

MISSIONARY **HERALD**  
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October 1995

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**Refugees**

Hope for a new life

**Sanctuary**

At Downs Baptist Church

**Landmines**

Counting the cost



The Missionary Herald is the magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society

BMS  
Christmas  
catalogue



**4** In sanctuary: Making an impact on Third World situations without leaving the church building — a report from urban north London



**10** Landmines: Legacy of war — the victims of a ceasefire

**14** Refugees: The plight of those on a flight of terror from injustice and atrocities — four special reports from around the world



**20** Fairtrade: The right price for a fair deal

# C o n t e n t s

<b>3</b> Editorial <i>David Pountain</i>	<b>10</b> The war's over? <i>Suzanne Roberts</i>	<b>20</b> Fairtrade <i>Richard Wells</i>	<b>22</b> Abiding presence <i>John Wilson</i>
<b>4</b> In sanctuary <i>Sandra Carter</i>	<b>12</b> Refugees: Flight of Terror; The atrocities Who is my neighbour Seeking asylum <i>Jacqui Wells</i> <i>Jan Kendall</i> <i>Wilma Aitchison</i>		<b>24</b> News
<b>9</b> Campaigning <i>for justice and peace</i>			<b>27</b> Call to prayer
			<b>28</b> Take Two
			<b>30</b> Editor's call

# editorial

## **m/h. Missionary Herald**

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**COVER PHOTO**  
Serb refugees from  
Croatia  
(Associated Press)

No one can be involved in world mission for very long without becoming aware of that great human family, crossing all barriers of language, culture and race, to which we all belong. Indeed the missionary vision looks towards that day when there shall be a "vast throng which no one can count, from all races and tribes, from all nations and tongues standing before the throne and before the Lamb".

However, visions of what shall be should not blind us to the here and now. We belong to the world-wide human family and we depend upon each other. It is very easy to become parochial, particularly in our churches, concerned as we are in maintaining buildings and reaching out to local neighbourhoods. It's all very strange because so much that is used by the modern church - electronic organs and keyboards, overhead projectors, photocopiers, as well as communion wine - comes from another country. Many of the clothes we don to come to worship, the cars we place in the church car park, the coffee and tea we drink after the service, remind us of the contribution to our lives of the wider world beyond our national boundaries.

Several of the articles of this month are about justice and peace. They remind us that none of us lives in isolation. The way we live affects others. Our choices as consumers, tourists and voters hold repercussions for others. So may we all be challenged to be more consciously concerned for our fellow citizens of the world. May we be more mindful in prayer of sisters and brothers in Christ and open to receive new insights and understanding from them. May we use our consumer-power to benefit producers and may we use our democratic freedom to call for government and financial policies which will promote justice, peace and well-being for all. ●

God's people need not travel far to have an impact on Third World situations. Sandra Carter discovers that World Mission starts on your doorstep.

# in sane



The drive from leafy Buckinghamshire to Clapton takes you through several worlds. Farmland and trim suburbia give way to the spend-easy allure of Brent Cross and the remnants of British industry round the North Circular Road. Drop down the A10 into east London and you enter a multiplicity of cultures.

Halal butchers, pavement displays of exotic vegetables, kosher stores, big flat circles of Turkish bread - it's a cultural United Nations. A drug store sports the intriguing notice: We stock human hair. Other towns and cities may have lost their heart to out-of-town shopping centres. Here the small shopkeeper reigns supreme.

This is the inner-city community to which Hackney Downs Baptist Church ministers. It's been preaching Christ since 1869, when it arose as a pompous Victorian sanctuary in the optimistic style of its age, complete with stained glass window, now rickety balcony, cavernous basements and dark corridors. This is the kind of community where you may be greeted, as I was, by a graffiti slogan on the church door: "Jesus eats dog shit."

On one side is a row of once elegant tenement town houses. A couple of 22-storey blocks of flats tower nearby. A sparse park lies opposite the church. "How many Baptist churches enjoy a park across the road, just right for church picnics and games of rounders?" grins its pastor, Steve Latham (38).

When the congregation file out on Sunday the chairs are stacked at the back of the church to create an indoor playground for three children. Two double beds are squeezed into the church office, and the pastor's study is filled with a family's few comforts: books, photos, a couple of easy chairs, a TV. Alongside the china and big kettles in the church kitchen are the family's pots and pans.

For this church is the home of the Ogunwobi family. Sunday Ogunwobi (43) - usually called Sunny - has rarely left its confines over the past year and a half. The church is their sanctuary.

The family is fighting a deportation order to return them to Nigeria. But when Sunny and Olubunmi (Bunmi) came to Britain to study neither had any thought of staying. Sunny arrived in 1981 and qualified



PICTURE: ANDY SMITH

# tuary

in water supply and public health with a masters in environmental resources. He was given an extension to allow Bunmi, whom he'd met here and married, to complete her business management course.

Her studies were interrupted by the premature birth at 25 weeks of their daughter Debra. She needed a lot of medical attention, as did Tunde, born the following year. A letter of deportation was issued for June 1993, but the family were allowed to stay until after the birth of their third child Phoebe. A deportation date was then set for March 16, 1994. The family went into sanctuary on March 15, 1994.

It could be said that their own country needs qualified people like Sunny and Bunmi. Steve Latham points out: "Their country needs them - but at this time there are no jobs there for them. The Nigerian economy is in such a shambles and the political system so unstable. Human rights abuses abound. If they returned they would have no job, no home, no means of support. The children would not be able to get the health care and education they need."

Hackney Downs Baptist Church

gave refuge to this family on compassionate grounds, because of the health of the children, and because they have so much to contribute to the church. Sunny, a gently-spoken man, firm in his faith, was an elder at Stamford Hill Baptist Church (which had no suitable building for sanctuary). He is a governor and PTA chairman at Craven Park School. Bunmi is an energetic, bustling woman who shares her faith with enthusiasm.

Ask about their practical situation and they give a calm factual response. Ask about what God is doing and they come alive. They are eager to share how God supports and encourages them, the goodness of his people, his sovereignty over their affairs.

Steve says: "They have given an enormous amount to our church spiritually. They give far more than they receive. People have come to Christ through them, and the faith of many has been strengthened by their testimony. They're a blessing to us."

Should a church challenge the law by offering sanctuary? Steve points out: "We are not hiding or harbouring them. The family has always kept the Home Office fully informed about where they are. In theory, the police

could walk in and pick them up at any time if they chose to. It's not protection, it's a statement, a prophetic sign. One family highlighting the wider plight of so many families.

"The Immigration Minister has discretionary powers and can overturn a deportation order on compassionate grounds, bearing in mind the health of the children. That's what we think should happen. It's all so arbitrary."

There are worse problems in the world than a family like the Ogunwobis facing deportation. Shouldn't churches reserve their energy for people with more pressing needs - political refugees perhaps?

This congregation believes that now is the time to take a stand: "If we don't defy the government now, will we be able to do it later if the situation worsens? If we compromise now, will we have the confidence to stand up in the future on bigger issues?"

"Think of the holocaust. It wasn't that Christians agreed with what was happening, but they didn't care enough."

**Above:**  
The Ogunwobi family with pastor Steve Latham  
**Left:**  
Help for mum preparing the lunch

Continues on page 6



Meanwhile the Ogunwobis continue to live under siege in the back rooms behind the church. Sunny rarely leaves the building, except for an occasional meeting of school governors when he is picked up by car. The two older children are taken to school by a church member, while another does the shopping. Bunmi occasionally takes little Pheobe out for some fresh air.

The family have been encouraged by visits from MPs, a visit in June from the Rev Jesse Jackson, a letter from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, messages from well-wishers around the country, and backing from bodies like the Churches

Commission for Racial Justice and the Church of England Race and Community Relations Committee.

If anyone thought letting the months drift by would break their spirit, they'd be wrong. Eighteen months after going into sanctuary Sunny says: "We've grown stronger over this time. I've seen the different faces of God in this situation. It's teaching us as Christians to be patient - then God can reveal a lot of things. We carry flesh so occasionally we feel discouraged. But we hang on to this, that God has the final say in every situation."

Bunmi adds: "The Lord gives us Scripture to strengthen and encourage us. The strength we tap is not from humans but from God." ●

**Sandra Carter** is a freelance Christian Journalist living in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.



# insane

# At the front line

Third World issues are a daily challenge to some British Churches says **Sandra Carter**

**D**eep issues of justice and oppression are the stuff of everyday life in Clapton. On Sunday mornings at Hackney Downs Baptist Church two-thirds of the congregation is of African or Caribbean origin. At the evening service, which is translated into Turkish, half are Turks and Kurds, many of them refugees. Some church members bear the scars of torture. A Baptist Church of 100 Zairean refugees meets in the

building on Sunday afternoon.

For pastors like Steve Latham there is a dilemma. Do they concentrate on the deep social needs around them, or preach the Gospel? He believes it's not necessary to repeat the mistakes of the past, when churches tended to opt for one or the other: "We need both. I long ago made a decision that my role is to be the pastor of this church, but I am concerned to mobilise the members of the church to do the ministry.

"So we have individual members involved in ethnic organisations, in a disability group, in counselling groups, a Christian bookshop, immigration issues, racial justice organisations, some of them Christian and some secular."

Instead of housegroups the church has task-oriented groups, such as outreach to Turks, social action, help for people with learning difficulties. It also sponsors an unemployment project with other local churches.

You're at the front line here, I

commented. These issues can seem a world away for people living in rural areas.

Wrong, Steve challenged. "Issues of justice are controlled from where you live. It's people there who have the power to change it. The decisions that create the living conditions of Hackney are made in leafy suburbs.

"People in suburbia can and should do something about the issues of injustice. They have MPs who make decisions. They have directors of companies who can help the inner city. They can work for change. They could consider church twinning, or moving here to live alongside our people.

"People think of the inner city as a satanic stronghold. To me suburbia is the satanic stronghold. That's where these situations are created. The local church needs to be more active on justice issues and have some guts."

Third world issues are all around in the inner city and it's not a problem, it's an opportunity, Steve insists.

"Don't think of the inner city as all doom and gloom. Socially and economically it may be poor, but spiritually it's thriving. Here churches are growing through the influx of Christians from other countries. They are revitalising the area and bringing new life. They evangelise, they're keen excited Christians. This church would have closed down if it weren't for them." ●

PICTURES: ANDY SMITH



# tuary

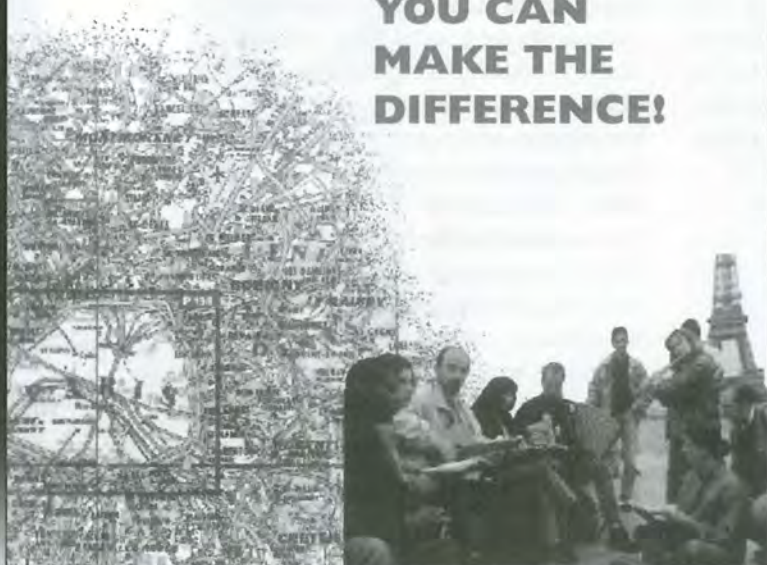
**Steve Latham  
and Hackney  
Downs Baptist  
Church, London:  
Issues that  
challenge**



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# Campaigning for justice and peace

“The Society accepts that a right relationship between people and nations is at the heart of God’s love for the world and is an integral part of His mission as declared and embodied by Jesus, therefore Justice and Peace issues are fundamental concerns to us. We accept wholeheartedly the role of promoting awareness, prayer and action in creating and maintaining this relationship within our existing witness”.

With this resolution in June 1994, the BMS General Committee kicked into action a support system to provide financial and staff resources on issues relating to justice and peace. This

fresh in their minds, General Committee members decided four months later to give weight of authority to what had formerly existed as their justice and peace working group. Following discussion at BMS Board of Management level, the Justice and Peace Advisory Group was born. The advisory group, comprising five members, including BMS Operations Director David Martin and a representative from Baptist Union (GB) social action committee, exists to investigate issues referred to it by the General Committee and Board of Management.

It briefs the board with a view to placing a resolution before the General

Committee. It also promotes and encourages action by General Committee members, churches, associations and individuals and monitors justice and peace issues throughout the world to encourage action when necessary. The group also acts as a clearing house and resources centre liaising with charitable bodies concerned with similar issues.

Its chairman, Peter Briggs, says: “We confine ourselves broadly to issues which affect our partnership churches. So far two resolutions have been passed; the first is linked to Jamaica and asks international financial institutions to consider the social implications of its financial activities, and the second is linked to Angola and concerns the abolition of anti-personnel mines.”

The group’s action mailing list contains names of those willing to follow up resolutions on their own behalf or in conjunction with a church, district or associa-

tion. They receive a copy of the resolutions, a list of people to whom the resolution has been sent and the briefing document which has been prepared for the BMS Board of Management. They then write support letters to resolution recipients.

In liaison with the BMS publicity team, the Justice and Peace Advisory Group co-operates to produce material for the society’s regular publications and encourages people to participate in the Action Card scheme publicised regularly in the *Missionary Herald* and the *Baptist Times*.

Baptists are encouraged to share their concerns with the society through advisory group chairman Peter Briggs who is pleased to include committed volunteers on the mailing list. ●

## Peter Briggs

can be contacted at 109 Croftdown Road, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 8RE. (Telephone: 0121 427 8029)

## World Mission Link

Is your church or group getting involved in world mission during the next months? Here’s how we can help.

### MISSION EDUCATION

If you’re planning a World Mission Sunday or midweek event, telephone Christine Neilson (01235) 512077 for the BMS resource catalogue which is packed with information about available material, including Power Pack with ideas for different kinds of meetings. If you are not on the mailing list for Power Pack we’ll be happy to add your name.

Ask your local BMS Area Co-ordinator for help and advice in planning an event. We’ll

be delighted to put you in touch but please give them plenty of notice. Mission Education can also help with speakers and ideas for other groups.

### BMS TEAM EVENTS

Now is the time to contact your local BMS Area Co-ordinator for events in 1996. Are you planning a Family Day, an Association Assembly, a weekend conference or activity? A BMS Team would be delighted to be involved. Contact your Co-ordinator now so you are not disappointed.

● The BMS Team event on November 4/5 is at Viewfield Baptist Church, Dunfermline, and not Inverkeithing, as published.

### LINK GROUPS

Is your church in a World Mission Link group? Now is a good time to look at how your Link is developing. How active is your church? Do you pray regularly for your Link missionary? Does your Link group contact secretary need support? How about a Link group get-together?

Look through your Link missionary’s letters. Update yourself about their work, the needs of the community they work with, the difficulties faced by the countries in which they work. Their letters and pictures could make an informative display.

● If you need help — (01235) 512077

# The war's over-

Even after the ceasefire and the peace treaty, war still generates new victims. Suzanne Roberts explains

Of course, many did not reach us. The vicious slicing, blasting, savagery of land mines often leaves little time to look for help, and for most victims, the long miles of mud or deeply - and painfully - rutted paths over hills and through rivers and bush become a death warrant. Even if they do reach medical help, there is no restoration for blind eyes, severed limbs, nor a devastated face.

Some are adults, clearing new land for crops to restart their lives after years in a refugee camp, or driving food, seeds, or tools to these returnees after torrential rains have taken off layers of soil; some are children, enjoying the fun of exploring their new hoe or racing around with their friends, unaware of the tripwire in the bush or the vibration-sensitive trigger under the trees. My object is preventive health, but how can you prevent

damage and death from the invisible? Health workers sport colourful "mine awareness" T-shirts, and posters adorn every wall; school-children are taught to recognise objects that could be mines but none of these was of any help to a lady going out to work in her small farm plot on the edge of town.

All looked well; she began to dig, swinging her angled spade firmly



PICTURE: CHRISTIAN AIDINIC DUNLOP

# isn't it?



PICTURE: CHRISTIAN AID/INIC DUNLOP

downwards with both hands. The mine was too deep to see, but not too deep for her spade; the blast hit mainly her hands and her bending face and chest. Fortunately we were able to transfer her to a better-equipped hospital across the border, and several weeks later she returned to her family - alive, but blind in one eye and without one thumb and five fingers.

How much could you or I achieve with two digits on each hand? And in Mozambique most of the work in the house and smallholding is done by the women. Mozambique once had a health service used as a model for other developing countries, with priority given to delivering care to the scattered rural population. Now, after a 17 year war, which left health centres and facilities gutted and in many cases with neither staff nor supplies, trying to restore even basic services is difficult.

Mine injuries range from superficial to fatal, but many who survive need prolonged hospital care, major surgery, and expensive medicines, which inevitably drain funds from other services, like the programmes for TB, leprosy, malaria and pneumonia that cause so much distress and death, especially malaria in children. In these conditions, the difficult and expensive reconstruction of limbs comes a long way down the list.

These problems will be magnified in Angola, where the war lasted longer, and where the number of mines is far greater than in Mozambique. In both countries, outside funding may not be long term,

whereas the problem of mine injuries will be. A man was killed last year by a mine thought to have been laid in Mozambique's independence war 25 years ago. They will be a cause of grief, worry, pain, and a drain on very limited resources for many years to come.

There are thought to be two million landmines in Mozambique, and about nine million in Angola. Many of these will be cleared, others will be set off by animals - though in a country only slowly rebuilding its herds, that causes problems of its own - but that still leaves probably several hundred thousand overall that may be set off by people, for each of whom the problem may be lifelong.

Mines can be cleared, with infinite patience and care, but both sides laid them, mostly without maps, across huge tracts of land, and so often only an explosion indicates where they might be. Accurate figures are difficult to find, but a reasonable estimate appears to be that each mine costs three US dollars to make, three to lay, and a thousand to clear. Can we equally easily quantify the cost to a family whose only income comes from a son working in a clearance team who gets careless or unlucky?

Many mines now have no metal in them, and are very difficult to detect; one such blew up while being cleared by a charitable team headed by an expatriate ex-army officer. He lost his right hand and foot. Apart from the immediate devastation, physically and psychologically, to him, what are his eventual employment prospects and

**Above:**  
**Circle of terror — the plastic landmine**  
**Left:**  
**Victim of the peace — wounded by a landmine**

the effects on his family? Even worse is the grief and loss of the family of his national colleague who was killed in the explosion.

Does all this seem distant? It is not distant from God. He loves each of us as individuals and "all the sorrow, all the aching, wrings with pain the heart of God". As His people, we must do all we can to outlaw these vicious weapons, to protect the lives and futures of young and old alike; and to help in the process of healing and restoration. ●

**Suzanne Roberts** is a BMS missionary who spent two years in a front line Mozambique hospital

## PRAYER POINTS

- Praise God for nearly three years without war in Mozambique, for peaceful elections last year, and for new opportunities for spreading the Good News of Jesus.
- Pray for all those injured by mines, in their pain and distress, and pray that help will be made available from international donors to provide new limbs and other help.
- Pray for all involved in clearing mines, that they may be kept safe.
- Pray for a worldwide ban on the production and use of mines.
- Pray for a prolonged peace in Angola that clearing can begin and pray for the safety of refugees returning to possibly mined land.

Your home is burned, your family beaten, your possessions stolen... your life is in danger. **Jacqui Wells** meets refugees who have fled atrocities in the Karen region of Burma to the safety of Thailand

# Flight of terror

**K**aren people have been crossing the border to take refuge in Thailand for many years. But during the past few months the number of Karen refugees in Thailand has increased dramatically, forced there by fierce fighting along the border. The SLORC (State Law & Order Restoration Council) forces have engaged the help of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) and they are working together to crush the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). Many innocent Karens, caught up in the fighting or badly persecuted in their villages, have had no other option but to flee from suffering and death to a place of refuge in Thailand.

By June this year there were 91,191 Karen refugees living in camps which are dotted along the Thai/Burmese border from Mae Hong Son district in the north of Thailand to Prachaoap Kiri Khan district in the south.

Life is not exactly a bed of roses for refugees in the Mae Sot district of Thailand, where the Mawker (K17) and Mae La (K14) camps provide a safe haven thanks to the Burmese Border Consortium, an NGO supported by gifts from Christians all over the world. The consortium uses the money to take care of refugees in camps along the Thailand/Burma border.

The two camps have been established for six years and each family is able to build and live in their own bamboo house with a thatched roof. Around their houses many Karens have planted vegetable gardens. In the Mawker camp there's a school for 700 children with classes from kindergarten right through to sixth form of High School has been built by the refugees and teachers work hard with the children even though there is no monthly salary for them.

In both camps a bamboo hospital treats hundreds of patients every week. The organisation Medicine

Sans Frontiers (MSF) works in the camps and many paramedics have been trained from among the Karen. The hospitals are simple and what they lack in high tech gadgets they make up for with love and care.

At Mae La more than 19,000 refugees were expected to be joined by another 10,000, because the Thai government policy has been to move refugees to the safety of a large central camp where adequate protection can be given. The camp, stretching 4km along a beautiful mountain road at the base of a huge cliff, provides safety and shelter for thousands of houses filling the valley.

These refugees have been moving from their old camp with their few belongings to start a new life at Mae La in torrential monsoon rains. Once there, the bedraggled refugees are given posts to build the frames of their house and then thatch the roof, at a cost of millions of Thai Baht to the Burmese Border Consortium.

From there refugees must search the jungle to find their own bamboo for the walls and floor, but some have had enough. Unable to cope with the upheaval of another move, they return to Burma. Others find refuge by hiding in villages in Thailand. They are at great risk because if and when the Thai authorities find them, they will be sent back to Burma immediately.

As well as basic housing material, newcomers to the camp receive cooking pots, mosquito nets, plastic sheeting, second hand clothing, blankets and milk powder for babies. Once a month the border consortium distributes rice, fish paste and salt to every Karen family in the camp.

To one Karen woman cradling her two month old baby this might have



**Left and below:**  
**After the burning...**  
**Right:**  
**Refuge in the forest**

PICTURES: VICTOR NEUMANN



seemed like a bonus. She and her family had run away from the suffering in Burma and, crossing the Moci river, had taken refuge in the security of Mae La. She pointed to the spot on the ground where her son had been born then, smiling, she said: "It's good to feel safe." ●

**Jacqui Wells**, a BMS missionary, works in Chiang Mai among the Thai Hill Tribe people.

● **Atrocities: Pages 12-13**

# refugees

SLORC soldiers and the OKBA are marauding their way through these areas near the border. They loot and burn villages, threaten villagers, capture porters and sometimes torture people. Village food supplies, already low due to last year's floods, have been destroyed and villagers in the border area are fleeing into the forests. Many are trying to get into Thailand and hundreds have already crossed the border since May but they say it is getting increasingly difficult to reach the border past the SLORC patrols. Here are some of their stories.

# Atrocities

Why are there so many refugees in Thailand? What are the Kareeni, Karen and Mon running from? Why leave the land of your birth and all that you own to live as a refugee?



PICTURES: VICTOR NEUMANN

**Above:**

A group of escaped "porters" swap tales of atrocities at the hands of SLORC soldiers

**Right:**

The remains of the family home after burning by soldiers





**Life at the camp: A refugee drags to his shelter a sack of rice distributed by the Burmese Border Consortium**



### **Move out... Or else**

The DKBA troops entered Bwa Der village on the Burmese side towards the junction of the Sulween and Moci rivers and ordered the Karens to move to a SLORC controlled area. The villagers refused so the OKBA troops burned down the church, all five houses and all the rice barns in the centre of the village and then said if they did not move by June 8 they would be taken by force. They captured and severely beat Wee Saw Aye, Saw Nu, Ser Nay Ntoe, Thaw Htoo, Kya Hay and Pa La Kyay – all Karen men. They burned a plastic bag and dripped the molten plastic on to Thaw Htoo's chest. All villagers have now fled to the forest or to Thailand.

### **Stolen or destroyed**

"When they entered our village they took so many things – machetes, spades, hoes and knives – but clothing and baskets they destroyed. You don't even need to ask about our livestock – they regarded it as their own. They took everything. They didn't even leave a needle for us."

### **No escape**

A young Karen woman said: "I have a small brother. I can't escape by myself, because my brother can't run. Even if I escape, I have no food in the jungle and no water-proof from the rain. Now the SLORC troops come and destroyed everything. I have nothing left. I don't know what I am going to do. I have no choice but to go and stay with relatives in Klaw Ifta and obey the SLORC. Whatever they ask, I will have to do."

### **Guide at gunpoint**

A young man who was taken as a guide and human mine sweeper on May 13, said: "I was eating sticky rice in my house. I got up to chase the children out of the house. Just then I heard a strange sound so I turned to look, and I saw a SLORC soldier. He said 'Don't run!' and told me to sit down. Another one came and grabbed me by the collar and

another tied my hands behind my back and ordered me 'Go' and then I had to go in front of the column. I realised they wanted me to act as their guide and to be a human minesweeper. Soldiers talked to me in Burmese but I didn't understand, so one pointed his gun at me and said 'Boom'. I guess it meant if I ran they'd shoot me!

They told me to take them to Thak Ko Der village and when we arrived they started shooting at people because they were running away. They ordered me to lift my hands behind my back and then they tied me very tightly to a house. I was in a lot of pain because of the way they tied me. They asked me so many questions and while they were asking they slapped me in the face, grabbed my hair and shook my head. They didn't get any answers because I do not speak or understand Burmese. They left me tied like that all night and didn't release me until the next day. This went on for days. I saw them burning down villages. I thought I would never be set free."

### **Fear of rape**

A woman, who was forced to work as a porter, lived in fear of being raped. "I was captured by the SLORC in my village. They accused me of being a Karen soldier's wife (she is not). They tied me, grabbed my collar and made me carry a soldier's pack.

Along the way we saw soldiers setting the villagers' barns on fire. First they took some rice and made us carry it, then burned what was left. When we arrived at Thay Ko Der village, they pushed me into one house and tied us standing to a bamboo post. One of my friends started crying loudly, so they let us sit down and tied us very tightly to the post again! They tied our body, our legs, our chests, to the post. During the second night the SLORC soldier guarded us because they thought we would run away. One soldier tried to unbutton my shirt so I made a movement and he stopped. A moment later, he tried to pull up my sarong. I pushed his hand away. He tried to grab my leg but I pushed him away. Every night the soldiers came to try to rape the women.

● **Who is my neighbour: Page 16**

# Who is my neighbour?

## This is Croatia today

It is a time of war, though there is a kind of peace in the area you used to live in. You decide to return. To return home.

You knew deep down it would be like this, but hoped against hope that some vestige had remained. It is strangely quiet. Scarcely anyone can be seen. Just others like yourself, returning home. And this is your home. Just about a building, with walls, but no windows, no roof, no furniture, nothing to cook on, not even a spoon. Just totally gutted. No electricity, no water supply, no gas. This is now your home.

Outside the gardens are in weeds, the fields untilled. The sheep, goats, cows, pigs and hens that used to wander around are gone. There is now no grain, no milk, no meat, no eggs. This is now your livelihood. On a wider scale a high percentage of industry and means of transport have been destroyed as well.

Just six days before this article was written, Branko Lovrec, the President of the Croatian Baptist Union visited Krajina, the territory which the Croatian army won back from Serbian control in early August, *writes Jan Kendall*.

Whilst there he went to the town of Petrinja, reporting that there was destruction everywhere, with buildings declared out of bounds by the police until mines can be removed by special military units. The former pastor of Petrinja, David Ogrizovic and his family returned to their home, but it had been stripped.

The church also had been demolished. Branko said: "The graffiti on the inside walls must be removed, and there is a lot of debris inside which has to be removed. All windows are broken, but we could not enter because the police had not inspected the building."

Other Baptist families are returning to Petrinja. Like everyone else, they have absolutely nothing with which to begin living again. In the last couple of weeks the pastor of the church at Karlovac has been able to visit a family from the Plashki Baptist church he had not seen for four and a half years.

Where did these people go? How have they been living? Hundreds of thousands of refugees in the former Yugoslavia have filled halls, sports centres, schools, hotels, homes for the aged, railway stations and even railway carriages. Others have been put into 'tent cities' and these are the

hardest hit when the bitterly cold winters arrive. Some Bosnian refugees have been taken in by Croatian families. A displaced Croatian living with friends or family is entitled to an allowance of 3000 dinars per month which just about pays for a loaf of bread and a small bottle of milk a day, (but these are only available in the larger cities.) This grant is not paid to families taking in Bosnian or non-Croatian refugees.

Many Baptists in Croatia believe there was a need for such hardships, to wake up their people who had gone to sleep in a sense of false security. Just a few months after the war began in December 1991, with refugees at their doors, the churches had to act.

A Croatian Baptist said: "Who can tell that a church could wake up so fast?" All sorts of relief programmes began from nowhere. Women started serving tea and biscuits to people waiting in lines for food. Women's groups started organising meetings where refugee women found friends and 'family'.

Several Christian humanitarian and relief organisations have been set up, among them Moz Bliznji (MB - My Neighbour) and Duhovna Starnost. MB is headed up by Josip Mikulic, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Croatia, and has its headquarters in Zagreb.

There are twelve other branch offices of MB throughout Croatia all based in Baptist churches, and MB personnel based in Baptist churches, are helping others in around 40 towns





## Cover Story

and villages in Croatia.

Duhovna Starvost (literally “Spiritual Reality”) describes itself as a Christian Resource Centre. It was begun by the same Branko Lovrec mentioned above in the 1960s as a small group of Baptists involved in evangelism and Christian publishing. When the war came they knew they had to do something to help the victims and so they are working side by side with refugees and displaced persons (often Muslims) from Croatia and Bosnia.

BMS has supported its Christian brothers and sisters on both sides of the divide.

So how do you begin again? How do you start from scratch under these circumstances? MB has begun a scheme to enable families to do just that. Appealing for animals such as goats, sheep, pigs, horses, poultry, agricultural seeds, basic foods, furniture, linen, stoves, fridges, sewing machines and tools they are enabling people to get a foothold on living again. They are helping with the reconstruction of not only homes, but also schools and medical centres helping to provide medical equipment and instruments.

And not only these, but churches too. The evangelical population of the former Yugoslavia is very small, probably less than one percent of the total population. Yet the church is growing. People are waiting to be baptised. The war has mobilised the Christians to evangelise boldly and in the midst of the chaos and destruction

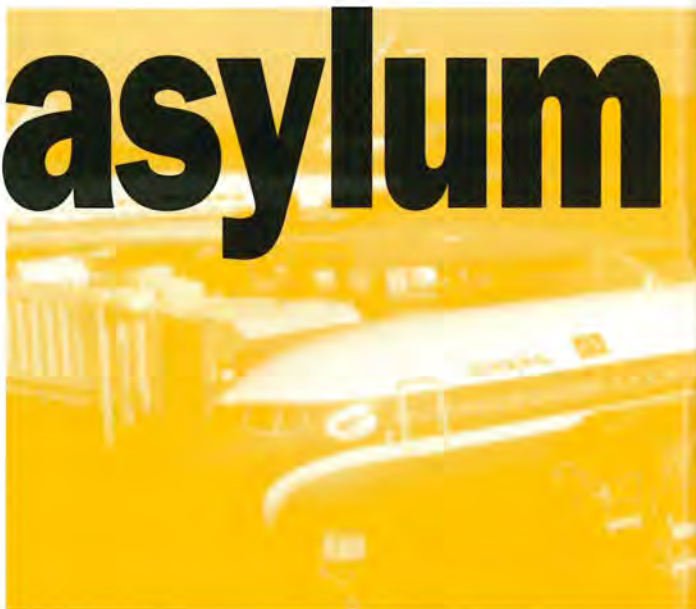
Christians in Croatia have not only a vision for humanitarian work but also to build new churches. ●

**Jan Kendall** is the BMS Publicity Department Production Supervisor

● **Seeking Asylum: Pages 18**

# Seeking asylum

Since moving to London in 1991 **Wilma Aitchison** has worked as a translator for Zairian refugees. Many of the refugees are asylum seekers



**Many refugees have had to flee and did not have opportunity to prepare any baggage. Often Zairian Christians have asked me for Bibles and other Christian literature in their own language. I have been able to buy stocks of Bibles in Lingala, French and Swahili and some Christian literature in other languages.**

**S**ince moving to London in January 1991, I have met many Zairians. Many “refugee churches” have been formed as refugees from Central Africa meet together for worship.

Although they come from different countries and church backgrounds they are united by language (usually Lingala and French) and have a common goal, ie to put behind them their sufferings and build a new life for themselves here. Some of these churches are now members of the London Baptist Association, having had links with the BMS in Zaire.

Many refugees have had to flee and did not have opportunity to prepare any baggage. Often Zairian Christians have asked me for Bibles and other Christian literature in their own language. I have been able to buy stocks of Bibles in Lingala, French and Swahili.

From time to time, I am asked by the Home Office or Immigration Services to

attend interviews and interpret for Zairians when they arrive in this country, and claim asylum. Usually, the individual or another member of the family have been involved in political activities and government soldiers have raided their home. Often the women are raped, the men beaten, the family forced to flee.

Their travel to different countries is usually arranged by a friend or member of the family. Forged passports are bought, falsified documents borrowed, and airline tickets sought. Sometimes, a boarding pass is all that is needed, especially if the family have a “contact” in the immigration department in Zaire.

I recently helped interview a man who had travelled here on a cargo plane from Nigeria as he didn’t have money to buy a ticket. He had been imprisoned in Zaire for opposing the government. On arrival here, he had a stomach problem which he says was due to eating banana skins. He and other prisoners had received

no proper food during their one month imprisonment in Kinshasa.

Few asylum seekers come here directly. They often pass through many countries in order to reach Britain. Some manage to do the trip in a few days, others take months. Last week, I helped interview a 16 year old who had fled from Kinshasa after her parents were killed. She had been helped by a friend to reach Nigeria, but was stranded there for six months. She eventually arrived in France and waited there for a month, hoping that her brother would be able to arrange travel to Britain.

Three years ago, a young Zairian lady arrived with two children, having been separated from her husband after their home was looted. Eighteen months later, she learned that her husband had tried to get to Luanda to get a flight to Europe, but had been killed by a landmine whilst trying to by-pass a roadblock in Angola. She is still here in London, await-



PICTURES: BMS LIBRARY



ing the outcome of her claim for asylum. Currently, 96 per cent of Zairians are refused refugee status, so she continues to fear deportation.

Not all asylum seekers are honest and I have been asked to interpret for the police as they follow up DSS fraud. Groups of Zairians have been involved in this type of fraud. Some say it is done to finance illegal immigrants, to send to Zaire to help the opposition parties, or just for personal gain. Those who engage in this cause much damage to the refugee community credibility.

Sometimes, asylum seekers are detained as they are unable to produce a valid internationally acceptable identify card or passport. I have attended interviews in prisons in Rochester, Portsmouth and Pentonville and occasionally I have seen Christians from London churches acting as surety so that an asylum seeker can be released from detention while awaiting the outcome of his asylum appeal. This has helped the families of the

detained person. Asylum seekers can be detained for over a year, but more commonly for three to six months. Unfortunately, asylum seekers are often detained in the same cells as criminals.

Sometimes, asylum seekers arrive here in desperate need of counselling, support and friendship. Recently a local pastor asked me to help a lady whose five month old baby was killed by government soldiers because she was unable to tell them the whereabouts of her husband. Her husband had already fled the country and her family had also fled. A friend arranged her flight to Britain.

It's difficult to imagine how she felt when she arrived here alone, unable to speak English and with no one who knew what she had just experienced. She was interviewed at the airport by an immigration officer who recorded the details of her asylum claim, including details of how her baby was killed. The officer's task is immigration control, not the

provision of counselling for such people. The first help she was offered was when she attended a local church some months later.

The Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture is one organisation which helps refugees to recover from traumatic experiences like rape, torture and beatings. Many asylum seekers from Zaire are Christians - one 16 year old arrived on her own with a CBFZ membership card as her only means of identification! I believe that as Christians we have a responsibility to help those who are seeking refuge.

The Bible has much to say about how the "sojourner" and "stranger" should be treated. We also need to welcome Christian asylum seekers as they are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Many of them have come to know the Lord through churches which have been established as a result of BMS work in Zaire for over a century. ●

**Wilma Aitchison** is a former BMS missionary in Zaire

**I believe that as Christians we have a responsibility to help those who are seeking refuge. The Bible has much to say about how the "sojourner" and "stranger" should be treated. We also need to welcome Christian asylum seekers as they are our brothers and sisters in Christ.**

# Fairtrade

A fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Richard Wells examines a trading system which rewarded everyone, except the hard-working producer... until the Fairtrade Foundation was born



PICTURE: RICHARD WELLS

**Y**ou're in the supermarket. Your brain and mouth co-ordination is being stretched to its limit in combat with the continuous tirade from juveniles whose shopping list is nothing more than a regurgitation of last night's TV commercials.

Both your hands are engaged in a courageous attempt to win the struggle to manoeuvre an overloaded shopping trolley on something like a straight course.

As you narrowly avoid a collision with a month's provisions being steered in your direction near the multi-packs of Power Rangers crisps you've just thrown back . . . the last thing on your mind is whether your £67.85p's worth of shopping contains any fairly traded goods.

It probably never crossed your mind as you plucked a 79p box of brown label teabags from the shelf, that as little as 10 per cent of the price would have reached the tea producer.

Or that the 250 gram pack of ground coffee crushed beneath the tins of dog food, baked beans and tomato and lentil soup, would have earned little more than 14p for its producer. You look at your till receipt and see you paid £1.79 for it.

Still, the neighbours always like filter coffee when they come round for the evening...

Today, more and more supermarkets are stocking goods bearing the Fairtrade symbol in response to requests from shoppers who are hear-

ing about the poor conditions under which Third World producers are operating through campaigning bodies like Christian Aid and Oxfam.

Trade is of paramount importance to the Third World; 80 per cent of its wealth comes from trade and only five per cent from aid. Every ounce of tea, coffee, sugar and cocoa matters to the economy.

But if producers are receiving only 14p of the price of every pack of coffee – that's not much more than \$60 for every 100lb sack of coffee beans produced – who is getting the rest?

If it were just the retailer, the wholesaler, the advertiser, the packer and the shipper, the producer at the end of the line might be sure of a consistent share.

But into the equation come the commodity dealers, says Peter Briggs, chairman of the BMS Justice and Peace Advisory Group. Dealers buy and sell pork bellies, orange juice, cotton, sugar, tea, as well as coffee, effectively setting the price for the consumer – and the grower.

It is in the London coffee futures market that the price can go up and down like a yoyo, taking the producer from solvency to bankruptcy in minutes.

"The dealers are buying and selling coffee that does not exist yet," says Peter. "Trading in futures, they're gambling on what the price of coffee will be, which has nothing to do with how much it costs the farmer to grow or with his right to a fair

**Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you - Luke ch 6, v 38.**



price for his product.”

In this climate of speculation, commodity prices can plunge quickly. The Fairtrade Foundation, incorporated in 1992, aims to take this uncertainty out of the transaction for the grower in an attempt to alleviate poverty in the Third World. It was set up by Christian Aid, Traidcraft, Oxfam, the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development, New Consumer and the World Development Movement with additional funding from the European Union and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

The Trust has set criteria and standards to award products the Fairtrade Mark – an independent consumer guarantee. To win the Fairtrade Mark for their products, companies must demonstrate to an independent assessment panel that terms of production ensure:

- Minimum wages
- Adequate housing, where appropriate.
- Minimum health and safety standards.
- Environmental standards.

Their terms of trading must ensure a minimum price, credit terms and a long-term trading commitment. The price paid will include a premium to be used by producers to improve living and working conditions.

Cafedirect, now stocked by most supermarket chains, is a coffee traded to these standards. For every 200 gram packet of ground coffee, the grower receives 40p – almost three times the price paid through the three UK coffee producers which dominate the market.

On the other side of the globe, in Peru, coffee grower Jose Rivera Campoverde has noticed the difference in lifestyle since he started selling to Cafedirect.

“Before, most of us couldn’t afford medical treatment,” he says. “For me, the price difference means I could

afford more food for my family and send my children to school properly equipped with pens and notebooks for the first time.”

Life on the plantation has changed. The higher price means the growers’ co-operative can afford to pay a doctor to treat its members. Healthy workers mean greater efficiency and higher productivity.

Since it was launched three years ago, Cafedirect ground coffee has increased sales by 1,000 per cent, taking nearly three per cent of the UK market. An instant Cafedirect was introduced recently at £2.39 for 100 grams but as it claims more of the market the economy of scale should make a bigger impact on the price to the customer.

Ripples from this storming performance are even being felt in the corridors of power; MPs Simon Hughes, Peter Bottomley and Glenda Jackson have gained the support of more than 80 colleagues to press the House of Commons catering committee to make Fairtrade Mark products available in the palace of Westminster.

Christian Aid is encouraging churches to discuss Fairtrade as a policy and the Fairtrade Foundation’s 1996 message to consumers is: “You got them on the shelves – be sure to buy them and keep them there.”

Supermarkets, doubtless aware of a shift towards ethical trading, have taken the plunge with fairly traded goods, recognising the need to project a good image.

Gateway’s Keith Jackson believes the success of such products could ultimately outstrip that of environmentally friendly goods. Safeway, one of the chains to stock Cafedirect, is clearly impressed. Grocery Controller Andrew Cole says: “Cafedirect has performed very well and on top of that, the reaction from our customers was as big as I can remember on any product.” ●

**Richard Wells** is the BMS Publicity Manager

## FACTFILE

Fairtrade-marked products include: Cafedirect roast and ground coffee, available in Sainsbury’s, Tesco, Safeway, Waitrose, Asda, Somerfield, Gateway, CWS, CRS and William Low. RRP: £2.29 for 227gram box.

Cafedirect freeze-dried instant coffee, available in all major supermarket chains. RRP: £2.39 for 100gram jar.

Watch for catering packs soon.

Clipper teas, including Sri Lanka Golden, Nilgiri Blue Mountain, Nilgiri Earl Grey, available in some Sainsbury’s, CWS and CRS stores, all Wm Morrisons and all Cullens in London. Some Safeway supermarkets and a few Tesco’s, where there is a demand, stock Nilgiri teabags. The range is also available in health food shops and delicatessens. RRP: £1.15 for 125grams of tea; £1.65 for a box of 50 teabags.

Seyte teas, available through health food shops and delicatessens. RRP: 94p for a box of 25 teabags.

Maya Gold chocolate, available in Sainsbury’s, Wm Morrisons, Somerfield, Gateway, Tesco, Waitrose, Asda and CRS. RRP: £1.55 for a 100gram bar. New 20gram bar, costing 39p, available from Sainsbury and Holland & Barrett.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you would like to support Third World producers by buying their products, look out for them in your local supermarket or grocery shop.

If they don’t stock them, ask them to consider doing so. Although fairly traded goods cost more, a recent National Opinion Poll revealed that 73 per cent of women would be prepared to pay 29p extra, and men 25p extra, for items costing £1.

### FAIR DEAL!

For more information about fairly traded goods, contact The Fairtrade Foundation, 7th Floor, 89 Kingsway, London WC2B 6RH.

Telephone 0171 405 5942.

# The abiding presence



ILLUSTRATION: SARAH PRENTICE

The promise of Jesus' abiding presence is not to a comfortable church preserving its history; it is linked to his commission, as **John Wilson** explains

**T**he four of us sat behind our microphones in the recording studio of Fréquence Protestante, taking part in a live radio programme on the topic of the resurrection. The discussion was centred on the Galilean appearance of Matthew 28. While Luke keeps everything very close to Jerusalem until the empowering of the Spirit, Matthew finishes his gospel with the disciples already looking across the northern borders of Israel. In a few sentences Matthew does what Luke takes another book to tell. With the abiding presence of Christ the disciples are to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

"I will be with you always to the end of the age", is a phrase often used as a reassuring and comforting statement. Perhaps we would do better to understand it as it really is: a disturbing and unsettling word.

The theme of the Plymouth Assembly: "To comfort and disturb" is an appropriate one when we come to the close of Matthew's gospel. Jesus' abiding presence isn't promised to a static and stationary church who are happy to look after their history. His presence is linked to his commission. It is in responding to his "Go" that we discover that he is with us and has gone before us. Our God is not a guardian of the status-quo. He is involved in mission so that every generation might know what the gospel means.

When Jesus promises his disciples to be with them every day until the close of the age, his promise takes into account the changing nature of each day or epoch, until the end comes.

His presence isn't an insurance against change but an assurance that through the changing times he will enable us to make the gospel live for the world of our day.

Whilst some talk of the missionary era as past, I believe we are only on its threshold. Not only are there more people alive today than at any other period of history, but communication between people groups is also greater than at any other period in time. World mission is no longer a unilateral impetus: "Remember what you were when God called you... few of you were wise or powerful or of high social standing. God purposely chose what the world considers nonsense in order to shame the wise, and he chose what the world considers weak in order to shame the powerful." (1Cor 1:26-27)

We can expect and can already see radical changes in missionary patterns. In the West we need to learn how to facilitate missionary work in our own communities. This change though difficult to adjust to, will in fact make us much more open to the task of world mission. We need to receive pastors and evangelists from Asia, Africa and the Americas into our churches who will help us think differently about what we are doing. We need to encourage our young people to join 28:19 Action Teams and their equivalents to contribute to and get a better grip on what mission is all about. We need to see retired people released to share their skills and experience in short term overseas projects. Pastors and evangelists will be much more in evidence as missionaries, making the 'faith-community' the centre of mission activity. 'Compassion ministries' along with 'tent-makers' will link into these long term 'faith-communities' for suitable periods, giving a holistic approach to mission without becoming its focus. We want to do mission with people, not for them.

Christian mission is going to have

to become lighter and fitter.

Opportunities will open up that will give access to Christians for only a few months or at best years. Missionary societies like the BMS are learning to be less monolithic in structure, ready and adaptable for each situation. Radio and television is becoming a part of the missionary landscape, with the 'video-church' being an interim necessity where no other teaching can be found. Scholarships and further education are intrinsic to the healthy continuation of mission in our age. We need thinkers who will help shape the kind of mission in which we are involved. These people should be a resource for any missionary organisation and should be drawn from many different cultures.

Jesus is with us in this day of change and he promises to be with us until the end. We should greet this new day of mission as the first disciples did, knowing that he will be with us through it all. Jesus' promise tells us something else that is important. The task of mission will never be finished. He will be with us in our going right until the end. Christian mission isn't a programme it's a way of life. We are called to live and share our life with him. We will always find him in the act of mission because he is Missionary. ●

### Questions:

- 1 From your experience would you say that you have known more of Christ's presence when you have been involved in some work of mission? Explain your answer.
- 2 Do you think that the word "missionary" should be dropped in favour of a term like: "International church worker"? What difference do you think it would make?
- 3 Is it "Mission Impossible" if we can never say "mission accomplished" or is it a new way of thinking about God's world?



Once the Albanian people were in bondage to communism – cut off from the outside world.

NOT free to have democracy.  
NOT free to travel.  
NOT free to speak their minds.  
NOT free to believe . . .

Today, following the collapse of the oppressive regime, the people are breaking their chains of bondage. *Breaking Chains*, the BMS Project 95, aims to raise £35,000 to resource evangelism and church planting in a nation which is hungry for God's word and which is seeing phenomenal growth in Christianity. BMS missionaries are among those taking the good news of salvation in Jesus to the Albanians, seeing the church grow, discipling new Christians and training leaders.

YOU can be involved in this exciting breakthrough. A resource booklet, bookmark and poster are available free and you can borrow a video or slide set to set your church, prayer group or housegroup going. All we ask is a contribution to post and packing. Telephone Christine Neilson at BMS, on (01235) 512077.

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

## Send more missionaries

A plea to British mission agencies to send more missionaries to Nepal was made at the Baptist World Congress in Buenos Aires in the summer.

Hari Gurung, a first-time delegate from Nepal, spoke of the nation as a developing country which was in need of many things, especially medical help. For this reason he invited Christian mission agencies to help Nepal.

Hari, who worked for five years as a pastor of one of the 35 Nepali Baptist churches in Nagaland, returned to his native Nepal in 1985 and planted a church in Pokhara.

The work has grown and 20 churches and 35 mission centres now belong to the Nepal Baptist Church Council, of which Hari is general secretary.

Before the communist government came to power in 1994 it was difficult to witness as a Christian, says Hari. "Now the government is tolerant of Christianity and tries to encourage religious tolerance for all."

The BMS has 43 missionaries in partnership with the United Mission to Nepal at Kathmandu and the International Nepal Fellowship at Pokhara.

## Albanian baptisms

Three coaches packed with church friends and families left Tirana, Albania's capital, for the seaside with 53 baptismal candidates.

It was the latest in a series of baptisms in the sea at Lexhe for

new Christians in Albania, once under the dictatorship of Enver Hoxha, who abolished all forms of religious worship.

The service was described as "very Albanian" – not very organised but with a sense of excitement and rejoicing as the 33 candidates from the church at Tirana and 20 from churches at Lexhe and Burrel made their professions of faith in Jesus.

Bert Ayres, of the European Baptist Federation (EBF), led worship on his guitar and Lezhe pastor George preached a short message in Albanian.

BMS missionary Gill Jones, who co-ordinates work at Tirana Baptist centre with the EBF, said: "There was a sense of excitement and celebration as the candidates went into the water and made their profession of faith. It was a time of praise."

The baptismal celebration was one of many positive developments in Tirana.

Congregations continue to grow and Tirana Baptist Church has moved into a new location – a cinema in Ali Demi. The rent is less than the church had been paying and security is better.

In the south, at Gjirocastra and Fier, three baptismal services have been scheduled.

● The mountain development project at Shkretë, featured last month, has won permission from the government to proceed.

## Gardens open for the BMS

Two Cambridgeshire gardens, opened to the public during the summer, raised more than £1,000 for the BMS.

BMS area co-ordinator Jim Clarke, and his wife Eileen, threw open the gates to visitors at their garden in Little Downham, near Ely. And in Swavesey, the garden of Brent and Christine Hudson at Brent House became a hive of activity with a bouncy castle and steam train rides for the family.

Funds were swelled by the sale of cakes, jams, plants, Third World products, lunches and refreshments. The Gardens with a View days were arranged in conjunction with Cambridgeshire Baptist Missionary Fellowship.

## Prayer call from Zaire

Evangelistic work has been started among sorcerers and occult workers at Ngonji-Rive, on the south bank of the River Zaire, near Upoto.

The Revd Mondanda Monongom pastor of the church at Ngonji-Rive has felt the call to direct work among these people in response to their activities which, he says, is calling into

question the faith of many Christians.

He has sent out a request for prayer cover for his front-line work. "These people are working satanic miracles by their fetishes and blocking the process of development," he says.

"Their conversion would be like that of the magician Simon of Samaria. (Acts 8) We pray that the Holy Spirit will convict them and that the village of Ngonji will be liberated from their bewitching powers."

## Budget for growth

Expansion of the BMS overseas spending budget has been planned in the 1995/96 Estimates approved by the General Committee.

This year the total overseas costs are expected to amount to £3,283,650; next year it is estimated that £3,420,400 will be needed to fund overseas mission work.

To support this, an extra four per cent is being sought in contributions and donations.

In the UK, administration is expected to cost £746,700, an increase of under three per cent on this year's figure, and £709,350 has been earmarked for constituency support, an increase of 3.13 per cent.

## Working with children

The Church of God in Nicaragua have started an outreach team presenting the gospel to street children through puppets, clowns and excursions. They plan to create a hostel and refuge for them.



The Hay family let the train take the strain at Brent House. (See Gardens open for the BMS)



## Reaching new heights

Reaching new heights of service is something we strive for in BMS but we have never employed a crane to do it for us. Although Missionary Herald reader Anthony Wilsdon, of Lightwater, Surrey, spotted this piece of equipment in Copenhagen during a visit, we can confirm that it is definitely not our commercial arm.



Crane in Copenhagen

## IBTS move is complete

The new Prague campus for the International Baptist Theological Seminary will be ready when classes begin on October 3.

There were fears earlier this year that the deadline would not be met because of the scale of the move and the state of the four major buildings, one of which is 200 years old.

But apart from work on non-teaching buildings, the move is complete. It took 25 volunteers to move the 55,000 volume library from Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and eight pantech-nicians to transfer furniture and equipment.

## YOUR RIGHT TO WRITE TO *mb.*

### Challenge to Steve Chalke

SIR

I feel that I must challenge some of the statements attributed to Steve Chalke in the July/August issue of Missionary Herald.

1 He says, "when we think simply that all Muslims or Hindus are outside the fold and therefore going to hell that's - well, sort of comfortable".

Surely, believing people are in danger of hell is one of the greatest incentives for evangelistic and missionary work. Isn't that what impelled William Carey and others to embark on missionary work? Does it not inspire others to pray, give and support missionaries? What true Christian feels comfortable about people going to hell?

2 "... we want to hang on to our exclusive belief that Jesus is the way and the truth, but then it becomes harder to deal with the Muslim and the Hindu."

I do hope that this does not mean that Steve Chalke no longer believes the words of

Jesus, and that he believes there are other ways of salvation. If so, Jesus is wrong.

I am well aware that Muslims and Hindus may heed a different approach but surely they can only come to the Father through Jesus, the Son. They may be honestly struggling to find God, but they still have to come the only way.

Incredible passion and love for humanity cannot save them any more than they can save a person who is nominally Christian, but not born again.

If what Steve Chalke seems to be saying is true, do we need BMS any longer, or any other missionary society? If people can be saved by any other means than Christ alone, He need not have died!

ROBERT PILE  
Bexhill on Sea,  
Sussex

PS. If BMS believes what Steve Chalke appears to believe, I would find it difficult to continue supporting BMS.

## Robert's Bean appointment

BMS missionary Robert Atkins who, some say, resembles TV actor Rowan Atkinson, when he's not smiling, is shortly to take over as pastor of Toulouse Baptist Church, in France.

He replaces Mr Bean . . . Murray Bean, to be precise, of New Zealand BMS.



Robert Atkins: pastorate

## CHECK OUT

OCTOBER 1995

### ARRIVALS

Joy Knapman from Sri Lanka  
Derek Punchard from Brazil  
David & Ann MacFarlane from Italy

### DEPARTURES

Action Teams to France, India, Sri Lanka, Trinidad, Albania  
Sue Headlam to Bangladesh  
David and Ann MacFarlane to Italy  
Janet Claxton to Zaire  
Brenda Earl to Zaire

### VISITS

John Passmore to France

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

#### ANONYMOUS GIFTS

Bexleyheath	5.00
Chelmsford	100.00
Dorset - Relief fund	5.00
Fort Worth - Texas	1.00
GAYE	119.94
Glasgow	30.00
Golden Wedding	5.00
Larkhall	100.00
Nottingham	35.00
Pantter-le-Fyle	25.00
Postal Orders	20.00
South West Charitable Giving	14.74
West London	20.00

£480.68

### LEGACIES

Burrell G E	953.12
Cartwright W J	1,000.00
Culverhouse Frederick H	52.87
Darlow Florence M	1,000.00
Donaldson David J	56,740.87
Glover Joan	20,000.00
Hill Stewart A	100.00
Muir M G	750.00
Page Evelyn R	53.06
Pellowe Ethel N	150.00
Preston J	4,200.00
Stevens Violet	12,500.00
Yuill William	14,434.12

111,934.04

# Keep informed

World mission in the 1990s is exciting, invigorating, and challenging. And you are part of this every time you pick up the **mh** magazine, read it, use it as a stimulus for prayer, and stay up to date. From a recent survey here's what other readers have said about the **mh**:

"I feel the magazine presents a superb image, very professional yet caring and Christian."

"I enjoy reading the **mh**. I am more able to appreciate the various ministries being carried out by our missionaries. Names become more familiar and prayer becomes more meaningful."

"The more one learns of those prepared to give up all for the gospel's sake, the more one feels the necessity to become a more effective local witness for Jesus."

If you enjoy reading **mh** please others about it. Use this order form to give them a copy for themselves

## order form

Now is the time to place your **mh** order for 1996. Place it before **December 31 to receive it at 1995 prices**

**1** Place your annual order through your church magazine secretary and receive your copy post-free at £5.00 for nine issues plus the BMS Annual Review.

**2** If you are not part of a church with a magazine secretary, order direct from us at BMS. A year's subscription to **mh** costs £9.40, post-paid. Simply complete and return this form with a cheque for £9.40 to the address below.

Please send me  copies of the **mh** starting with  (month)

Name

Address

Post Code

Home Church

Are you the church magazine secretary? YES /NO

**MAGAZINE SECRETARIES AND FOR BULK ORDERS PLEASE NOTE: MINIMUM ORDER £15.00**

Please return this form to Janet Keys, BMS PO Box 49 Baptist House 129 Broadway Didcot Oxon OX11 8XA Cheques should be made payable to the Baptist Missionary Society. BMS is a registered charity



This month's picture of an orphan in Barbados is a reminder that the United Nations has a strong commitment to justice and peace which embraces work with children through UNICEF, its children's fund, UNHCR, its refugee network and the World Health Organisation

### United Nations, 50 years on

"Of course, if the United Nations Organisation didn't exist, you would have to invent it!" said one frustrated supporter against a tide of criticisms of perceived UN inaction or ineffectiveness in the former Yugoslavia.

And Christians would probably agree with that, for though the administration and infrastructure of the UN creaks or stumbles the principle is surely sound.

Not for nothing were the opening meetings of the General Assembly and Security Council held in religious buildings. The ethos was of hope and determination that peace should prevail; this was the dominant mood in 1945.

But the very title 'United Nations' begs a lot of questions! If people were not divided into nations, maybe we should be rather more united.

The deep loyalties to culture or territory or the notion of sovereignty that constitute nationality have done so much damage over the centuries; one might hope we

had grown out of that into a vision of unity and co-operation but the evidence of our eyes in Europe (let alone other continents) soon humbles us.

It's good to be reminded of the marvellous Preamble to the UN Charter, "we, the peoples .... determined".

Let's catch that mood of determination again, against the tide of pessimism or fatalism that dominates 1995, not looking back in anger or nostalgia or even penitence (as so many 50th anniversary celebrations have done) but renewing our hope.

We, the peoples, together and determined - a wonderful 'mission statement' for the new millennium.

Read the new CCBI booklet on "The UN, 50 years on". Send your card, pleading for continued and even increased participation by the UK in the life and work of the UN to:

**The Rt Hon Malcolm Rifkind, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London SW1A 2AL.**

# Call to Prayer

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

## WEEK 42

October 15 - 21

### Brazil: Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina

Martin and Kathy Hewitt will have moved house mid August after two years of uncertainty over their accommodation. In this time rent prices have escalated wildly which has made finding a suitable property very difficult. However the Southern Baptists have an empty apartment which they have made available until the Hewitt's next Home Assignment. Pray that they may have settled down after the upheaval of moving. Also pray for both Martin and Kathy as they have increased their responsibilities at church as well as both teaching in the Seminary. Pray for the students at the Seminary many of whom are facing personal difficulties and need better pastoral care.

Give thanks that John Dyer has been awarded a Master of Theology degree from Westminster College, Oxford for his dissertation in Lay Training in southern Brazil. He and his wife Maria are busy putting together a project for the training of pastors in Santa Catarina where they live. Subject to approval by the churches, it will be a new type of course using the principle of theological education by extension, the model used for their lay training programme. They already

have four candidates for this course. The Dyers will be back in the UK for a short while, December 1995 - February 1996.

Pray for Vince and Sadie MacDougall and family as they have recently returned to Brazil and for the Collict family and the Collinsons as they seek God's guidance for their future.



## WEEK 43

October 22 - 28

### One World week

As a missionary society we are concerned with sharing the good news of God's reconciling love in Jesus with the whole world. Let us continue to lift up in prayer organisations like the United Nations, in its difficult task of working for justice and peace. Each of the articles in this edition of mh are concerned with these issues too. As you read each article, use the prayer points at the end of each one, to register your concerns and longings with God.

**One body  
and one mission  
to one world  
all working together  
as Christ's body  
alive and active  
in the world  
with one purpose -  
to reach out to others  
in loving Christian service  
and witness.**



## WEEK 44

October 29 - November 4

### Nepal: UMN Health

Ian and Sally Smith are now back in Nepal. Sally is spending some of her time helping in a small research project for the UMN urban health programme. With other staff she is visiting carpet factories and helping to lead discussion groups with the workers about some of the issues the girls who work in these factories face. In their recent prayer letter Ian and Sally write, "Please pray with us that we will be able to catch God's vision for us here and respond in obedience to his calling and leading."

Valerie Harwood has been visiting some of the former residents of the Ryder Cheshire home. Januka is walking better, has improved her educational skills and learnt some sewing. She has a sewing machine at home, which she is using to make some money. Bimla's family had made her a new room between two existing buildings with a bathroom at the back. She, too, has been busy making clothes to sell to contribute to the family income. Valerie writes: "I am pleased to say the present students are really doing very well and I am delighted with the better attitude taken by the staff. Two of them have taken on doing some extra work in the evening to help the students practise some of the things taught during the day."

Several missionaries who have served in Nepal need prayer regarding their futures. Katie Norris is waiting to return to Nepal, subject to the right job assignment; pray for Isobel Strang, currently on home assignment, as to what she should be doing in the future; Jerry and Ruth Clewett both have new jobs in the UK; and Andrew and Linda Mason and children

would welcome prayer concerning their future.



## WEEK 45

November 5 - 11

### Brazil: Rondonia, Acre, Brasilia and Goias

Goiania, the state capital of Goias is growing fast. Pray for the evangelisation of the whole state, and for training of adequate leadership to take up the challenge. The youth work in this state also needs our prayers. Pray for Tim Deller, who has recently modified his ministerial role so that he is now responsible for the oversight and practical training of ministerial students. Rosimar Deller is busy developing her music ministry at Jardim das Esmeraldas Baptist Church. In the last few months she has been able to strengthen this aspect of worship and community life and in so doing has been able to get others to offer their musical gifts to the Lord's service.

Pray for David and Sue Jackson in Brasilia where David is involved in the teaching programme of the College and Sue is very involved with work at church - Sunday school, Bible study groups, leading the missionary council and teaching at a daughter congregation. She has also taken over short-term the Missions Dept at the College which means teaching Missions to two different groups, and World Religions as well as counselling and working with students on their practical assignments. Pray also for their children being educated in England and for the pressures and tensions this creates. The Jacksons will be coming back to the UK in 1996 for a year's home assignment, when David will be studying for a PhD and Sue an MTh, both at Spurgeon's College.



**FACT**

Ninety per cent of war casualties are civilians. 100 million landmines still lie undetected.

**FAIR TRADE**

- makes sure the chain between producers in the Third World and customers like us is as short as possible
- pays the producers a price they consider to be fair
- can provide support services to producers eg: training and advice to help with establishing and maintaining trading relationships

**THINK BEFORE YOU DRINK YOUR NEXT CUPPA**



PICTURE: RICHARD WELLS

Millions of people are kept in poverty because they are paid a pittance for their crops. Out of every £1 jar of coffee sold in the UK, the producing country gets 37p. Some of this money goes to the government and some to the



PICTURE: CHRISTIAN AID/ELAINE DUIGENAN

grower - but most stays in

the UK, which controls the

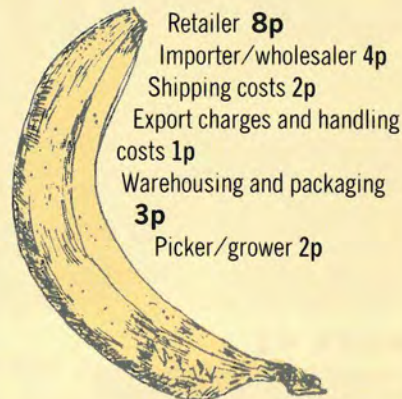
transporting, processing and distributing of coffee. Fairtrade products are now on sale in certain supermarkets and through agencies such as Oxfam and Traidcraft. Fairtrade Mark is the seal of approval by the Fairtrade Foundation, which was set up by Oxfam and other agencies. The Mark tells consumers that producers in the Third World are getting a better deal. Cafédirect the leading Fairtrade coffee has sold over one million packets and is now outselling many other brands of ground coffee. Clipper teas have been awarded the Fairtrade Mark because they guarantee that workers on their plantations enjoy good working conditions. Some of their estates offer such benefits as housing schemes, creche facilities, schooling and funding of vocational training colleges for the tea-workers' children. Clipper teas are sold in selected branches of Sainsbury's and health food shops. Also, Premier brands, which markets Typhoo tea says on its labels "caring for tea and our tea pickers". Premier buys the tea for Typhoo direct from estates which have higher safety, health and housing standards.

- Ask your supermarket to stock fairly traded goods
- Buy products that are more fairly traded
- Organise Cafédirect coffee mornings,
- use Cafédirect after church services and at midweek meetings

- Write to your MP at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0HA. Raise some of the issues of unfair trading. Say you support a trading system which pays better prices to coffee, tea and banana growers in the Third World.

Littlewoods stores have published a code of conduct for their clothes buyers in the Third World saying employees must be working in decent factory conditions.

**A 20p Caribbean banana: who gets what?**



- Retailer **8p**
- Importer/wholesaler **4p**
- Shipping costs **2p**
- Export charges and handling costs **1p**
- Warehousing and packaging **3p**
- Picker/grower **2p**

**BOOKSHELF**

**Global Consumer** by Phil Wells and Mandy Jetter. Provides consumers with information which will help them choose goods which have been more fairly traded. The book covers products ranging from textiles to bananas.

Published by Gollancz. £5.99.

**VIDEOSHELF**

**Bitter Sweet** - the real price of sugar. This video explores the sugar trade of the Dominican Republic. It looks briefly at the history of sugar and shows how today its production is still a story of exploitation. Using sugar as an example it shows how the international trading system traps people in a cycle of poverty and semi-slavery, from which it is hard to escape.

Produced by and available from Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT. Free hire. £9.99 to buy.

**ASYLUM STATISTICS**

In the first six months of 1994 there were 14,730 asylum applications. Of the 9,360 applications dealt with in this period, asylum was granted in 385 cases (4.1%) and Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR) granted in 1,680 cases (17.9%). As of 30 June 1994 there were approx 50,000 appli-

cations remaining under consideration.

Sources: Home Office Statistical Bulletins and Parliamentary debates (Hansard).

In November 1990 Amnesty International published a report, United Kingdom: Deficient policy and practice for the protection of asylum seekers, making specific recommendations for change:

- detention of asylum seekers should be avoided
- in so far as a detention occurs, detainees should be given a full statement of the reasons for detention and should be allowed access to legal representation
- all decisions to detain should be reviewed as to their necessity and compliance with international standards by an independent, impartial and competent review board within seven days of the initial decision to detain (and 14 days thereafter)

On two subsequent occasions these recommendations have been reiterated publicly, and there have also been a number of meetings with government ministers (most recently in September 1994). To date none of the organisation's recommendations relating to the detention of asylum seekers have been accepted by the Government.

## ACTION CARDS

You may well have seen Action cards featured in mh each month and weren't sure exactly what they were. They are a co-operative venture involving the Methodist Church, Baptist Union, BMS, United Reformed Church, Christians Aware and the Church of Scotland.

To take part you need to buy a set of 12 postcards; these depict an aspect of Christian caring for quality of life worldwide. For 1996 these will cost £2.59 including postage.

Every month the Baptist Times and mh contain an article under the "Action Cards" heading on a particular issue, not necessarily related directly to the picture on the card. The cards have a different address on

them for each month, and participants in the scheme are asked to send the card for that month with a short message of support, encouragement or challenge (or a combination!) to the person or group named. Cards in 1995 have drawn attention to child prostitution, work amongst deprived people in Calcutta, the employment of children in the carpet making industry, and the United Nations Rehabilitation Office in Tuzla, Bosnia.

This is a great scheme to take part in either as individuals or groups of people within a church or housegroup. Participants find that although they do not look for replies, some do indeed come. One supporter recalls that having written recently to the First Secretary of the Japanese Ambassador complaining of the lack of Japanese support in funding international development aid, he received a letter back - five pages long!

Cards for 1996 can be obtained from Methodist Publishing House, 20 Ivatt Way, Peterborough, PE3 7PG

### Three of 1995's Action Cards



Woman with Nile perch in Tanzania



After church, Fortaleza Brazil



Young Manobo tribe boy, Mirindao

# TAKE TWO

Resource ideas for group discussion starters

by Jan Kendall

A gift with words, an enthusiasm to communicate, a fascination and ability with modern technology and a commitment to World Mission, particularly through the Baptist Missionary Society – these were the gifts that David Pountain brought to the BMS when he joined the staff in March 1982.

Having trained at the Manchester Baptist College, David had pastorates spanning more than 20 years in Lancashire, Yorkshire and the Cotswolds. As well as his own greatly appreciated pastoral and preaching ministry, this time in pastoral ministry gave him the opportunity to develop his skill with words, particularly those for use in worship. He was also used in association publications and this gave him a wide knowledge of printing practice and techniques and equipment that was becoming available.

When the opening occurred in the BMS for an Editorial Secretary, David did not apply but his name was suggested and he eventually agreed to appear for interview. It was the unanimous view of the interviewing group that he should be invited to serve and he began his work with BMS in March 1982.

Immediately it was clear that here was a man who, with his concern that the Society should communicate ever more effectively with the constituency, was ready to be an innovator. Building on the good traditions that were already present in the Herald and Look publications, David pioneered new approaches in graphic design and shape of the publication. His own writing skills were



After 13 years in the *mb* Editor's chair, David Pountain has accepted a call to the pastorate at Florence Road Baptist Church, Brighton. BMS General Director Reg Harvey pays tribute to David's service

## The Editor's pastoral call

well to the fore, as was his use of contributions of missionaries and of overseas partners.

He is an enthusiast for whatever the latest technology has to offer and quickly the Society moved both to a higher degree of in-house printing and also the use of word processing. The graphic design work was expanded, with different artists used to introduce greater variety. The novel approach was used not only for the regular publications but also for the volume of leaflets and

booklets that the Society produces each year.

David's gifting was especially valuable when it came to the preparation of material that would be used in worship. This was shown not only in the prayers that were written for the annual Prayer Guide but also was extensively used in the preparation of worship and other materials in the project packs and young people's packs. When the Society was looking to the celebration of its Bicentenary, it was David's writ-

ing that was largely used in the preparation of special material for worship and the Society was able to participate in encouraging the publication of a book of prayers *Praying with God's People*.

David has never lost his concern as a pastor and this has been evidenced in his relationships with missionaries, both when they have visited the offices and also when David has made overseas visits. Such visits have not simply been to secure material that could go into print or photographs that could be used in publications but have also brought encouragement and refreshment to the missionaries and national leaders with whom David has had contact.

When note is also taken of David's sharing in the promotional programme of deputation speaking (as it was then called) and World Mission Link participation, particularly the Staff Teams, and his wholehearted involvement in the promotion team preparation of materials, the Society is indeed grateful for the 13 years of service that David has given. Our prayers and good wishes go with Dorothy and David as they settle into the pastorate at Brighton. ●

David's induction is at Brighton on October 14

## Waves

A personal and independent look at justice and peace by **Peter Briggs**



Putting the right book in the right place is part of the art of the librarian. It's not easy. Last week *William Carey – A Tribute by an Indian Woman* appeared on my desk; a biography but it's as well to check! The contents page reveals that two thirds of the book is about Carey and the modernization of India. New thought! This book must go into another section – *Modern India and Western Influences*. We have found the right place for Carey! Have we found our right place in mission? Carey's kind of impact has always been at the heart of BMS tradition. In my brother's recent book on English Baptists in the Nineteenth Century, the chapter on Society and Politics has these words: "These cases (slavery in Jamaica and colonial and company legislation in India) reintroduced Baptist leaders, of whom those associated with the Baptist Missionary Society were by far the best organised, to political activity". 1992 marked not only the BMS bicentenary but also Columbus's contact with America and the many tragic consequences which followed from that. Often this was because church leaders failed to give a central place to justice and peace in their mission. One of Reg Harvey's first statements when setting the tone for the bicentenary celebrations was that we were called to look to the future rather than to the past. It is not without significance, therefore, that in 1992 the General Committee set up a group to reinvestigate the place in the Society of justice and peace issues. A Justice and Peace Advisory Group now exists and was already working on the subject when Trevor Edwards, now General Secretary of the Jamaica Baptist Union preached his missionary sermon entitled *the Church Without Walls* in 1994. He spoke of the financial problems which burden his country and asked whether the "time is right for the BMS to reassert the advocacy role it so successfully commandeered in the past." As a result of action taken, representatives of the Society were able to meet the resident UK and Ireland representative of the World Bank recently. Another live issue is the war that follows every peace. In Angola, where our church partnership has existed for over 100 years, nine million mines remain to be cleared. This, too, is a matter of concern to the Society. Many other areas of injustice which prevent the establishment of peace will occur to you as you read this. It is humbling sometimes to read how others see us. Ruth Mangalwadi writes in her book on Carey: "The legalised murders of preborn children through abortion is a far greater issue in today's England than was infanticide in India in Carey's day."

**Peter Briggs** is chairman of the BMS Justice and Peace Advisory Group

# “SET APART FOR ME”

## Volunteers to work in partnership

### **Bangladesh:**

Short term (six months) mature administrator working with the Bangladesh Baptist Sanga, to assist with central office administration.

### **Hungary:**

Short term (academic year) TEFL teacher to train theological students in English at the International Baptist Lay Academy.

### **Albania:**

Short term (six months) teachers in primary and secondary age ranges.

### **Thailand:**

*Short term* (six months) administrator for Chiang Rai mission boarding school to help update systems which will effectively manage financial planning, working with local office staff. (Suit single volunteer or volunteer couple).

## Full time mission partners

### **Sri Lanka:**

Ministerial couple with educational background to serve the Sri Lanka Baptist Union, which aims to have a greater input into schools and colleges.

### **Thailand:**

Pastor to work with the Church of Christ in the Bangkok area to identify areas of outreach and social need, and encourage local Christians to become active in the community.

### **Nepal:**

A number of professional long and short-term posts in medical, administrative, educational and engineering areas.

### **Other opportunities:**

Surgeons, general practitioners, senior health staff, nursing managers, nurse educators.

Phone Andrew North on 01235 512077

