

September 1995

MISSIONARY **HERALD**
mh.

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**Special
Harvest
Issue**

**Albania:
Investing
for the
future**

**Zaire:
After Ebola-
looking
forward**



full colour
development
poster

The Missionary Herald is the magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society

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mh. editorial

***mh.* Missionary Herald**

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It would be nice to think contributions to this year's Harvest Appeal "Sow What" will have world-shaking consequences. But being the realistic, down-to-earth people that you are, you know differently.

You know that a country's development, agriculturally or otherwise, is linked to many other factors. There is the corrupt government which has bankrupted a nation. There's the civil war that has drained an exchequer to pay for armaments, never mind all that has been spent in human lives and limbs and the millions around the world languishing in refugee camps. There are droughts, floods, global warming and climatic changes. There are forests which have been cut down by greedy landowners and hill-sides which have been denuded of soil. There are population explosions, overcrowded shanty towns and thousands of hungry mouths. There is international debt and the profligate life-style of those, like us, in the developed world.

As a Christian you know that you must respond to human need wherever it is to be found. You know you must love your neighbour; that as a relatively rich person you have a responsibility for the poor. "One thing you lack," said Jesus to the rich man. "Go sell everything you have and give to the poor."

But as a Christian you know that this must also be part of a wider proclamation of the gospel. Unless people feel the love of God in Christ touching their lives and are changed, then the poor will always be with us because the selfish, the greedy and the hateful will remain. That's why BMS is a missionary society. Agriculture and development work is part of the whole presentation of the good news. Your contribution to "Sow What" is important. It may be only a small drop in the ocean of human need but offered in the name of Jesus Christ and as part of the whole gospel it has life-changing potential. ●

COVER PHOTO
An Albanian village
woman celebrates
a good harvest.

The world sat up and noticed the central African nation of Zaire when news of the Ebola virus broke in May. Today Zaire is yesterday's news but the BMS is helping the church there to look to its tomorrows. **Katherine Jones** reports

life after ebola



The Ebola virus captured the public's interest for a few weeks in May and world attention was focused on Zaire. The journalists moved on as the outbreak was brought under control, but the reality of life in Zaire was unchanged.

Whilst Ebola has been contained, many people are still dying of treatable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and typhoid. Children are undernourished and so more susceptible to diseases such as measles, diarrhoea and intestinal parasites. Media interest fades, but the everyday struggle to get by continues.

The Baptist Community (CBFZ) with BMS help, runs four hospitals in different parts of Zaire, and dispensaries in the rural areas and Kinshasa. It also collaborates in a training hospital, IME, (Institut Médical évangélique) at Kimpese. These institutes make a significant contribution to the fight against disease.

While health care is a problem in Zaire, education is another area which

gives great cause for concern. A recent newspaper headline claimed that 75% of Zaire's children were not in school, teachers being unpaid and therefore on strike.

In some cases parents pay a monthly sum per child to the school which functions as long as payments are maintained. This results in erratic education and large numbers of young people just hanging around in the streets.

The long term consequences of this situation are alarming as children do not even have a basic level of education. At Bolobo, all the expert masons are now over 50. This will inevitably lead to a shortage of skilled workmen in time.

The country's infrastructure has broken down completely and the economy is in collapse. There is high inflation and high unemployment, and government employees are paid irregularly.

The main road linking Kinshasa to Matadi via Mbanza Ngungu and Kimpese is in a deplorable condition

and has been virtually impassable during the heavy rains. In Kinshasa, few buses still run and they are not well maintained. Often public transport - old lorries and minibuses which offer rides to people - is unsafe.

Mola, a young Baptist who is blind, travels to a project in the centre of Kinshasa from where he lives on the outskirts of town once a week. He teaches Braille and other skills to blind people. To get there, he has to take three different taxi-buses which people cram in like sardines.

One morning, the minibus in which he was travelling began to belch smoke from the engine, and as the driver pulled over it burst into flames. People fought to get out in a panic. Mola managed to get out of a window, grazed and bruised. He lost his bag containing papers and some money, but was thankful for having escaped alive.

It was Julius Nyerere, founder President of Tanzania, who once said that while the great powers are trying to get to the moon, in Africa we are

Above:
In a
collapsed
economy,
often,
vehicles
are not
well
maintained

Ebola

in Zaire, touching on topics such as medical work, education and evangelism. The consultation theme, Looking Forward, is particularly relevant. The medical team organised

by Médecins sans Frontières flown in to advise on the Ebola virus in May were horrified at the state of hygiene in the hospital. It is said to be one of the cleaner ones in Zaire. This is symptomatic of the situation facing BMS with its partners in mission. They operate in conditions that the West would find

unacceptable. What we consider as basic and essential would be considered luxurious by many Africans.

With an economy in collapse and irregular payment of government employees, much of the population in urban areas is undernourished. The cost of 50 kg of rice in April last year was 6000 New Zaires. In May it was 17,000 and by July the cost had rocketed to 33,000.

Whilst we have the luxury of asking questions about direction and vision, Zaireans are caught up in a struggle for survival.

The theme of the second Pan African Christian Leadership Assembly held in Nairobi in November 1994 was Developing Godly Leaders for Africa. Eleazar Ziherambere, General Secretary of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship, spoke at this year's Baptist Assembly in Plymouth of the need for Godly leaders in Africa.

It seems there is a growing pan-African awareness of the role of the Church in taking a stand against the corruption which pervades govern-

ment and other institutions.

In Zaire the Church is aware that Christians need to be in public life, setting standards. The consultation hopes to examine how the Church can enable lay people to be witnesses in their own spheres of life and work. Lay people have been invited to attend the Consultation which is a significant step.

Staff at the Protestant University in Kinshasa and the new campus at Kimpese are aware of the importance of standards and are working towards maintaining them.

Through the despair, there are tales of hope. The Christian medical team at Kikwit stood firm through the Ebola epidemic, risking their own lives to care for others.

A service of baptism was held recently at Tondo, where Batwa (pygmy) people, until recently marginalised from society, were welcomed as members.

There is joy in worship, and people are giving in Christian service. Some churches in Kinshasa now have crops growing around them, planted by members. A woman chief in the Kingasani District has given land which is being used to grow peanuts and manioc. As well as feeding families, money is being given to the church from the sale of produce.

Zaire is in chaos. "Nothing works, yet everything works."

The Church's energies, since the pillaging in 1991 following the mutiny of Zairean paratroopers and subsequent evacuation of BMS missionaries, have been caught up in surviving.

The horrific Ebola virus highlighted the difficult situation faced by so many in Zaire. It is important that this interest be maintained. The consultation is providing the opportunity to take a step back, assess the situation and see the right way forward.

BMS will stand by the CBFZ as it seeks a new vision for the future. ●



trying to get to the village.

Roads are fundamental to a nation. The state of the Kinshasa to Matadi road speaks volumes about communications in Zaire. In places the road surface has worn away completely and vehicles cut through the forest or drive round by the edge of the road.

If it rains, the road becomes even less passable and trucks queue in convoys of 60 or 70 to wait their turn. All these years later, the great powers have been to the moon and back, and in Africa we are still trying to reach the village.

This summer has been a time for BMS to take stock of its work in Zaire. David Stockley visited in June and July at the invitation of Operation Agri to assess agricultural work, followed in August by BMS President David Wilson and his wife, Sue, who were asked to assess medical work.

A consultation between the Zaire Baptist federation CBFZ and the BMS will run from September 4 to 8 - an opportunity for representatives from the both bodies to discuss work

A mountain village in Albania

Roger Cady and Stan Crees visit the mountain village of Shkretë in Albania and discover how this forgotten people, rich in culture and tradition, are being reached by European Baptist missionaries, working to bring the gospel and an enhanced quality of life.

Hill top demonstration: Roger Cady shows village children how to load a film into a camera



The people of Shkretë feel they are the forgotten ones. The very name of the village means “forsaken, deserted, abandoned” and even those who live in the Albanian capital of Tiranâ know little of the lifestyle of their fellow countrymen a few miles away in the mountains.

Add to this materially-deprived situation the absence of any spiritual dimension to life — officially eliminated by the communist regime — and it is not difficult to see why the team of missionaries working with the European Baptist Federation (EBF) feels that strenuous efforts should be directed to this village.

This is the background against which we found ourselves in the village school at Shkretë surrounded by farmers, children and teachers as we accompanied BMS missionary Gill Jones on one of her visits.

Despite the chaotic conditions which our arrival produced, we felt very welcome. The head of the school, on discovering that I, like him, was a geography teacher, claimed the professional bond, and pored with enthusiasm over posters, maps and books which we had brought.

The bare stone walls would be brightened by our gifts and the home-made wooden desks would now be spread with new pens and colourful books.

Perhaps the task of the teachers, one of whom walked for three hours to school and three hours back

in the evening, would be made easier and more rewarding.

Stan, who had strayed into the playground with his camera, was relentlessly pursued by bright-eyed children and village folk alike with demands for "fotografi, fotografi" — and what good subjects they all made, arranging themselves into groups on the low stone wall which surrounds the school with open and smiling faces.

We sat in on a history lesson, taught the class to say "Thank you very much" in English, were impressed by Year 8's algebra, and finally left, accompanied by the headman of the village en route to the nurse's house.

The earth-floored room with its central metal stove contained four people when we entered. The village nurse; her son, tall, swarthy

with his face often lit with a wide grin; his pregnant wife; and in the corner a small girl tucked into a bed, not feeling too well today.

This was a room in the home of the extended family and it served as the health centre of the village. Long-requested medical supplies with instructions in Albanian were handed over with some ceremony and a promise that there is more to follow. More "fotografi" were duly taken.

Perhaps our visit had made the people of Shkretë feel a little less abandoned. Perhaps we had played a minor part in the EBF missionaries' strategy of bringing the people of this village to the eventual realisation that there is One who does not forsake, or desert, or abandon, who can bring them the hope and purpose they need in their lives. ●

**Below:
village
children
at
Shkretë**

FACT FILE

Shkretë

The village of Shkretë, located at an altitude of 650-950 metres in the mountains of Albania, is typical of many such settlements in a country which is the poorest in Europe.

Cut off by weather and inadequate roads for months at a time, the village economy is based on subsistence agriculture with a little cash being obtained from the sale of sheep, goats and cattle.

The population of 550 people includes 105 children of first school age and the quality of life of these people has been likened to those in a "Third World" village in the tropics.

It was against this background that the European Baptist Federation commissioned a detailed study of the needs of the village, and the work was undertaken by four Baptist agricultural

missionaries.

They were supported by a team of specialists in the fields of Christian outreach, medicine, education, agriculture, engineering and hydrology.

The report, published in May 1994, aims to improve the quality of life of the people of Shkretë by:

- introducing Christian teaching
- strengthening education
- increasing and diversifying food production
- developing home industries
- providing water for irrigation
- improving access to the village.

The report was financed by BMS(UK), Operation Agri (BMM), The American Baptist Convention and the Co-operative Baptist Fellowship. ●

continues on page 9

Shkretë



A mountain village in **Albania**

We sat in silence round the edge of the dimly lit room. Opposite sat the men of the bereaved family, father, grand-father and brothers of the twenty-two-year-old man who had recently died.

Thick black coffee was served and as we sipped, I was reminded that these were the descendants of the “wild Albanians” whom Byron met when he visited the country at the beginning of the 19th century.

Yet today these were just sad grieving men feeling deeply the loss of a beloved son.

From outside an anguished cry reached us, the lament of a seventeen-year-old girl, who had been engaged to the dead man. Ruled by custom,

she would henceforth dress in black and never marry.

Custom, too, dictated that only the men would wait in the subdued light to receive the respects of relatives, neighbours and strangers like ourselves.

In this village, as in many others in the mountains of Albania, Muslim tradition has mingled with the orthodox, as is evidenced by the giving and receiving of the “holy kiss” on entering and leaving a house, or indeed on meeting people on a stony mountain path.

At last we filed out, leaving on a shelf by the door, a book of Bible stories and a bar of soap.

As we walked along the track to the house of the headman of the vil-

lage, we passed the ruined mosque, its rafters protruding like bones through a thick skin of red tiles.

During the years of communist rule any form of religious practice had been relentlessly suppressed, and now that the communist regime has collapsed, a gaping spiritual hole has been left.

The symbolism was strong. The people of the village, faced with all the vicissitudes of life, and desperately needing a purpose and direction in their lives found only a vacuum.

It is into this void that Glyn and Gill Jones, BMS missionaries working with the European Baptist Federation team, are endeavouring to pour the love of God which can only come through Jesus Christ. ●



Left: House building in shkretë
Above: Missionaries visiting
shkretë attracts crowds of
villagers.

*pictures courtesy of Stan Crees,
Glyn and Gill Jones*

Charitable handouts may help in the short term in Zimbabwe but **Steve Seymour** is keen on the long term benefits of sustainable business development

empowerment entrepreneurial training

A new church building sits right beside the central market and bus terminus - unusual in that the roof has been completed. Other roofing materials prove too expensive for an expanding congregation and the church building can remain incomplete for some time due to the lack of funds. We remarked on this to the pastor, Revd Nyarda, who after explaining the details of the progress of the building work and that no external funding was used, added as an aside that he had not been paid for three months! But the church building has been completed.

The work of this young enthusiastic pastor is not limited to the building of churches. Recognising the problem faced by many of the young unemployed in his area the pastor Revd Nyarda, decided to act.

For many in Zimbabwe, particularly those in urban high density townships, finding employment is an impossible task. Because of drought the rural population move to urban centres, numbers are further swelled

each year by 250,000 school leavers and the many made redundant from the civil service and companies. Whilst welfare or handouts would help, many would prefer assistance that it is sustainable, liberating and empowering. The only opportunity for many is to attend a small business venture - selling, vending fruit, a barber shop, a tuck shop on the road side or at the flea market. Unfortunately others turn to prostitution and crime as a means of survival.

Revd Nyarda pastors Tsitsi Baptist Church in Zuishavane, a town which serves a large asbestos mine and commercial farms with little other opportunities for work. Revd Nyanda quickly recognised that many of the young men and women could benefit from skills training. Being a Master Craftsman prior to taking up ministry, Revd Nyanda has been able to pass on stone carving skills to the youth. However the group has struggled with management and marketing.

Unscrupulous middle men have stolen valuable carvings and failed to pay the group. Or the prices they do receive are very low. Like many who try to earn a living working for themselves the lack of entrepreneurial skills and experience have discouraged further effort and confidence.

By providing basic business training and counselling on such matters the BHOD has been able to empower the Zuishavane carving group and similar groups and individuals around Zimbabwe to build confidence for themselves and their effort.

Furthermore the BHOD has strengthened the denominations, capacity to assist such groups by the training of Trainers who will combine the process of encouraging and empowering those in the community who are motivated to want to improve on their activities.

Each business training pack costs £50 and BHOD needs 16 per course. There are four courses a year. The course organisers have to ask for funding from Baptist sources worldwide. ●



Business boom: Joel Gardner took advantage of BHOD business training and development, set up a catering business and now employs four people

empowerment

resources and decision making

Continued...

FACT FILE

The Baptist Heads of Denominations BHOD is a networking body of the four Baptist groups in Zimbabwe. The Baptist Convention, Baptist Union, National Baptist and United Baptist have come together to tackle spiritual and social issues facing Zimbabwe today.

Following the severe 1991-92 drought the BHOD has with the assistance of BWAID been working to establish a development agenda along the following lines.

- strengthen local structures for development.
- development of a Theological Framework for social ministries, to be included in theological training.
- entrepreneurial and business skills training for youth.
- importance of networking.
- develop local research and appraisal skills.

Practically, the results have been

- seminars and training in business and sustainable agriculture.
- seminars held by each denomination specifically to increase awareness about development issues.
- specific projects and activities implemented by the denominations in response to community needs.

Key development facilitators

- Revd Musona and Mrs Myarjowa, UBC
- Ms Sally Chademana and Ms Flora Chari, BUZ
- Mr P Jambaya, NBC

As a farmer, Mrs Mutagedi knows the value of cattle. They are a valuable source of milk for her children and are needed for draught work and ploughing. Purchase costs of a cow have risen dramatically beyond the means of Mrs Mutagedi. Mr Mutagedi works in Harare as a gardener. Like many families in rural Zimbabwe men travel to urban centres in search of work and a cash income, however small, to pay school fees and purchase maize meal.

Mr Mutagedi's family live in the Rushinga area, a relatively isolated and under-developed community in the far north of Zimbabwe, some kilometres from the Mozambique border. The War of Independence, Mozambique rebel incursion and subsequent drought have combined to devastate the region.

The United Baptist Church (UBC) has worked in the area for over

ten years on church planting and development activities, combining the two effectively and actively encouraging the local community to develop its won leadership and programmes. Revd Denis Musona the UBC Development Co-ordinator and Mrs Mary Nyavjoura the field officer are responsible for the UBC development program in the community, linking church ministry with much needed economic and sustainable development activities.

Over the last two years the UBC has facilitated a cattle restocking programme supported by TEAR Australia and BWAID. The programme is a continuation of a successful pilot project started by Revd Musana in 1987. This year the UBC obtained 50 cows and two bulls basing the programme on successful models developed in Southern Africa region whereby a family is provided with a cow on the understanding that the



Calendar 1996

New for 1996!

The BMS 1996 Calendar is an inspirational pictorial tour of areas in which Baptist Missionary Society personnel are working. Drawn from our extensive library of high quality images, each month's large colour picture is an evocative scene from one of the four continents in which BMS has partnerships with the growing church of Jesus Christ.

For your convenience, the calendar presentation is an easy-to-follow diary format with space for you to use as prayer reminder. And a new feature is its helpful centre wire binding so that the calendar stays flat.

Its new size means your 1996 calendar will fit neatly on your Kitchen or office wall or on the church notice board.



Far Left: Management course group from Rushinga.
Left: Rushinga cattle project compound.
Above: Project team - Denis Musona, Mary Nyanjowa and Pastor Mutagedi.



offspring will then be passed on to another family and the process repeated.

In the past development activities have been dictated to the community by outsiders. But the UBC listens to the community and by a process of empowerment encourages the community to take decisions for themselves and manage the resources. We learnt from the community that they did not want to receive the cows as a gift and insisted on paying a percentage of the cost; this covered the purchase of the two breeding bulls.

The impact of the development work over the ten years and the cattle programme has been significant, helping to stabilise food security, involving women and single parents, and giving the community confidence to manage programmes themselves. ●

Steve and Pam Seymour are BMS missionaries in Zimbabwe



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lawnmower Cameroon

There is a strange connection between a priceless collection of vintage cars in Berkshire and a home-made lawnmower in Cameroon.

Richard Wells asks **Andy Wilson** to reveal the link

Taking a job as a gardener when you are a highly skilled motor mechanic is an odd career move in anyone's book.

But this was no ordinary gardener's job. The "garden" consisted of rolling acres of Berkshire parkland. The boss had a real touch of class: a peer of the realm.

Perhaps Andy Wilson's real green-fingered motivation was the gleaming collection of vintage cars a steering wheel's turn away from the herbageous borders.

Eyeing the graceful hand-crafted machinery of yesteryear became a daily pastime. But he could only admire from a ride-on mower's distance, his mechanical appetite frustratingly unsated as he assigned more than a fair share of husbandry to that particular area of lawn.

Through all his grass cutting duties, digging the vegetable garden, trimming the trees and even draining and cleaning the estate's lake, his heart was with the earl's automotive collection.

Maybe it was while he was pruning the ninety-third Viburnum, or trowelling the umpteenth furrow for late lettuces that Andy began to wonder just why he was going through this particular experience in life and questioning why God had put him where he was right then.

There was nothing new about these questions. "They're things that I have constantly asked myself throughout life, and always the answer has been revealed to me months or even years later," says Andy.

His patience was rewarded after 18 months. For the good lord, a man not so prepossessed with his collection that he failed to take full account of Andy's horticultural activities, had mentally recorded during their conversations over the vegetable planning more than a passing note of enthusiasm about things on wheels.

Eventually Andy was promoted to manage his vintage pride and joy.

But Andy's gardening means to a mechanical end were to be more significant that he could ever had thought.

"Those 18 months proved to be an invaluable help in my service with BMS in Cameroon," admits Andy.

"One of my jobs was to keep the grass cut."

That is a strange assignment to send a missionary half way across the



Francois and the Mark 11 mower with child's buggy wheels



for



Andy's Mark 1 mower helps Francois keep the mission trim

world to do, but it had a far greater effect on the life of the mission station than he had imagined.

When he arrived in Cameroon with wife Jenny, a doctor, it soon became evident that the Bible School extension that he was to oversee would not be built within the near future. This left him looking for work, of which there was not a short supply - including running the mission centre, book-keeping and mending anything that was broken, which covered just about everything in the village.

His two assistants were willing and able; Vincent, the handyman, young and quick to grasp new things, and Francois, the gardener, 60 years old, 30 of which he had spent cutting the mission grass with an 18 inch machete.

The warm wet climate of southern Cameroon presented Francois with a Forth Bridge-style challenge; the grass grew so fast that by the time he had spent three weeks going right around the centre the grass where he had started was three feet tall.

Except during the short dry season most of the grounds were unusable or unsafe because snakes like that kind of cover.

The solution - or part of it - was to lie hidden in an old store shed. An old rusting lawn mower, incomplete and in bad shape through more than 10 years under all manner of junk, appeared beneath the assorted nuts, bolts, generators, Toyota Landcruiser bits and Volkswagen engine spares.

Coincidentally an American mission had asked Andy to repair a water

pump and in gratitude for this essential task, had presented him with . . . two rusty lawnmowers.

A lesser mechanic wouldn't have given a tin of Swarfega for them. But Andy's creative mix and match mentality immediately saw the solution to his grass cutting challenge. He pulled the three mowers to pieces, created a lathe from a Black and Decker drill, found a hand file and prepared to breathe life into the disintegrating parts.

"With these assorted parts I was able to get two mowers working," he says. "Then two English churches came to my rescue by sending out pistons and a few other parts. Life around the mission changed overnight. Francois could now get round the whole centre in about three days

so the grass was always short.

"There were no snakes so the children could play safely and there were areas where people could sit and talk. I was able then to plant trees and hedges to add to the beauty of the mission."

A year later one of the large shops in the city of Douala began to stock engine parts for the so the mowers could be kept in good order.

Andy says: "Looking back I can see just how precisely my past had prepared me for this task, even down to having had enormous experience on the make of mower engine or the book-keeping that I had to do when working on the vintage car collection.

"I still question why I have to go through certain experiences or situations but I know that God does have a plan and a purpose and that all will become clear in the end." ●

A mission to cut the grass in the Cameroon

John Wilson reflects on the impact of living for others in the name of Jesus, demonstrating love, faithfulness and selflessness

teaching them everything

disc

Walking around the local bazaar, the boy had not stopped begging us for 'bukshish'. The missionary I was with had come to get away from some difficult work problems that he was dealing with. I had been asked to show him the local shops. This boy continued his asking, whining, getting in the way and being a thorough nuisance. Suddenly the missionary's temper snapped, he stamped on the bare boy's foot, telling him to get lost in no uncertain terms. For me, his role as a teacher/discipler which is one of the essential roles of a missionary, was destroyed. Total consistency is outside the reach of us all, but Jesus does not only ask us to make disciples by baptism but also by teaching them "all that I have commanded you".

To make a disciple is a very different thing to teaching a student. When we are at school or university, we learn many things from people we barely know. In our rationalistic culture we think that ideas and concepts are the staple diet of education. For Jesus and his era the idea of learning by example was the key. Like a Rabbi, Jesus took men to live with him, to share not only his thoughts but his experience of life as well.

Today when we look at the world

we might be disappointed that the Bible is not more like a text book that teaches us socio-economics, or political science. If we knew how everything worked we could sort out world problems. Our rationalistic minds have forgotten the basis for education which is teaching by example. Discipleship is not just learning how to think, but how to be. It is to take the example and experience of another and apply it to the world that confronts me. This is the way that Jesus taught his disciples. That is why the Bible stories of people's lives and experiences are so important. They disciple us as we read them, finding, now one thing, now another applicable to our changing experiences of life.

When William Carey went to India his primary concern was to set up a community that could model Christian living. He had been influenced by the community based mission of Zinzendorf's Moravian church. Sharing of finance and property as well as community support and shared vision were essential to his missionary outlook. His hope was to include national Christians into these communities thereby spreading the experience of Christian living. Practical difficulties and personal pride meant that those who followed

Carey did not retain these high values of education. Too often missionary work has come to be seen as an extension of western teaching methods. We are however called to community life, to practical sharing and mutual encouragement. It is only in this way that we truly participate in Christian mission.

Every Christian is involved in discipleship. Jesus' words underline both the need to be a learner as well as a teacher. We can only teach what we ourselves have learnt. Alongside the authoritative discipling of the Bible narrative, we also learn to model our lives on those who have shown us something of Christ's life. I have my own private gallery of saints. People whom I have met, worked alongside and come to know in private, who by their love, faithfulness and acts of selflessness have marked my life. Many faces come to mind, each have left me a living example of the Gospel message that I want to appropriate for myself. Knowing such people is a privilege, but the mission of Jesus is not that we hold these people to ourselves, but that we go and share what we have learnt with others.

Had the disciples tried to hang on to Jesus, or stay together for the sake of the good times, they would have lost the very mission dynamic for

Everyday discipleship:
John Wilson with a young
group in the street; out-
side the church at
Morsang; at the local
bazaar



cripples

which Jesus had prepared them. Today's church can also be crippled in its mission by trying to protect the privileged moments of the past. We need to take those learning moments that we cherish so much, that shaped us into the person we are and give them away to someone who has never yet shared the depth of love, fellowship and service which we have known.

The church to which we belong in Morsang, was begun about eight years ago by a couple who had spent over 30 years in a strong, thriving fellowship. He had played the organ at nearly every service during those 30 years. They gave it all up to start a church plant in their home, which has subsequently moved to our present premises. Here is a couple who can disciple, because they have something to give. Their lives have been shaped by fellowship with Christ's people. Though things have been difficult and discouraging at times, they have Christ's life running through them. They have learnt the work of mission: learning to live for others in Jesus' name. ●

Questions

- 1 What or who shaped you most as a disciple of Christ?
- 2 Do you think you are still learning? In what way?
- 3 Who are you discipling? Stop and pray for that person right now.



Theo Angelov: Site visit at Sofia

Bulgarian reversal

In a surprise announcement following a long debate on July 12, the City Council of Sofia reversed a decision made earlier this year which stopped a Bulgarian Baptist building project.

The Baptists had acquired a site for a theological college, church, school and orphanage, totalling 17,000 sq. metres but in February, Sofia City Council rejected the plan because of its "negatives effects". All work on the site stopped and workers were sent home.

There have been repeated attempts made to reverse the decision, but to no avail.

Individuals, churches, and Baptist Unions expressed concern and wrote in protest to the Mayor of Sofia and Bulgarian embassies around the world.

Following the city council decision, Baptists can build the orphanage and college on a 12,000 sq metre site but the church and school have been rejected. The council voted 56 in favour and one against.

"Praise the Lord," exclaimed Theo Angelov, President of the Baptist Union of Bulgaria, when he heard the decision. He was sure the reversal was because of the "prayers and support of our brothers and sisters in the Baptist world".

Reg Harvey to retire

The Revd Reg Harvey, BMS General Director, has announced he is to retire in the spring of 1997, two years earlier than planned.

Reg and his wife, Maire, based their decision on a sense of God's timing and are open to God's guidance to any other Christian service that may be revealed.

"This is right for the BMS, it's right for me and it's right for Maire," he says.

The search for his successor starts with the society's Board of Management and Nominations Committee and it is hoped that a name will be presented to the BMS annual meeting in April 1996.



Reg Harvey: God's timing

Reg, who has steered the society through a number of significant developments, the latest of which was a complete management restructure, was keen that his successor should have a strong run-up to the turn of the century.

"I believe the work continues to be exciting as the BMS moves into a period of demanding change," he says. "But this calls for leadership that will be available to take the society beyond 1999 - bridging the decade, the century and the millennium."

BMS President David Wilson said the whole BMS family was indebted to Reg Harvey.

"His inspired, gracious leadership has been greatly valued at Didcot, in the churches and especially by the missionaries," he said. "We ask for God's blessing on Reg and Maire as they now look forward to retirement from BMS."



Casually discarded: the unexploded shell

Tooled up for a big bang

Tools With a Mission (TWAM) collector John Bennett was delighted when his neighbour left a pile of tools in his back garden.

Having sorted the usable equipment from the debris, he threw the scrap into a heap to await disposal. But a six-inch long cylinder began to look suspicious.

Hampshire police also thought it looked suspicious.

And when the Bomb Disposal Squad called in later, suspicion turned to certainty; this was a bomb.

The two experts carefully removed the carelessly discarded 2lb World War I shell packed with high explosives and blew it up later in a controlled explosion.

John, who lives in Waterlooville, said the bomb squad dated the shell at April 1916.

Later he said: "We'll continue to collect tools but you can rest assured the inspection will be more thorough before they're shipped off."

TWAM is an auxiliary of the Baptist Men's Movement.

Walk aids Albanians

Sponsored walkers from four Baptist churches in Wales gave BMS President David Wilson a run for his money when they presented cheques totalling £829.

David was visiting the Maesyrdhelem group of churches for a united service, to speak about work in Albania, and the money will go towards a PIPs project for children's education in the Balkan state.

Eight walkers, including minister the Revd Haydn Davies and his wife Moira, braved appalling conditions on the 20-mile trek, which put two in hospital with minor injuries.

One of the walkers, Jane Bennett doubled her sponsorship money thanks to an offer by her employers, Midland Bank.

At Blackmore Baptist Church, a small village fellowship near Brentwood, Essex, sponsored swimming and golf helped members to meet their 1995 PIPs target of £360.

Missionary secretary John Powell said the events raised £421.50, enough to buy two bicycles for BMS missionaries Saverio and Betsy Guarna in Albania, and to start next year's PIPs project.



Money for PIPs David Wilson with Haydn Davies

Freedom in a name

Baptists in Armenia have won religious freedom - by changing their name and forging a link in France.

In April, the Armenian military authorities arrested the President of the country's Baptist Union (BU), Yuri Avanesian, and members of the church.

The government had considered the BU a dangerous sect but under its new name, the Union of Evangelical Churches of Armenia, it has gained full recognition.

The new name identifies Armenian Baptists with the ex-patriot Armenian Evangelical Church in Paris which is baptistic in nature and which has long had government recognition.

Pentecostals in Armenia are still not recognised and are prevented from renting or buying property.

CHARITIES ACT 1992

Public notice for the Expenditure of Capital under Section 44
Charity Commission number 233782

DECLARATION

The Trustees of Carey Gardens Trust of Didcot, Oxfordshire, HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that they have passed a Resolution under the above provisions for the following purpose:

Authorising the expenditure of the Charity capital as income.

Any interested person wishing to make representations regarding this said Resolution may do so, quoting the Registered reference at the head of this notice, by writing to the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales at: St Alban's House, 57/60 Haymarket, London, SW1Y 4QX.

Signed by and on behalf of the Trustees.
Christopher J Hutt,
Clerk to the above Trust.

NOTE: The income for the above Trust does not exceed £1,000 per annum.

Reunion for missionaries

Former Asia missionaries spent a day and a half sharing news, prayer and fellowship at a residential reunion at Hothorpe Hall, Leicestershire, organised by the Former Missionaries Association.

A total of 56, several first-timers, heard a report of the centenary celebrations of the Misoram Baptist Church, and a report of a thanksgiving for the first 100 years of medical work in Ludhiana. Arnesby Baptist Church hosted the delegates for Sunday worship and communion.

Weight of stamps

More than 600 kilogrammes (almost 12 cwt) of stamps and other collectables have been received so far this year by the BMS Stamp Bureau. And some of them have featured a Baptist flavour, like a 10 cent stamp which turned up recently showing a picture of Webb Memorial Baptist Church, Jamaica.

The bureau is also collecting old postcards and cigarette card albums.

Stamps and other collectables should be sent to the BMS at PO Box 49, Baptist House, Didcot, OX11 8XA.

Student successes

Five students supported by the BMS through Gandaki Boarding School, in Pokhara, Nepal, have passed their end of term exams with flying colours.

They all scored more than 70% in English and Maths, and one gained a 99% mark in Maths. Other subjects covered were Nepali, Science and social studies.

The five BMS-sponsored candidates are among more than 200 scholarship students at the school which delivers a curriculum including vocational training in agriculture, home science and industrial education.

Teams on the road

BMS 20-20 Vision teams are on the road during the autumn.

They will be making multimedia world mission presentations in Newport (Sept 16), Chesham (23), Colwyn Bay (Oct 14), Exeter (28), Inverkeithing (Nov 4), Peterborough (11) and Maidstone (18).

The fast-moving roadshows include seminars, slide presentations, fun games, drama and video programmes.

Silver jubilee

The Church of North India will be 25 years old on November 29. Plans are being made for a silver jubilee celebration at the YMCA in Fitzroy Square, London, on Saturday October 28.

Specs point

Old spectacles, which used to be collected by the BMS for use overseas, can now be sent to Vision Aid Overseas, 56-66 Highlands Road, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 8NR. Telephone (01372) 360822.

CHECK OUT

SEPTEMBER 1995

ARRIVALS

Jacqui Wells from Thailand
Mark and Claire Ord from Italy
Mary Parsons from Brazil

DEPARTURES

Geoff and Chris Bland to Thailand
Tim Lehane and Alison MacLean to Nepal
Robert and Catherine Atkins to France
Mark and Claire Ord to Italy
Owen and Deanna Clark to Zaire
Neil and Rosalie Hall to Nepal

VISITS

David Martin to Zaire and Angola
Derek Rumbol to Zaire and Angola
John Passmore to Albania
Andrew North to Albania

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ANONYMOUS GIFTS

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Barrhead | 25.00 |
| Bristol | 400.00 |
| Bristol | 120.00 |
| CAF Voucher | 500.00 |
| CAF Voucher | 100.00 |
| Cardiff | 10.00 |
| M.B., Coventry | 50.00 |
| GAYE | 119.94 |
| Give as you Earn | 239.88 |
| Hammersmith | 25.00 |
| Hemel Hempstead | 25.00 |
| Nottingham | 120.00 |
| Relief fund, Bootle | 40.00 |
| Sheffield | 50.00 |
| South West Charitable Giving | 31.48 |
| Southampton | 140.00 |
| Stroud | 20.00 |
| Swansea | 5.00 |
| Taunton | 20.00 |
| Torbek | 69.30 |
| UKET | 2,300.00 |
| Watford | 5.00 |
| West London | 20.00 |
| | £4,386.10 |

LEGACIES

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Booth James John | 1,537.13 |
| Belton E | 8,362.94 |
| Brampton Lucy Elizabeth | 13,000.00 |
| Coleman Arnold W | 5,500.00 |
| Cullimore A E M | 830.00 |
| Donaldson David J | 46,752.74 |
| Hallett Rosina Maud | 550.00 |
| Hardinge Irene Ellen | 1,441.76 |
| Hawkins H D | 100.00 |
| Horne Elsie Fannie | 72,000.00 |
| Lund Jean Hutchieson | 6,719.55 |
| Madeley Marjorie Nowell | 1,985.14 |
| Newby F | 1,000.00 |
| Pellowe Ethel Nancy | 300.00 |
| Preston Jessie | 13,000.00 |
| Purves Margaret | 500.00 |
| Reed George Ernest | 1,644.87 |
| Springett M J | 2,000.00 |
| Spoor Olive Gertrude | 15.00 |
| Turnbull Mary | 75.88 |
| Waldock Rebecca M | 100.00 |
| | £177,615.01 |

Co-Ordinator

BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

CO-ORDINATOR - SOUTH AND WEST ENGLAND

Competitive salary and conditions. Interesting and varied work.

With active involvement in over 30 countries the work of BMS is supported by churches throughout England, Wales and Scotland.

We are looking for someone to join our team of Co-ordinators who actively promote and stimulate interest in world mission. The work is interesting, varied and rewarding, offering real scope to use initiative.

The successful candidate will have a heart for world mission and be fully committed to the objectives of the Society. To do the job you will need to be self-motivated, well organised, possessing vision and creativity with the ability to lead and enthuse others and the drive and commitment to make things happen.

It would be an advantage to have some knowledge of world mission and the Baptist denomination along with word processing and information technology skills.

The job holder will need to live centrally to the area working principally from home. This is a demanding job requiring substantial travel, flexible working hours and some time away from home.

The salary offered reflects the importance of the post which commands generous holiday entitlement, travel allowance and contributory pension. Some relocation expenses may be available if appropriate.

If you would like to discuss the position informally please phone Andy Stockbridge on 01235 512077 or for an application form and further details Michael Quantick, Baptist Missionary Society, on the same number.

The closing date for receipt of applications is 19 September 1995

Baptist Missionary Society, PO Box 49, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8XA Tel 01235 512077



This month's picture, of coffee picking in the Philippines, illustrates the growing opportunities for sustainable agricultural economies aided by the sale of fairly traded goods

Pickers and Parables

When agencies such as WDM, Traidcraft and Oxfam began promoting fairly-traded products some 20 years ago no-one imagined that this, seemingly, cranky activity would expand and capture a significant percentage of national supermarket sales. In many ways the Fair Trade story is an illustration of the parables of the Kingdom, whereby a small grain or seed gradually grows, often unseen, and has enormous influence. We should be immensely encouraged by this: a small minority concern for justice has become part of mainstream society.

However, it is also significant that this year three denominations have passed resolutions supporting and promoting fairly traded products. The churches still seem to need convincing that buying alternative products does make a difference. We need to keep telling the stories of what the Fair Trade mark on products symbolises in the lives of men like the one pictured here in the Philippines. On many estates

women and men are vulnerable; work is spasmodic, pay minimal and families cannot plan for the future. On the estates with Fair Trade approval, people are guaranteed fair, secure wages, decent living conditions and education for their children. Life chances are vastly improved.

Our lifestyles and consumer choices have a direct impact on the lives of others around the globe. The use of alternatives needs to continue to permeate every level of society. At present an Early Day Motion (EDM No 20) has been tabled asking that fairly traded products be used in all House of Commons refreshment outlets. This would be a strategic step, encouraging other institutions to follow suit. However, it requires the support of 330 MPs. Use your card this month to write to your MP and ask him or her to sign EDM No 20.

Order your 1996 set of Action Cards from The Methodist Church, Social Responsibility Division, 1 Central Buildings, London, SW1H 9NH

JESUS, THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE POOR... SOURCES OF RECONCILIATION.

20th ANNIVERSARY

For 20 years the Christian Community of Reconciliation in Lille (France) has been committed on a daily basis to helping the poor, living a community life of prayer, solidarity and spiritual renewal.

This year has led them to take steps to work for reconciliation together with other Christians from some of the most divided regions of the world.

Drawing from their experiences, speakers from different churches and denominations will work on the above theme, a challenge for today's Church.

- ▲ Hong Kong: Jackie PULLING
- ▲ United States: Ronald SIDER, John McLean TALBOT
- ▲ Northern Ireland: Cecil KERR
- ▲ Israel: Christine Lynda BRAYER
- ▲ South Africa: Cesar MOLEBATS
- ▲ France: David BERLY, Georgina DUFOIX, Sister MYRIAM
- ▲ JACOB, Sister MYRIAM

OCTOBER 26 - NOVEMBER 1, 95

For further information, please contact the Christian Community of Reconciliation, 11 rue de la Paix, 59000 Lille, France. Tel: 03 20 37 11 11

Call to Prayer

Supplementing the BMS 1995 Prayer Guide. Week numbers correspond to those in the Prayer Guide

WEEK 37

September 10-16

Nepal: UMN Education

Joy Ransom is now working in a new capacity as Staff Children's Education Advisor. Pray for her as she tries to provide training, resources and support to home-schooling parents, tutorial groups and Nepali schools in project areas. Teachers and parents in remote areas face stresses that are unique to their situation.

The Education Department has been asked by the Government to take part in a teacher training programme in two schools in Western Nepal. So far there is no funding from donors overseas. There are staff ready to start work as soon as money becomes available. Prayer has already been answered in that funds have been provided for the building of a school for the Nepali staff and village children in Okhaldhunga.

Give thanks that Susan Jeffreys who was seriously injured in a plane crash on her way to Okhaldhunga to teach in a tutorial group is now much recovered, and is undergoing physiotherapy at home in Australia. She hopes to return to teaching soon.

WEEK 38

September 17-23

Europe (FBZ)

Give thanks that confirmed reports have stated that the Sofia City Council have completely

reversed their decision, and have now given the go-ahead for the Bulgarian Baptists to continue with their building project to construct an orphanage and a theological school. (See news item page 16) Now that the Council have relented, this project has even been announced on the radio as being a Baptist scheme.

This turn-around means that money that had been set aside as a Fund for the Future grant for the theological school in Bulgaria will now be released. Pray for continuing good relations with the authorities, and for a speedy completion.

Elsewhere in the EBF pray especially for the people of Croatia. Croatia is now in full partnership with the BMS and the church are looking for a missionary couple to work with them.

●●●●

WEEK 39

September 24-30

Brazilian Baptist Convention

Colin and Marcia Pavitt are now working in Porto Alegre. They write, "The Central Baptist church is the third oldest Baptist church in the state of Rio Grande do Sul and this year celebrated 63 years. From its name you can imagine it is situated right in the centre of Porto Alegre, alongside an enormous beer factory, which means as we sit in church we can smell the hops. Unlike most of the churches in the south it is growing numerically and has now

reached 200.

"We are getting to know the ins and outs of the church and all her members, which is very important because they are the ones who are going to support us in Eldorado. Colin is preaching once a month at the main church and once in one of the daughter churches. Marcia is very involved in the Sunday school and the children's services.

"On Tuesday afternoons we and two or three others from the Central church go out and give a little presentation to the 50 or so children in the council run creche of Eldorado, Cidade Verde. We wanted to take the next step and try to reach the parents with the gospel. Our first meeting was last week and we were thrilled by the start - 16 non-Christians, that is parents and staff of the creche, four people from the Central church and ourselves."

Pray for the final purchase of the land in Eldorado, which is rather complicated and involved the town council.

Andy and Linda Eaves have received an invitation to work with the Ceara Baptist Convention helping in a project attached to the Baptist Church of Limoeiro do Norte in the interior of Ceara State. This involves the education of about 170 children and general care for their health, well being and home situation in an area of extreme poverty.

●●●●

WEEK 40

October 1-7

Bangladesh: Medical work

Sue Headlam is now back in the UK on Home Assignment until 11 October. Chandraghona has recently been given the status of "Baby Friendly Hospital" by UNICEF - exclusive breast feeding is maintained for four months, and artificial milk substitutes are

not used or promoted and advertising is banned. Makrau from the Marma tribe has been appointed a temporary staff nurse to cover Sue's Home Assignment. Pray for her, as she is only newly qualified, that she may present all the necessary skills and sensitivities required.

Stephen Chowdhury, son of the Medical Superintendent of the Chandraghona Christian General Hospital, has now decided not to come to the UK for further training after all. In June he was made Deputy Medical Superintendent for two years.

Pray also for Christine Preston who is moving from the Ruhea Clinic in Bangladesh to become a Community Development and Health Care worker in Nepal.

Phil Commons, at present on Leave of Absence, is exploring her future within missionary service. Please remember her in your prayers. ●●●●

WEEK 41

September 24-30

India: sharing ministries

Ann Bothamley is a Senior Nursing Administrator at the Christian Medical College Hospital at Vellore in South India. Every day she meets both staff and patients with tremendous needs.

She also looks after fourteen children at the Balanilayam Hostel. She writes, "I have marvelled at the graciousness of God as he has given me the patience and love needed to meet the demands of so many individuals and to keep abreast of events. At times it has seemed that every minute of the day from 4.30 am to 9.30 pm has to be structured, but as I see people grow in their knowledge of Jesus I give thanks to God. The hostel children are learning to be thoughtful and kind." ●●●●

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1 What is it that brings development issues and world poverty to your attention? If you lived in a world with no TV, radio, newspapers, or magazines, might your reaction and response to these issues be different?

2 Do you think it is just "chance" or "bad luck" that causes people in the un- and underdeveloped world to have to live as they do? If it is more than that, what underlying factors are involved?

3 In Mark 10:21 Jesus said to the rich young man, "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor". Is poverty an aspect of spirituality?

4 What are the differences between people trying to eke out a living in a Third World country, and people living in poverty in the UK? Are there also differences in your reactions to these situations and in the ways you do or do not try to intervene?

5 If you are physically poor but spiritually rich, what characteristics describe your life?

6 It has been said that the majority of the world's poor are women, but it is men who set the economic and political agendas. Do you agree? If you do, what can be done to redress the balance?

7 What kind of things do you pray for when praying for those living lives of poverty and deprivation in the Third World?

8 What is the opposite of development? Is it stagnation?

ACTION POINTS

1 Have a look at your church programme. What percentage of your time is given over to raising awareness of the plight of people living in undeveloped parts of the world and/or in great physical need? Encourage representatives from development agencies and missionary societies that are involved in development work to come and speak in your church. Send off for the literature and audio-visuals: posters, leaflets, facts and figures, and have a display. If it's too late to do anything for this year's harvest, how about One World Week 22 - 29 October 1995 or next year's Christian Aid week?

2 Do you know which BMS missionaries

are involved in aid and development work? Do a bit of research, and ask for their Prayer Letters.

3 Stock fairly traded tea and coffee in your church kitchen. Don't be put off by people telling you they bought them years ago and they were terrible. They really have improved over the years, and are very acceptable now. Make sure you ask your local supermarket to stock these too. It's amazing what a little lobbying will do!

4 Make sure you have a stall of fairly traded goods eg Traidcraft at your next fund raising event.

5 Are you linked or twinned to a church somewhere else in the world? Why don't you organise a fact finding mission to find out more about the conditions these people live in. It may even be possible to arrange exchange visits.

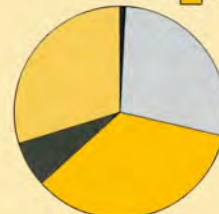
6 How about holding a Rich man/Poor man dinner at your church? Everyone pays the same, and on arrival people are arbitrarily given a ticket eg either blue or pink. The blues get to eat the "rich man's" meal, a three course meal with all the trimmings, whereas the pinks, the "poor men", eat a very meagre dry bread and thin soup meal. Other suggestions (instead of tickets) are to divide the rich and poor up on the basis of eye colour - that's a bit more risky for planning purposes!

7 Are you able to give practical help in the local community to those who have less or are in need of a helping hand? From running coffee shops and soup kitchens, to providing child care facilities, visiting the elderly, donating professional skills to providing educational programmes for local people in parenting and management of household finances - these are all things that churches throughout the UK are already involved in.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

Women currently receive 10 per cent of the world's income and own one per cent of the world's wealth as a reward for doing two-thirds of the work. Even in most industrialised countries women only receive between 60 and 70 per cent of men's wages.

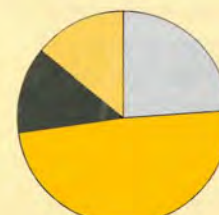
CAUSES OF SOIL DEGRADATION



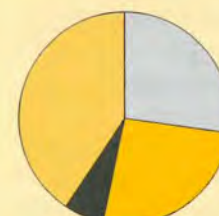
WORLD



EUROPE



AFRICA



ASIA

Figures taken from the Third World Guide 1993/1994 edition.

TOOLS WITH A MISSION

TWAM supplies new and refurbished tools to missionaries and the mission field overseas to people who do not have the tools to feed themselves and their families.

In 1994 TWAM despatched 70 'jobs':

43 loads were supplied to UK charities for their work - mainly in Africa and Eastern Europe

12 loads were requests from overseas

organisations, and for these a sponsor was found to pay the freight charges

6 jobs came from church groups in the UK for tools for their own projects -

- St Peters, Ipswich to Tanzania
- a Kent church to Hungary
- a Sussex Baptist church to Albania
- Frinton Baptist church to Romania
- CBFC Trust (Kent) to Kenya
- Witham URC church to the Gambia.

3 jobs were small requests from individual missionaries

2 jobs were large shipments (over a tonne each) to projects in Kenya and were financed from Kenya

4 jobs were small and were to individuals in Malawi, Gambia and the UK.

TWAM in response to requests are now seeking to send comprehensive tool kits so that craftsmen can use their skills in an unrestricted way. TWAM is looking for:

- Planes (all types)
- Chisels (wood)
- Marking gauges
- Spirit levels
- G Cramps
- Claw hammers
- Carpenter squares
- Hand turn grindstones
- Builder levels
- Drill bits for wood braces
- Bricklayer trowels
- METRIC spanners of all sizes and types

TWAM also requires sewing kits, ie cotton cloth, sewing machine needles, reels of cotton, buttons etc

At present demand - especially from developing countries and the former Eastern bloc - is exceeding TWAM'S ability to collect and refurbish at a corresponding rate. Can you help?!

Contact your local collector, or get in touch with Dr W G Peterson, (the national administrator) 124 Darnley Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 0SN. Tel. 01474 533686.

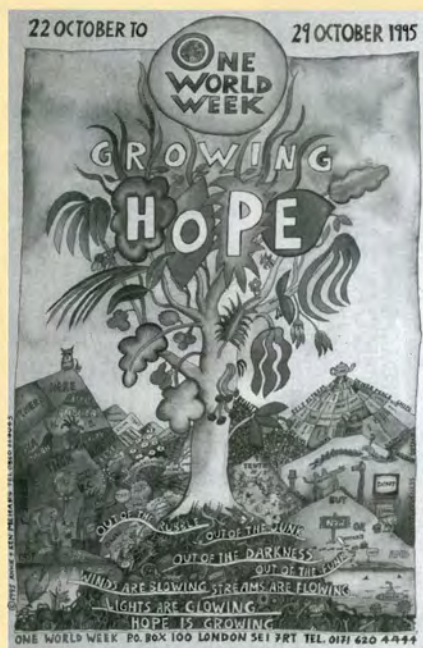
ONE WORLD WEEK "GROWING HOPE"

This year's Study-Action guide includes information and action ideas on:

- Changes and concerns for farmers - in the UK and in Africa
- Food miles - how far does your food travel? Is this wasteful?
- The Movement for Seed Freedom in India - protests about companies wanting to patent seeds.
- Threats to biodiversity of agricultural crops.
- Causes of the Irish Potato Famine, and comparison with famines today.

Cost: £3.50 (or 3 for £7.50) and is available from One World Week, PO Box 100, London, SE1 7RT.

CHRISTIAN AID is celebrating its 50th birthday this year at the weekend beginning September 30. They are encouraging churches and other groups to join in the birthday celebrations, and have produced a birthday pack, with ideas for a party, vigil/watchnight and special service and the special 50th Birthday Appeal - Miles of Money.



TAKE TWO

sorry... NOT interested

Mission was lonely and tough for the Belgian Action Team of Michael Bansback, Gill Smith, Shona McDonald and Chris Evans — but they stuck at it

Some wore crosses round their necks, others opened their doors to reveal crosses in their homes and yet despite these religious symbols, the many ornate cathedrals and the ten-foot high crucifixes on every street corner, the response was usually the same:

“Je suis desole mais ce ne m’interesse pas”

It was a phrase we must have heard hundreds of times, but at least the ones who said that were polite. After three months of door-to-door, we learned not all Belgians - or their dogs are! When we finally arrived in Belgium in late October, our French nicely under control, we were four inexperienced but nevertheless enthusiastic young missionaries, pretty much prepared to handle whatever was thrown our way. Well, as long as it wasn't door-to-door. Okay, so they say God has a sense of humour; we were told we'd be doing door-to-door from 10 'til 5, five and a half days a week - and it was in winter - and it was in French!

But we like challenges and started out on our mini mission, with nothing more than some very warm clothes, a few hundred questionnaires and a real desire to reach these foreign people beyond the doorbells. It certainly wasn't easy. When we actually found

people who let us go further than “Bonjour madame...”, we had to overcome the hurdle of being a sect, explaining we were neither Swedish nor Canadian, and that we were not trying to sell them soap powder. On a good day we'd have five completed questionnaires, but usually answered by people too polite to say no or by others who had no apparent interest in what the Protestant church believes.

The only people really willing to spend time talking were Jehovah's Witnesses - and an in-depth sermon on Revelation is not very easy to follow in any language but we compromised and usually ended up exchanging tracts with each other.

Of course we found it difficult. Of course we became discouraged. Of course there were days when “one more door” almost broke us. But the hardest aspect of the work was the loneliness of it all.

We were dropped off in the morning and picked up in the evening. Of course we felt useless at times but we have to believe we were where God wanted us and doing what God wanted us to do.

What our prayer letters didn't speak about was the utter sense of disappointment - well, missionaries

aren't supposed to consider going home are they? For a while, we felt pretty cheated too - this was our “year-out” and we couldn't ever relive it. This was the year we had been waiting for, talking about and feeling for so long - a chance to put our faith on the frontline, to fight new battles, to meet new challenges and to come out the other side stronger, more steadfast Christians. This was the year we'd saved and slaved in Tesco's for.

This was our big adventure and none of it quite seemed to be going to plan.

With our “foreign eyes” we saw a lot in the churches that touched and saddened us, yet felt so unable to change.

So how do four young Action Team members cope when the going gets tough and you suddenly find yourself with nothing left to give, no strength to carry on, and with another three months to stick it out? (It wasn't something we were told about on the application form nor something we were taught about during training). Perhaps nothing could have prepared us for the emotional turmoil that awaited us, and anyway, if we'd been foretold, I'm sure our feet would have stayed firmly put on this side of the Channel.

We knew that we weren't just “four inexperienced, young missionaries” but that we were and are a team, and that team wasn't sent out by God by accident. It was the definite calling of God in each of our lives which we came to cling on to so passionately; at

Interlude:
Gill and Shona with the youth music group at Grace-Hollogne





Waves

A personal and independent look at development by **Edward P Echlin**

times it was the only life-line, the catalyst to our determination not to give in and go home.

“Hard pressed on every side but not crushed; perplexed but not in despair; persecuted but not abandoned; struck down but not destroyed”. (2 Corinthians 4:8-9: That, and the faith to believe God was using us to sow seeds whilst changing each of us for the better inside.

Now, sharing our experiences with churches in Britain, we’ve had to learn we can only be honest and although God did not have the radical experiences of Jamaica, Albania, or Zimbabwe in store for us. We went to Belgium in His will and we can’t hide the ugly facts now because they were part of His will for us too. We had a hard time but God remained faithful and had higher plans for us.

We know the story doesn’t come to an end simply because our year out is drawing to a close. He has given each of us a heart for the spiritual poverty in Belgium. Please pray with us. We put our faith on the front-line, we fought the battles and met the challenges and God is leading each of us on to greater things. ●

“**M**arket forces” men, addicted to global consumerism, call infinite exploitation of a finite island sustainable development. The slogan “sustainable development” says Teeside University’s Dick Richardson, is a fudge. When I read the Bible I notice the superior wisdom of the Hebrew. They knew that soil is a community, that it is frail and precious, and that it is finite. They knew - as the motor lobby and employees of the Department of Transport do not or will not admit - that you cannot infinitely exploit what is frail, finite and precious.

Especially did they know how precious and finite is water. They had lots of sun. But little water. They dug cisterns and wells to get their fields through the dry summer.

The Hebrews - and first Christians - knew that God created order in our frail planet. Weather, elements, plants and animals “by nature” respect that order.

Humans are different; we are free to abuse God’s order by living unsustainably. We can exploit the soil beyond its carrying capacity... to our peril and that of the whole soil community. The Bible reads as if it were written for today when developers and intensive farmers behave as if finite land were infinite. Their deforestation, road, cars and chemicals, their abuse of fossil fuel, is even changing the climate. Indeed the Bible is for us today. Market men should listen to Jeremiah who said almost 3000 years ago:

They do not say in their hearts, ‘Let us fear the Lord our God, who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.’ Your iniquities have turned these away, and your sins have kept good from you. (Jer 5:24-25)

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BREAK

BMS Project 95

Chains

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Albania

We were in chains...

*Now we are free
We are free to love
and serve the Lord
Jesus who died for
us and is our Saviour*



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