



News around the world

Focus on Thailand

Action teams in Albania

international

Land of the free

INSIDE THE
KINGDOM
OF THAILAND



Steve Chalke

Nurturing young disciples

Young people

Do we trust them to take the lead?

WOW!

Window on the World

ACTION DAYS!

A day of fun and activity making world mission come alive for children aged around 6 to 13 years. Free of charge for WOW CLUB MEMBERS. £1 for non members.



Coming to a place near you during **AUGUST 1996!**

DATE IN AUGUST	PLACE	CONTACT
Monday 12	Hamilton College, Lanarkshire	Derek Clark Tel: 0141 775 1201
Tuesday 13	Oakes Baptist Church, Huddersfield	Cath Mawson Tel: 01274 487341
Thursday 15	Llandrindod Wells Baptist Church, Powys	Janet Bowen Tel: 01597 823234
Friday 16	Mansfield Road Baptist Church, Nottingham	Joan Manicom Tel: 0115 962 3235
Monday 19	Pantygwydr Baptist Church, Swansea	Caroline Nantel Tel: 01792 651857
Tuesday 20	Stonehenge School, Amesbury, Salisbury	Bill Smith Tel: 01980 626124
Thursday 22	Kenton Baptist Church, Harrow	Veronica Campbell Tel: 0181 450 3516
Friday 23	Felixstowe Baptist Church, Suffolk	Gerald Askew Tel: 01473 780437

- Action Days run from 10am to 4pm.
- Please bring a packed lunch, soft drinks will be provided.
- It will help if you could provide one helper for every eight children from your church.
- Please tell contact person how many children and helpers will be coming from your church.

Baptist Missionary Society

Baptist Theological
Seminary Library
Prague
Czech Republic



We must do something to attract the young people; have you noticed how they drift away in their late teens, or move out of town when they get a little older?

This, or something like it, is possibly among the 10 most well-worn conversation pieces in churches today. It usually accompanies much heart-searching and brain-racking in pursuit of a strategy to attract young adults into the congregation or to stop them drifting away.

Isn't it always the church down the road that seems to have cracked the mystery of the disappearing young people? What have they got that we haven't? So we play it cool and manufacture an enticing environment in the hope that they will come back to see what's happening.

If we want a living demonstration of successful involvement by young people, we need look no further than the BMS 28:19 Action Teams. Key ingredients to the scheme are challenge, purpose, trust, self-motivation, accountability and an active opportunity to live out their Christian faith. Translating these to local church life could just provide the shot-in-the-arm we're seeking.

Richard Wells

Missionary Herald, the magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society,
PO Box 49, Baptist House, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA.
Telephone: 01235 512077 Fax: 01235 511265
E-mail: Editorial - bms_media@cin.co.uk
Other departments - 100626.1577@compuserve.com
Registered charity No. 233782

The views and opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the BMS

Missionary Herald

C O N T E N T S

Cover story

TOO OLD TO BE A YOUTH LEADER

Alan Dodds reflects on a life in youth mission 4

Steve Chalke

NURTURING YOUNG DISCIPLES

Too young to be given responsibility?..... 9

News section

FOREIGN AND HOME NEWS

Looking at things with a global perspective 11

Centre special

SOLD OUT TO MISSION

Unequivocal talk from a former Baptist youth officer.. 18

Country Focus

mb LOOKS AT THAILAND

Jan Kendall's regular national overview 20

Mission file

IDEAS AND OPINIONS

Facts, figures and background resource material 26

Prayer focus

WHO AND WHAT TO PRAY FOR

BMS 28:19 Action Team in Albania 28
Prayer points from BMS colleagues around the world. 30

John Passmore

A SIDEWAYS LOOK

Almost the last word 34

Waves

AN INDEPENDENT VIEW

Stuart Blythe is this month's guest writer 35

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

AGRICULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Reports from around the world

FOCUS ON FRANCE

Challenge of mission on the Continent

FRONT COVER: A tribal elder from the Karen area of northern Thailand where the gospel is being shared by BMS worker Jacqui Wells. Picture: BMS library

GENERAL DIRECTOR

Reg Harvey

MANAGING EDITOR

Richard Wells

CONSULTING EDITOR

David Pountain

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS

Steve Chalke, Sandra Carter, Clive Doubleday
Sam Gibson, Jan Kendall, John Passmore
David Pountain, Richard Wells

DESIGNER

Anthony Viney

ILLUSTRATOR/DESIGNER

Sarah Prentice

PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR

Jan Kendall

Director for Missionaries

Sian Williams
(for inquiries about service overseas)

© Copyright 1996
Baptist Missionary Society

Printed by Stanley L Hunt Ltd
Rushden, Northamptonshire

Subscription for 1996
£5.40 through church mh distributors
£9.90 by direct mail (inc p&p)
Nine issues plus the BMS Annual Review.
Post and packing overseas at the rate applicable

When you realise
you're too old to be a

youth leader

THE TIME COMES WHEN YOU

HAVE TO ADMIT YOUR MISSION TO

EXPERIENCED YOUTH WORKER **ALAN DODDS** TELLS

At 40 years old I suggested to Rob White – the former director of British Youth for Christ – that we start a new organisation.

The SCYE – the Society of Clapped out Youth Evangelists!

Actually this was only two thirds through my time as a Christian youth worker. I got into it at 20 when I trained to be a Church Army officer.

Playing the guitar helped. In fact I had been professional in a band that backed David Bowie, then known as Dave Jones.

Having a riotous teenage life helped. My testimony still grabs young people. Sex, drugs and rock & roll abounded, then a blind date with a Christian while at Butlin's Holiday Camp in Clacton, turned me to Jesus.

Actually, Jesus turned me to Jesus in

the most dramatic way. Floods of tears, repentance, deliverance, and so on... I seemed to have the lot. I could even see in colour for the first time.

All this happened shortly after my 18th birthday, on August 16th to be precise. School had been a bore. I failed every O-level exam simply because I didn't do any work. I was "asked to leave" Bromley Tech in Kent after two terms, but that didn't matter because by then I could scrape by on income from the band.

This sort of testimony still speaks; I've been sharing it for the past 32 years. But after a while "sharing a testimony" gets a bit boring.

Certainly I trained as a Church Army officer – one of the best training courses on offer both then and now. I enjoyed theology, teaching, preaching and counselling, so my work didn't just consist of presenting the ABC of the gospel. I remained in youth work for 25 years. It was a fabulous time. Many

young people

turned to Jesus.

In lots of ways I was much more effective as an evangelist then than I am now as an Anglican clergyman, so why give up youth work?

In my 20s it seemed the most natural thing to do. I was, after all, very near to teenage life myself, so I was in touch, as they say.

Actually, I don't think I was as good a youth worker then as I became later; you have to be stable and mature to be an effective youth worker because you are working with the most unstable age range.

The days of giving the youth work to the curate or the youth pastor barely out of college were bad old days.

Working with teenage girls was a distraction. I just managed to keep my hands off them, thank God, but it was a close thing sometimes. Fortunately, I met my wife, Chris, which helped a bit, but I'm afraid there was a lot of plain old fashioned lust around.

Still, the God of all grace used even me!

The 30s were better. Now, I kept in





YOUTH IS AT AN END. WHAT IT FELT LIKE

touch with young people simply by working with them. By now I had worked in two Anglican parishes and had become the youth worker for a large parish in Crawley, Sussex. This was the most effective time.

The youth fellowship was 60-strong, with evangelism going on all the time. The most effective work was with young men, although there were always plenty of girls around. I left the parish after five years to become a travelling evangelist in the south, but after three years burned myself out, very nearly had an affair, and came to a grinding halt.

It was 1981, and I questioned for the first time if I should remain in youth work, or even in Christian ministry at all. I went to a college of higher education, thoroughly enjoyed two years of study, applied for several non-youth work jobs and was turned down for each one.

My future lay with British Youth For Christ as its training director and, two years later, with the Crusaders as their first development worker.

But by now I was nearly in my 40s. So how do you keep in touch with young people in your 40s?

I had two teenage daughters. so the house was full of teenagers – teenage videos, teenage interests, teenage ideas, teenage habits, all before my very eyes. Never had I been better informed about teenage life.

Nevertheless, even though I was still communicating well to this age group, I was beginning to feel bored with doing so. I felt trapped.

These were the tell tale signs for stopping youth work. But there was a third issue, that of British culture.

At the beginning of my work with Crusaders, I was sent out to see the work of Young Life in Colorado Springs, USA. Here youth workers were doing effective work in their 60s and so I took great heart from this. But the difference between the American young people I met and those I had left in the UK was extraordinary.

Five thousand young people and parents turned out on a snowy night for a high school football match. When



the national anthem played and the Stars and Stripes were hoisted, you could have heard a pin drop. When the evangelist told 350 young people to be silent for three minutes, I looked around. No one belched. No one giggled. Everyone was quiet.

In Britain, our youth work seemed to be more and more entertainment orientated. Our books on youth work are full of “crowd breakers”, games with a meaning, how to entertain the young people in the hope that they might possibly listen. Now don’t get me wrong, in a culture where it has become un-cool to sing together, you have to do something to both grab attention and unite people into the group.

It’s just that I didn’t want to do this any more.

I wouldn’t have changed the past 25 years for the world but I’m glad I’m not doing it now.

Alan Dodds is minister of The Carpenter’s Arms Anglican Fellowship, in Deal, Kent. He has had 25 years experience in youth work

Alan Dodds: A time to pull back from mainstream youth mission

Let them get a **piece** of the **action**

A FORCE WAITING TO BE RECKONED WITH... **PHIL MARSDEN** THROWS OUT THE CHALLENGE TO INVOLVE THE YOUNG PEOPLE



There is a massive untapped resource in many of our churches today – young people.

These young activists are ready to take on the world – to fight for freedom, challenge injustice, stand up for the poor and oppressed.

They want to make a difference.

The world recognises this potential and challenges them to get involved and help others by raising money through programmes and projects like Blue Peter, Children in Need and Comic Relief.

They are encouraged to fight for their country as teenagers and give their lives sacrificially for the cause, such as was the case in Tiananmen Square.

God also saw this potential when he chose Joseph, David, Jeremiah and

Mary – all young people for whom he had great plans. When Jesus chose his 12 young disciples he saw their potential despite the fact that he knew they

would fail and mess up along the way. Eventually they went on to do exploits and miracles in his name.

But what of the church? Do we really see and release the full potential in our young people?

Week after week we teach them and train them but the challenge is to provide them with opportunities to work out their faith and put into practice what they are learning.

Christian young people have a desire to do something radical for God. They want to be challenged and what better than the challenge Jesus himself gave to each one of us, the challenge of world mission?

The Youth and Children's Department in the BMS has been developing a three-fold strategy to help churches do this more effectively. This strategy aims to educate young people about world mission, to stimulate their interest for world mission, and to provide them with practical opportunities to participate in world mission.

The WOW club for children is designed to fulfil all of these objectives. Its full colour bi-monthly magazine

with large world map and stickers helps to educate and stimulate their interest in mission while a WOW project and WOW Action Days give children the opportunity to get involved first hand in mission activities.

Youth roadshows aim to challenge young people to catch hold of the vision God has for their lives and put their faith into action, while the BMS 28:19 Action Team scheme gives them the opportunity to do this by spending between two weeks and two years serving God overseas.

Other mission agencies too, such as YWAM, Oasis, Youth for Christ and Operation Mobilisation have schemes specifically designed to enable young people to experience overseas mission for themselves.

But there is only so much any organisation or agency can do. The real challenge is for the local church to provide opportunities for its own young people to get involved in mission.

A trip to Cardboard City in London helping with the food runs, a dramatic youth group production taken into local schools, an open-air children's

piece of the
Action

Thrust into leadership

DOES THE CHURCH IN A YOUNG SOCIETY TREAT YOUTH DIFFERENTLY? **DEREK PUNCHARD** REPORTS FROM BRAZIL

Brazil must be described as having a vibrant young society and this is reflected in the churches, too. The average age of congregations here must be half what it is in Britain. This has its effect on the style of worship and some of the church activities, although we find big differences from city to interior in the multi-social society.

Music plays a large part in the life of young people and in the churches they usually form groups to sing or play instruments like the electric guitar, bass and drums, and will lead a period of worship during the service. Some of the music is adapted from American or British sources but they have new music they write themselves in a Brazilian style.

Within church leadership, their participation varies. In the larger churches, they often don't get much of a look in, take little interest in church meetings and can even form young people's groups or meetings which are almost a church within a church.

In smaller churches and congregations, they are sometimes thrust into leadership and are often very effective with the enthusiasm and dedication that is typical of young people.

Life can be very intense for many of them. They are often obliged to combine working with studying to pay their way through college, which leaves them only the weekend to be taken up with church activities. Nevertheless, they participate in retreats, weekend exchanges with churches outside the state and congresses with young people from throughout the state, or the country.

Their social life can be tied up within the church and their relationships often start within the group, too. There is still a great deal of strict morality in the friendships despite the promotion of immorality generally in society and through the media.

It is good to see young people growing up, marrying and then bringing their families up in the church.

praise party in the town centre, a visit to an old people's home, the children's wing of a hospital, an orphanage or prison or even an organised overseas trip helping to run a children's club or getting involved in beach missions . . .

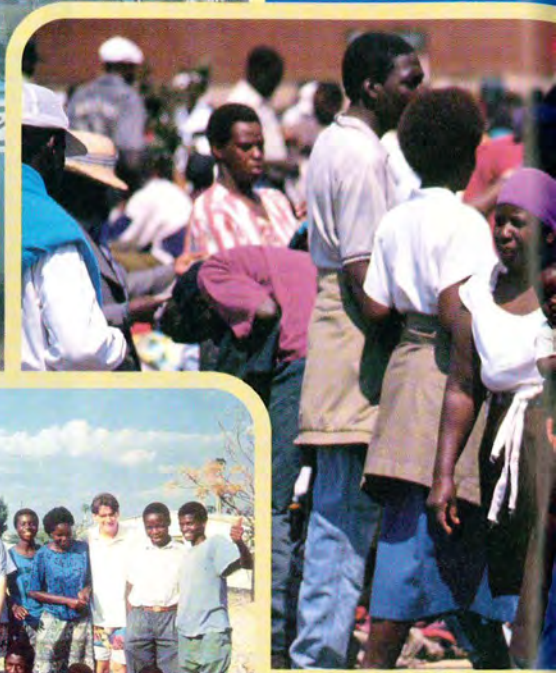
All of these will help to bring your young people's faith alive and the teaching you have been providing for years will suddenly become real.

Are you ready to take up the challenge?

They are.

Phil Marsden is Youth and Children's Co-ordinator for the BMS





After Zimbabwe

FULL-TIME CHRISTIAN YOUTH SERVICE IS A PREPARATION FOR LEADERSHIP.

MARIANNE YOUNG TAKES STOCK A YEAR ON FROM BMS 28:19 ACTION TEAMS

It's over a year now since I returned from Zimbabwe back to the lung-constricting cold of an early morning April day; met at the airport by a wonderful family from my church as my own could not be there. The love that showed was amazing.

I could talk for a year about my time on BMS 28:19 Action teams; indeed on the six-week tour we recounted our experiences so many countless times that sometimes none of it felt real anymore.

Of course, it was a life changing experience and a time that I grew and learned so much about myself and God – a very intense time where I did hundreds of new things and was put in impossible circumstances with only a smattering of language and lots of prayer to

survive!

But, and this is the thing that gets so easily forgotten, there is life after 28:19! At first you have a million people to talk to and life to recapture but then the reality sinks in. Life in England has actually continued while you've been away and it can be

unsettling; it would be all too easy to fall away from old friends, from old life.

I think I could have fallen apart without my church.

No church is perfect but mine gave me such support and gentle care. A wonderful Spirit-filled youth group who prayed for me, and continues to do so now I'm away at university, brought me back into the life here avoiding much of the expected culture shock.

My new-found gifts, developed in 28:19, have been more use at university, helping to run the Christian



Steve Chalke



NURTURING YOUNG DISCIPLES

I was not encouraged. Having spent every evening for two months attending what was called a discipleship class, I'd recently been baptised as a Christian. Now I was informed that, as a disciple, I would be expected to attend the mid-week prayer meeting regularly as well as hand over what I regarded as a huge portion of my all too meagre pocket money. But, in spite of these heavy demands on my time and wallet, my – I thought very reasonable – request to speak at Sunday services was dismissed out of hand and it was made very clear to me that I wouldn't be eligible to vote at church meetings until I was 18, in another three years' time.

"You're not mature enough for the responsibility involved," they told me. I could well empathise with the American revolutionary slogan: No taxation without representation!

At the time, I felt used, frustrated and belittled. Now I understand why I felt that way. It was all such a far cry from Jesus' own empowering approach to discipleship. Luke tells us that, calling his 12 rather young disciples together Jesus sent them out "to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick", Luke 9:2. But there was more to it than that.

We are so familiar with this episode that we rarely stop to think why Jesus sent his disciples out. Did his healing powers only work at short range in good atmospheric conditions? Did he have other appointments to keep? Or was he planning on taking sabbatical leave? The truth is, of course, that Jesus didn't send his disciples out primarily to preach and heal. He sent them out to learn about how to preach and heal. And they needed it. Their preaching left people confused about who Jesus was (Luke 9:7-8 and 19) – not too surprising, perhaps, when you consider that they themselves didn't fully understand who Jesus was until after the resurrection – and their healing ministry wasn't much better (Luke 9:40).

Jesus' methodology radically challenges our current thinking and practice. Most of us, if we really stopped to think about it, would conclude that Jesus' discipleship sandwich course here was thoroughly irresponsible. We wouldn't dream of letting someone preach until they had clearly demonstrated that they were ready for it. And we'd take stringent measure to ensure that the ministry of healing wasn't left in hands of novices with no first-hand experience and little pastoral sensitivity.

We exclude young people from preaching, teaching, evangelism and mission work often because, to be honest, we don't trust them. We're afraid they will create the wrong impression with others. After all, we reason, they just don't have a deep enough understanding of their own faith yet. But somewhere along the line, we have lost both our willingness to take risks and our commitment to Jesus' principles and practice. We've become like parents whose concern for their children's welfare leads them misguidedly to shelter them, not prepare them for life in the real world.

The result? Our young people grow bored and frustrated – a condition all too often mistaken for apathy by those who don't understand the young. In reality, the one thing they crave more than anything else is the feeling that they are valued and trusted with responsibility. In turn, it's our responsibility not to crush and suppress their energy but to harness and channel it constructively. To grow as Christians, young people need the oxygen which only the opportunity to practise their faith in real and adventurous ways can provide. Like Jesus' first disciples, and the rest of us, they will learn from their mistakes as they go.

Jesus sent his first 12 disciples out with power and authority, giving them the chance to practise what he preached, even though he knew that they would make a mess of the whole thing. And as if that weren't enough, far from learning his lesson as they made their mistakes, he went on to do the same thing all over again in the next chapter (Luke 10) but this time on an even bigger scale!

So, how truly Christ-like is your church in its approach to discipling the young?

Steve Chalke is General Director of the Oasis Trust



Union and being able to live a life as worthy of God as possible in an atmosphere completely opposed to it.

I don't think views towards me have changed much. Maybe there is a subtle respect but that could be my advancing years.

My 28:19 experience prepared me for so much and I have been able to see God work through me here at university. Day by day life continues, but Zimbabwe will always be in my heart.

It was called a year out but it was so much more.

Priceless.

Marianne Young, from Leicester, and studying at Demontfort University, was a member of the 1994/5 Zimbabwe Action Team

ACTION

Young People: A Force for Change

THE KEY TO UNLOCK POTENTIAL IN YOUNG PEOPLE IS TRUST. **SIMON HALL** EXPLAINS



This was the title of a conference I attended on behalf of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. Organised by the National Youth Agency, the Home Office and other august bodies, it was a conference to celebrate young people's contribution to society, particularly in voluntary community service.

Hundreds of young people, aged 16 to 25, who were active in their local communities were invited to Westminster to . . . listen to a load of adults talking to them for two days. Before the conference was over, there had been a protest and a walkout, despite all the good intentions of the conference organisers.

This, at least, makes me feel a bit better: even the big-wigs in the secular world of youth work, the ones who talk about things like "empowerment", sometimes forget that young people are much more than just recipients of our ministry.

Recently, one of the young people with whom I work gave me a backhanded compliment: "At

last," she said smiling, "you're beginning to do youth work with me, not to me."

In recently months this girl has, with only a little support from me, established a soup-run on which about a dozen teenagers work every Saturday morning. She says that until recently she thought it was MY job to organise that sort of thing and she'd been waiting for me to sort it out for ages. As soon as she worked out that I trusted her to do it herself, she was off.

In December last year, I was part of a conference called Quo Vadis, sponsored by many youth organisations nationally. Thirty-seven young people from very different backgrounds were left together for a weekend with virtually no supervision and asked to come up with a presentation on how the church could be more relevant to young people.

"Yes, interesting," I hear you say, "but so what?"

The "so what" of Quo Vadis was what happened to some of the young people who attended the conference; the simple act of handing over control to these guys and completely trusting

them, changed them. They are no longer young people waiting to be old enough to serve God. Now they are servants of the risen Jesus, who are making waves and claiming ground in ways that are probably surprising even them.

Jesus' discipling method appears to be so different from our own. If Mark is to be believed, Jesus gathered the disciples together, told them a few stories about seeds and then sent them out to talk about the kingdom, heal the sick and raise the dead. Jesus showed a ridiculous amount of trust in these disciples – disciples who, it is true, betrayed him – because this was the best way for them to grow.

If we as churches continue to tell young people they are not old enough or not spiritual enough to serve God, they will end up believing us and give up on a religion that doesn't value them.

Can God use young people?

Well, he's managed to use you, hasn't he?

Simon Hall is Youth Pastor at Moortown Baptist Church, Leeds

news

Forward to the millennium



A new framework for mission activity by the BMS for the next five years has been agreed by members of the General Committee, following almost a year of discussion and consultation. It comes in the form of the BMS Strategy 1996-2000 which underpins the society's commitment to holistic mission in partnership with Christians in Britain and worldwide.

Its main strategic objectives will be:

- Mission to the unevangelised and unreached.
- Emphasis on urban ministries, women's, young people's and children's work.
- Greater use of scripture, Christian literature and the media for sharing the gospel.
- Support for healing, development and education ministries.
- Commitment to the search for justice and peace by action with partner and sister agencies.

To support these objectives, BMS will be seeking to strengthen a three-fold commitment from Baptist church members throughout Britain – prayer, dedicated giving and promotion.

At the heart of all activities is prayer and the BMS will encourage supporting congregations to be persistent in prayer for its work of making Jesus known worldwide and will explore fresh ways of promoting greater involvement in prayer by supporters.

The society aims to shift the emphasis on the way it deploys mission personnel and spending to engage in mission to the unevangelised and unreached.

At present only 27% of resources are directed to countries or people groups where fewer than half the population is evangelised. The aim is to raise that to 33% by 2000 and 60% by 2020.

In areas where more than half the people have been evangelised but fewer than 60% are Christian, the BMS aims to increase resources from 7% to 12% by 2000, and to 30% by 2020.

The society plans to reduce its activity in areas where more than 60% of the population claim to be Christian – from 66% at present to 55% by 2000 and to 10% by 2020.

To illustrate its vision for the next five years the BMS is to launch a video and study booklet in the autumn. ●

Carvings support church plants

Hand carved crafts from a Baptist community programme in Zimbabwe are helping to raise money for evangelism and church planting through the BMS Project 96, Arise and Build!

Pastor Johannes Nyanda, who was originally trained in craft production, set up the programme with four unemployed craftsmen at the village of Zvishavane in April 1985.

Now 15 craftsmen work at Umhiza Craft Centre, close to the village's Tsitsi Baptist Church, daily producing up to 75 carvings of native birds, animals and people in wood and stone. Six of the 15 are Christians and their average earnings are £25 a week.

Support for the initiative has come from Steve Seymour, who is serving with the BMS in Harare, providing business training and development, which helps efforts to combat the country's unemployment problem. Fewer than three per cent of Zimbabwe's 300,000 school leavers are expected to get a job.

Carvings from the Umhiza craftsmen are being imported for sale through the BMS Project 96 Arise and Build! thanks to the efforts of BMS General Committee member Stan Crees, of Wallington, Surrey. This provides an alternative outlet to small markets in Zimbabwe and proceeds from their sale will help to reach the Project 96 fund target of £36,500.

The church in Zimbabwe aims to reach everyone in the country with the gospel by the year 2000.

● Carvings are individually priced and cost between £15 and £30. Details about ordering are available from Christine Neilson, BMS Literature Secretary, on 01235 512077.

Attractively designed Arise and Build! postcards are also available at six for £1 in aid of Project 96.



Hoe! Hoe! Hoe! What a gift!

A request to Tools With a Mission (TWAM) for 150 African hoes and a visit by BMS General Committee member Stan Crees to a neighbour's house should be expected to have nothing in common...ordinarily.

Except on this occasion.

The local Liberia Prayer and Action Group in Staffordshire had approached TWAM to provide farming tools for development work linked with an evangelistic programme organised by Agape Ministries in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia.

There was no problem with run-of-the-mill implements but when it came to the African hoe – a cross between a spade and a pick-axe – TWAM just hadn't any in stock.

And there was little hope of finding one, let alone the 150 needed by the Liberian Prayer and Action Group. There didn't seem to be much call for this kind of tool in the UK.

Its members considered applying for a grant to buy some but after discussing this at their monthly prayer meeting, they decided not to ask for cash but to pray that God would supply their need in some other way.

And so they prayed.

That weekend Stan Crees made a social call on neighbour Gulshan

Esmail in the London suburb of Wallington. She has lived in Britain ever since fleeing Ugandan dictator Idi Amin's reign of terror in the late 1960s.

"She was soon to emigrate to Canada and had a few tools in her shed that might be useful to TWAM," said Stan. "I poked my head round the door and I was pleased to see a stack of tools."

They'll come in handy to someone, thought Stan, as he sorted through several hundred pieces of rusting ironmongery.

"They're African hoe heads", he heard Gulshan explain. "About 270 of them from an export venture which came to an end 20 years ago."

When Stan reported his find to Jack Norwood, development officer with the Baptist Men's Movement, which runs TWAM, he could hardly believe his ears.

"Jack said he'd just had a call asking for African hoes and could I ring Sylvia in Staffordshire!" said Stan. "You can just imagine the kind of conversation we had – two complete strangers talking about African hoes and God's marvellous provision.

"I had no idea about Sylvia's group's need when I looked at those rusty tools in Gulshan's shed. For me, this was a challenging experience which has renewed my determination to take prayer more seriously." ●



Hoe down: Gulshan Esmail and Stan Crees examine some of the 270 African hoe heads found in her shed

President goes on tour

Newly elected BMS president Carolyn Green launched her national roadshow at the BUGB Assembly in Blackpool. Carolyn wants to reach three groups of people in churches and there will be activities for each of these groups.

Ministers and church leaders are being invited to breakfasts and lunches; the first three were in southern England on May 30, 31 and June 1, when Carolyn and her team, met some 80 leaders for breakfasts at Woodley Baptist Church, Reading, Thornhill Baptist Church, Southampton, and Kidlington Baptist Church, Oxford.

Carolyn, keen to thank those who work for BMS at local level, is holding informal receptions the first of which was taking place at Avenue Baptist Church, Southend, on Saturday June 29, when mission secretaries, birthday scheme organisers, and many others gathered.

The third group – everyone in church fellowships – are being invited to share in joyful celebrations of faith and commission. The first followed the reception at Southend with worship led by Colin Waller, of Earls Hall Baptist Church, and keynote speakers Martin Hewitt from Brazil and John Passmore, BMS Europe Representative.

Future events are planned for Kent and Sussex in September and in the Greater London area during October ●

● For more details of events, see your missionary secretary, or telephone Derek Mucklow on 0181 393 6017 or Jim Clarke on 01353 778984.



01235 512077

Christine Neilson – Off the shelf

Hundreds of BMS supporters collect stamps for the society's Stamp Bureau, which raises thousands of pounds every year. But how many know that tea cards, cigarette cards, coins and other collectibles can help to raise cash, too?

Our new Stamps and Collectibles leaflet gives full details.

A new BMS Birthday Scheme promotion is

under way. Already, four new birthday card designs have been produced for birthday scheme organisers to send out; these are available now. On the press at the moment is a new campaign pack of leaflets, posters, gift envelopes and birthday registers.

Telephone to order yours now.

Roots to Life, the 1996 Harvest resources pack is available this month. And

we've kept the price at £5 for the third year in succession. The pack supports the BMS-Operation Agri-BMM harvest appeal and contains a stack of ideas and activities – plus a set of overhead projector slides and commentary tape – using two agricultural projects as a basis.

Telephone for an order form. ●

Relief fund aid for tornado victims

A BMS relief fund grant of £5,000 was made to the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha to help Christians meet the needs of people struck by a tornado in May.

More than 500 people were killed and at least 100,000 injured as winds of up to 125mph drove a swathe of destruction across the nation. Trees and homes were tossed into the air, tin roofs fell on victims like guillotines and at least three villages were swept away.

Witnesses reported seeing a fire-red funnel appear in the western sky just before the tornado struck. It lasted only 20 minutes but its aftermath is still being felt.

The Baptist Sangha Social Health and Education Development Board (SHED) has been visiting the worst-hit areas and is expected to report fully to the BMS.

The SHED action came just a month after it reported back on its action, following last year's floods, to help with house repairs, create temporary jobs, help affected farmers with land cultivation and rebuild boundary walls. ●

Joint mission

A joint mission in Llandudno, organised by English and Welsh speaking fellowships of all denominations, heard evangelist Robert Cunville, a minister from North East India.

There is a link between Robert and North Wales; Presbyterian missionaries took the gospel to the Khasia Hills and Shillong 150 years ago and was returning to the country to which he and his family owe their Christian heritage.

BMS

116453

JAMAICA: A call for a national Commission Against Waste and Corruption was made at the 146th Baptist Assembly by the Revd Eron Henry. He cited drug trading and money laundering as forms of institutional corruption and said progressive legislation introduced was insufficient to stem the tide. He blamed flaws in the Jamaican constitution and called for legislation to fence in the government and restrict corrupt practices. A commission, he said, should have powers to investigate, prosecute, try and sentence. He challenged the church to set an example to repudiate corrupt lifestyles. (JBR)

ISRAEL: An appeal has been made for volunteers to work at the Baptist Village Conference Centre in Tel Aviv. The centre is used principally for conferences but during holiday periods, it is home to youth camps, and during the summer needs a larger number of volunteers. Volunteer workers help with ground keeping, housekeeping, cooking, dining responsibilities, maintenance, building and life-guarding for the swimming pool. Accommodation and expenses are provided. (Contact: EBF, PO Box 405, NL-9200, Drachten, Netherlands). (EBPS)

NEW ZEALAND: Churches are being encouraged to evangelise international backpackers, thousands of whom visit the islands annually to follow their world-famous wilderness trails. Through the Oxford-based Backpackers for Jesus, former world traveller George Probek is recruiting Christians to take to the footways and share their faith with fellow travellers, and to help churches learn how to reach walkers who pass through their towns. (YWAM News)

AUSTRALIA: Baptists are preparing for an attendance of 15,000 at the next Baptist World Congress in Melbourne in 2000. The organising team is looking upon the congress as kick-starting a new millennium of evangelistic possibilities. Denton Lotz, General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, said: "We want to be so enriched by our meeting that we'll go out and spread further the gospel of Jesus Christ." (EBPS)

News in brief

Trust on the

A SPECIAL REPORT FROM **ROBERT ATKINS**, BMS WORKER IN FRANCE



We're in the inner city here in Toulouse.

The young man on our steps doing something obviously illegal with a tourniquet and a syringe; the problem of reeking men sleeping on the doorstep of the Chapelle des Capitouls. I came up with the gentlemanly solution of letting them sleep their fill and then offering them a cup of tea – a typically British gesture.

These people are SDFs – Sans Domicile Fixe, or of no fixed abode. They make even the briefest sortie from the chapel, to get a newspaper or something, into an obstacle course of alsatians, vendors and those just begging with an empty saucepan or paper cup.

SDF – some of the most eloquent initials in the French language. "No thanks, I've just given." These words should be in every phrase book alongside: "My postillion has been struck by lightning."

One of the SDFs stumbled into the chapel after the Sunday service one day. This would be a couple of months before one of their number froze to death behind Toulouse station and a couple more months before another was burned alive in a Paris street.

This one was in a bad way through a mixture of alcohol, drugs, mental imbalance, woman trouble and some spiritual difficulty. We were the only people he could think of turning to and, after all, we'd given him a cup of coffee back in the summer so he felt he could trust us.

His name was Jacques, and he is in his mid-forties, although it was hard to make much of his incoherent ramblings – I knew four years of Spurgeon's College sermon class would come in handy.

Jacques began to see us more regularly, that is to say he'd come a couple of days and then vanish for a fortnight or so. Then, just for once, a family who came to the Sunday service returned a second time! In fact, they decided to stay! Remarkable.

Even more remarkable is the background of this couple, Pierre and Marie and two-year-old Naomi. Pierre has had a lot of trouble with drugs and has spent time in prison as well as living rough for about 10 years. He was the ideal

streets



person to help with Jacques. He knew the system.

Little by little, Jacques calmed down. He stopped raving about strangling his ex-woman friend. He began to express a desire to use fewer chemicals – under medical supervision. If only he had a roof of his own. You'd never believe what 22 years of living on the streets can do to a man.

Our smart-looking young student, Nirina, subscribes to an agency which allows you to browse an exclusive list of accommodation for rent. So we allowed him to speak to the bemused agency proprietor who, quite understandably, wanted to know why his client was accompanied by three tramps – Pierre dresses casually and I hadn't shaved that morning.

We phoned the first number, a ridiculously cheap flat at only 900 francs a month. I can hardly believe it's true; the social services will cover the cost for someone like Jacques but by rights it should be impossible to persuade a landlord to accept someone like him on the inevitably

flimsy guarantees that a man like him – and a chapel like us – can furnish. Not this time. Pierre and Nirina sort it out within a week.

We see Jacques most days now for coffee and a frenetic game of table football. He explains what it was like to grow up in Paris in the sixties, with appropriate linguistic illustrations. Then suddenly he was orphaned. Little by little we come to understand why Jacques is as he is . . .

Another group of SDFs drop by at the Chapelle. They're younger and still more marginal than Jacques. They all have large ferocious dogs which alone prevent them from being housed in any of the numerous hostels for homeless people. What odours! What slang! What camaraderie!

We've been chatting with the Salvation Army just up the road and we think we can do something together for these people. In the winter they give breakfasts on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, so we are looking into doing the same thing on Mondays and Tuesdays to fill the gaps. ●

Update

STILL NO TOTAL BAN...

Already 100 million landmines have been laid and it is estimated that the same number are stockpiled.

In 1993 it cost \$70 million to clear 100,000 landmines, (average \$700 each). It costs as little as \$3 to produce one.

Brigadier Paddy Blagden, the UN's British mines expert says that every 15 minutes of every day, someone, somewhere will step on an anti-personnel mine.

In Cambodia there are reckoned to be four million landmines and there are already 30,000 amputees there.

These are stark statistics and while it is good that the UK government has given almost £17 million for mine clearance, only a complete ban will offer a real solution. The position of the UK government is that authorised research into anti-personnel mines will continue, and that self-destruct mines will continue to be made available to responsible countries.

The follow-up to the Inhumane Weapons Convention held in April resulted in an increase in the number of countries agreeing to a total ban on landmines from 16 to 39, but the UK is not among them.

In theory non-detectable mines have now been banned, while "smart" or detectable mines can continue, providing the minefields are marked. However a nine year period of grace has been allowed for the ban on non-detectable mines, and the proviso that smart minefields are to be marked unless military operations prevent it being done means that innocent people will continue to be killed or maimed.

The BMS has passed a resolution calling on the international community to introduce a total ban on the production, sale, transfer, export, stockpiling and use of all anti-personnel land mines, and to ensure that satisfactory control measures are enforced and necessary funding made available.

Peter Briggs, chairman of the BMS Justice and Peace Advisory Group

LEFT: Toulouse – on the street

BELOW: Hand-sized disc of death – a land mine



PICTURE: CHRISTIAN AID/NIC DUNLOP



Fairly traded

A coffee morning held by Wrexham Baptist Church mission committee was no ordinary affair, for the emphasis was on fair trading. The coffee, tea and even chocolate on offer all carried the Fair Trade symbol and it was all in aid of mission.

The church is active in support of charity; the women's meeting knits jumpers and blankets and helps the organisation Teddies for Tragedies. And members and friends collect stamps and coins for the BMS Stamp Bureau.

Pictured are mission committee team: (back row) Pat Mitchell, Rose Woosnam and Mike Brain, (front row) Jean Brain, Helen Paddock, minister Nigel Thomas and John Mitchell. ●



Dates for your diary

If you are organising a world mission event open to visitors, and would like it publicised in this diary, please let us have details at least three months in advance. Drop us a line at: Diary Dates, World Mission Link, BMS, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA. Alternatively, telephone on 01235 512077.

Presidential tour

In September Carolyn Green will be in the South Eastern Area. At the Cutting Edge – a celebration

Saturday 14 September at Horsham (venue to be announced)
Details: Presidential Tour Co-ordinator Jim Clarke

31 August - Saturday

Leicester BMS Auxiliary Summer Event at Arnesby
Details: John & Shirley Russell 0116 241 6299

10 September - Tuesday

Worcester Women's Rally at Sansome Walk
Details: Lavinia Hand 01527 520136

10-13 September

WMA Bilingual Conference at Swansea University Conference Centre. Theme: God's Secret Plan
Details: Delyth Wyn Davies 01766 512957

21 September - Saturday

Shropshire Women's Auxiliary Rally at Ludlow
Details: Ivy Jones 01952 506933

27-29 September

Nottingham BMS Support Group Children's Weekend at Mansfield Road, Nottingham
"WOW be a Globetrotter"
Details: Joan Manicom 0115 962 3235

WOW Action Days
For dates, see back cover.

Sept
96



all, BBC Radio Nottingham came along to do a live broadcast of the WOW Weekend water carrying race – using containers carried on their heads.

Worship on the Sunday morning had an African flavour and children reported to the congregation on the activities of the weekend.

"We had a super time," said Wendy. "The only problem is, they want to do it all over again!"

● The WOW magazine and club is run by the BMS to inspire and motivate children in world mission. Resources are available to help with special church-organised WOW events. ●

Mission partnership

Meet Dr and Mrs Simon Collins. BMS missionary Simon and his fiancée, Karen Hedge, were married at Sittingbourne Baptist Church where they met when Simon made a World Mission Link visit last year. Simon, from East Grinstead, Sussex, and Karen, whose parents live in Stevenage, Herts, spent their honeymoon in the

Mud in the cause of mission

If anyone can tell you how they live in Zaire, the youngsters of Daybrook Baptist Church, Nottingham, can.

They have tramped in mud with bare feet to make models of African houses.

They have carried water jars on their heads.

They have prepared African fruit for lunch...

All at a WOW Weekend run at their church.

WOW team leader Wendy Pearson, who drew on BMS WOW Club children's resources for the action-packed weekend, said 40 youngsters took part in a quiz about life in Zaire, a praise party, workshops to make models of African homes and a drama based on Kieze's story in the BMS video Monsters, Monkeys and a Big Big Spider. And to top it

Inspiration, motivation, ideas, news on world mission for churches...



Making an African home at Daybrook WOW weekend

Mission Link



Lake District before travelling to Blackpool to attend the BUGB Baptist Assembly. Karen was a teacher in Sittingbourne before being accepted as a missionary by BMS General Committee in March. They both feel a strong call of God on their lives to service overseas and, after language training in Portugal, they will move to Angola later this year where they will set up a community health scheme. ●

999 calls . . . with a difference

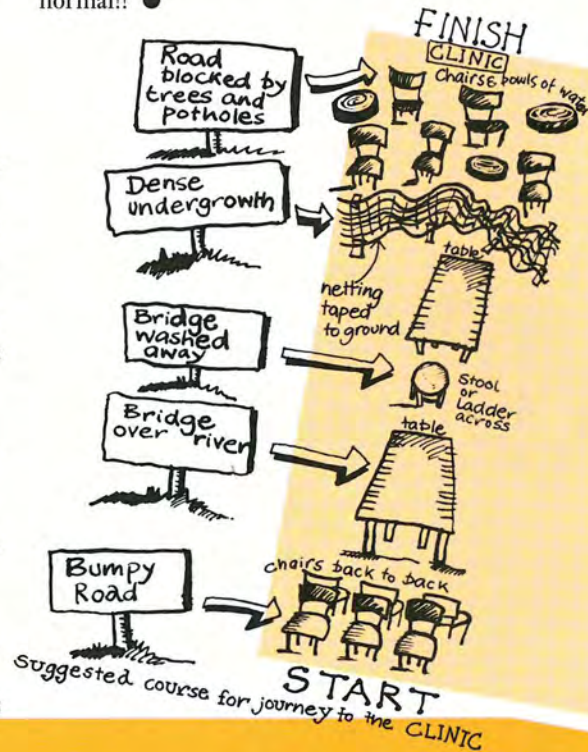
An idea for a summer event – learning can be fun. Set up an obstacle course using chairs, tables, nets, buckets of water and any other articles easily available. Each obstacle represents a problem, eg: chairs are logs blocking the path, netting poisonous undergrowth, buckets of water a marshy area where straying off the path is dangerous, narrow bench a bridge. Be imaginative but safe; here is what one group did – see plan, right.

Form teams of at least five people per team. When it is their turn each team will be given a small ladder. Explain to the teams what is going to happen:

One of your group is very ill and has to be carried on the ladder to the nearest clinic. You have five health points but every time your “patient” touches any of the obstacles, ie hits the bumps in the road, gets wet crossing the river, a point is lost. If the “patient” is

to have any chance of survival they have to get to the clinic as soon as possible and with at least one health point left.

If two parallel courses can be arranged that increases the excitement and involvement. And, if it rains and the event is outdoors – remember that in the rainy season in Asia that would be quite normal!! ●



Dear Audrey...

It's summer time - even the post bag is rejoicing! Here's a letter that is surely irresistible, it ends with love and kisses – I feel better already. Can we do anything to help? Well in this case we can, as they want to join a Link-Up group and are not sure of the nearest one. I give the details but then the serious question – do I send love and kisses in my reply! And here's a thank you letter. No, not to me, but from a missionary to all the groups they'd visited, thanking them for all the support, help, fun and surprises – like the time the bulb blew in the projector (they did an impromptu quiz instead); or being greeted with “You don't look like a missionary” (music to a missionary's ear!); or the birthday cake presented on the right day but without the candles (very tactful). And here's one from a relieved Contact person after a Link-Up visit. She'd never organised one before but it had gone really well, though she'd been a bit worried about the missionary going down with flu – the youth group had organised a walk as part of the visit and were determined to go through with it in spite of the rain. The missionary put on walking shoes and a brave face and got very, very wet!! Thank you missionary for making the young people's day. ●

Sold out to **mission**

DARRELL JACKSON CALMLY WEIGHS WHAT HE SAYS BEFORE HE SAYS IT; YOU CAN ALMOST SEE HIM APPLYING QUIET CEREBRAL MEASUREMENT. THE CONVERSATION MAY BE INFORMAL BUT IT'S AS CAREFUL AND PRECISE AS DARRELL NEEDS TO BE WHEN HE'S SCALING A ROCK FACE OR ICE CLIMBING – JUST ONE OF HIS ACTIVE PURSUITS.

WITH DARRELL THERE IS NO COMPROMISE WHEN IT COMES TO COMMITMENT; IT'S ALL OR NOTHING – SOMETHING FOR WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE WEST COUNTRY WILL HAVE COME TO KNOW HIM DURING HIS THREE YEARS AS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION YOUTH OFFICER FOR DEVON AND CORNWALL.

DARRELL, WHO GREW UP ON THE ISLE OF MAN, TRAINED AT THE LONDON BIBLE COLLEGE, IN NORTHWOOD, MIDDLESEX, BEFORE BEING CALLED TO THE PASTORATE OF A GROUP OF CHURCHES IN EAST DARTMOOR, DEVON, IN 1989. TWO YEARS LATER HE MARRIED CLAIR, A TEXTILE ARTIST.

EARLIER THIS YEAR HE WAS APPOINTED EVANGELISM CO-ORDINATOR WITH THE BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN.

How on earth did you manage to find us?" I had found the small congregation meeting in the local school only through careful inquiry and sheer determination. Being greeted with this question, I politely held back from asking in return: "Why didn't you find us?"

Why do newly arrived residents on a new estate rarely get to hear about the services offered by the local church? So far we've received several local newsletters, had calls from various opportunist salesmen, yet nothing from any of the town's churches. This is prime territory. New housing. Easy ground to cover. The only consolation for our local church is that, so far, the Jehovah's Witnesses haven't found us either!

Why is it that mission is often only an agenda item at church meetings?

When I married Clair in 1991 we were able to visit Zimbabwe and meet up with former college friends. Another trip in 1993 to the International Youth Conference gave further opportunity to visit and work alongside Christians in Zimbabwe. They taught me that for the church to grow and nurture its vitality it has to spend and be spent in mission. This saw an outworking in the setting aside of church planters and the planting of churches that were there for the community. Our group of young British volunteers helped build a playground on a church plot for the benefit of children from the surrounding township.

This same small group of British young people returned to the UK and committed themselves to offering financial support to this church

planting programme. What they had experienced was a church that was as committed to gospel proclamation as it was to enacting it and they found it infectious.

There are many strands drawn from my own experiences that have contributed to the vision for mission that I have for the British church. I spent four happy years as a pastor in Devon and had to approach mission in five rural towns and villages in five different ways. Culturally they appeared similar yet each demanded a distinctive approach. The impetus for mission was the same in each. The programmes and methods were very different.

Unable to leave the beautiful South West behind I spent the next two and a half years working as the youth officer for Devon & Cornwall. Three issues



IF WE WERE ABLE TO SLICE THROUGH GOD'S HEART WE WOULD FIND THE WORD MISSION WRITTEN IN BOLD TYPE.

became clear as I worked with young people.

Firstly, young people will usually respond positively to a presentation of the Christian faith that attempts to engage with their world.

Secondly, young Christians will respond more readily to the challenge to church involvement where adult church members are modelling mission attitudes. It takes adult church members with mission attitudes to mentor young Christians with a willingness to serve. But I found that young people do not want to serve the church, they want to serve others through the church.

Thirdly, young people want church to be the place where they can be themselves, where they can express something of what it is to be human. Sadly, I have seen too many churches dehumanise young people by demanding that they conform to man-made norms. The mission-minded church has successfully created space for young and old to express what it is to be uniquely and individually made in the image of God.

Home or overseas, the church is God's instrument for mission. Society and Union have the same commission. Now, as the BUGB Evangelism Co-ordinator I am so grateful that God has prepared my heart for home mission through exposure to overseas mission and experience of cultures in Africa and throughout continental Europe.

Each one of these cultures needs the redeeming power of the gospel to touch it. Proclamation and enactment of the gospel in each is shaped by that culture. Our post-everything British culture demands we take a fresh look at our mission. New methods are



certainly needed but of themselves are not enough.

What our society needs first and foremost are church communities renewed by the Spirit of Jesus, living as communities of Jesus' transforming love and presence, and offering this life and love to others.

A radical change of attitude is called for. A new way of understanding and being church beckons.

If we were able to slice through God's heart we would find the word **MISSION** written in bold type. I want to be able to slice through the collective heart of every Baptist church in Britain and find there the same word.

When we do find it there we can then be confident that the church has become all that God wants it to be.

Darrell Jackson is Evangelism Co-ordinator for the Baptist Union of Great Britain at Baptist House, Didcot



DARRELL JACKSON: IMAGES FROM HIS LIFE – IN BAPTISM, WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND IN HIS NATIONAL MINISTRY



Thailand

country in focus

Thailand, whose name means Land of the Free is shaped like an elephant's head and trunk, and has an area slightly smaller than France. It has been described as the most exotic country in Asia.

It seems there has been a core of civilisation in this area predating Mediterranean and Chinese civilisations. Thailand has been a kingdom since 1283 – called Siam – with its capital at Ayuthia. Recently the army has dominated politics and commercial life, but its violent suppression of pro-democracy demonstrations in 1992 led to its humiliation.

There followed an election of a civilian government committed to dealing with corruption and diminishing army influence in politics. The present capital Bangkok is known as Krung Thep – the city of Angels – and is the largest city in Thailand.

Chiang Mai, where BMS missionary Jacqui Wells is based, is Thailand's second largest city with a

population of 250,000.

Rice is the major export and main crop, but farmers are often paid inadequately and as a result, they often live below the poverty line.

Poverty has often forced parents to send their children out to work, and in some occupations children under the age of 10 outnumber those between 10 and 19. Others are lured away or even kidnapped and taken to the cities where they are sold into prostitution slavery. It is estimated there are 100,000 male and 700,000 female prostitutes operating in Bangkok, and AIDS is now a major concern; a higher number of AIDS cases is reported in Thailand than in any of the other countries of South East Asia.

Economic growth has been rapid since 1960 and farmers in the uplands began to grow maize, cassava, jute and sugar cane. Irrigation schemes were brought in to extend the growing season and tractors began to replace buffalo.

At the same time the country's

forest area shrank from 60 per cent to 20 per cent leading to soil erosion and a ban on commercial logging in the rain forests. There are also other economic problems: the Gulf of Thailand is being overfished, and Bangkok itself is sinking a little each year because the underground water supplies are drying up.

Thailand also has around 100,000 refugees, including some Hmong Laotians and Cambodians remaining from the previous fighting in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Others are more recent, Karen and Burmese people fleeing from repression in neighbouring Myanmar (Burma).

The Thai people, in the main, have not responded to the gospel, but the tribal peoples living in the north of the country have. The Karen are the largest hill tribe group living in Thailand, and three per cent of them are Christian. One of their church's main goals is to take the gospel to all of the Karens in Thailand before the year 2000. ●

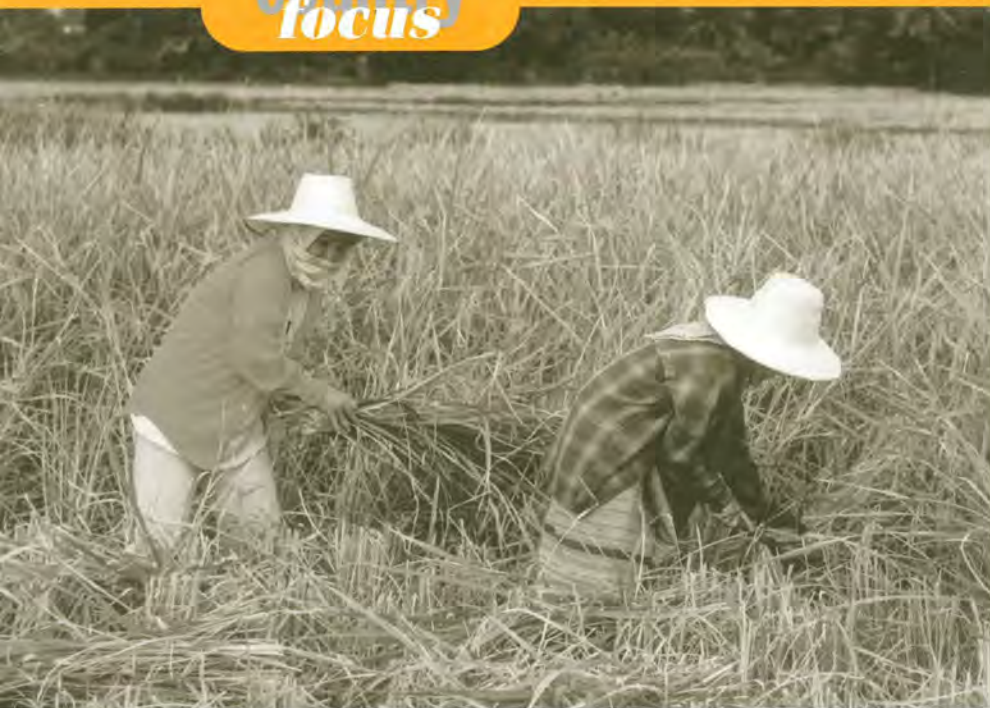


THAILAND: Location, facts and figures



Area 513,120 sq km
Capital Bangkok (Krung Thep) pop. 6,450,000
Population 59,605,000 (1995); estimate for year 2000 65 million
People groups Thai 78%, Chinese 12%, Malay 4%, Mon-Khmer 4% Others 2% (Meo-Yao, Tibeto-Burman which includes Karen, Lahu, Akha, and Lisu peoples)
Religion Buddhist 93%, Muslim 4%, Chinese religions 2%, Christian 1%
Health One doctor for every 4360 people
Calorie consumption 198% of required intake
Safe water 93% of the population has access
Literacy 89%





ANGUS MACNEILL TRIES TO LOOK AT IT FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE

It is one of those questions that will not go away. On the face of it, there should be no problem. The positive answer leaps out, but I suspect that it leaps out too easily and superficially. We do, after all, have a tendency to produce trained, pat answers.

Better to go carefully – especially with this question.

But before facing up to the question, the scene has to be set – and there is our first problem.

Scene-setting is notoriously difficult, made up as it always is, by selected data. Tell me about your house and I will probably get a fair idea of what it is like, even though you forget to tell me the colour of your bedroom wall and somehow omit the fact that you have got one of those tune-playing doorbells.

But ask me to tell you what it is like to live in your house so that, like you, I can get an “inside” feel for it all, and you can see what I mean when I say that scene-setting is notoriously difficult.

After all, I can hardly be expected to view your living-room or lounge in the way that you do. I never lived through the riotous Christmas Party that you held there, nor was I present when you got that telephone call that led to tears and sadness. Nor did I sit in one of the easy chairs over months and years relaxing at the end of a working day, reading the newspaper, doing the crossword puzzle, watching TV and listening to the stories of an entertaining visitor.

To me, it is just another room, no doubt a nice one at that, but I do not have the same feel for it as you have.

What chance then do we have of grasping what it is like to live at Huey

Slow progress for the Gospel

Although there has been a marked increase in interest in the gospel in Thailand during the past 20 years, Christians are still waiting for the spiritual breakthrough. Despite 160 years of intensive mission effort, progress is slow.

A barrier seems to be the strong social cohesiveness of Buddhism; Christianity appears foreign to a nation whose lifestyle is dominated by a Buddhist culture. However, there is evidence of disillusionment among many at the emptiness of Buddhism and an increase in emphasis on evangelism and church growth.

A challenge to the small church in Thailand – there are 24,000 Buddhist temples but only 2,000 small Christian congregations – is a real bondage of demonic powers and the power of sin in society.

Behind Buddhism is a complex world of venerated and feared spirits. Many homes and business premises in Thailand have “spirit houses” outside to appease the spirits. These models, mounted on poles, reflect the size and quality of the family home and are replaced by more elaborate models when the family

improve the home or move.

The idea is that the spirits need a place to live; rather than occupy the family home, they provide them with a home of their own.

Corruption, drugs and violence are evidence of social erosion in Thai society but there is no concept of a need to repent.

The church has suffered from nominalism, backsliding, a lack of discipline and even misuse of funds but there are encouraging signs. There is growing evidence of urban and rural evangelism, church planting and Bible teaching as churches catch the vision for growth.

However, churches are more numerous in the north, in Bangkok and among tribal minorities. Jacqui Wells serves with the BMS in northern Thailand, in a teaching role among Karen tribe women while BMS colleagues Geoff and Chris Bland work with students of the Bangkok Institute of Theology, helping to prepare a new generation of potential Christian workers.

Angus and Carol MacNeill have been involved in Christian education and health work in the remote Sangklaburi area.

**Vision for
growth
amid
social
erosion**

A bit different

Phaak in Western Thailand?

It's not far from the border with Burma in the midst of forested hills. There is a valley running up to the left of the village and the stream (the Huey, that is) has been dammed to form a small reservoir.

Even in the dry months of January and February, there is still some green to be seen near the water. For the most part, however, at this time of the year the ground is brown and dry with clouds of dust hanging over the road every time a vehicle passes. To the east, the countryside is more open, stretching out towards the coastal plain not too far away.

Is a picture forming in your mind yet?

"Yes", you reply, as you think of a place that you once visited on holiday and settle back to fit in the other pieces of description that I am bound to give you, into that over-all reference frame.

And there we have it, our first difficulty, because it is not anything like the place you are thinking of.

"Well," you say, "go on, try me."

Very well. The bamboo houses are on stilts with a small ladder-like stair leading up to the floor of the house. There is no furniture but a mat will be put out for you to sit on once you have left your shoes at the bottom of the ladder and climbed into the house.

The house will have a thatch roof and if you are unfortunate enough to be in a richer householder's house, you will wish that he had kept thatch for his roof, rather than switch to the status-bearing tin roof.

A faded calendar hangs on one wall with a few old photographs beside it. From somewhere, has come a colourful poster about the dangers of drug-taking which is looked at from the

opposite wall by a large picture of a bowler-hatted, European suit-clad, drooping

moustached Thai gentleman of yesteryear.

Underneath the house you can hear a couple of dogs having a scuffle and a hen squawking out of their way.

How is the picture getting on ?

"Sort of," you say. "I'm getting a rough idea in my mind from a picture I remember seeing in a geographical magazine."

Well maybe, but what I am describing is probably not like that either. Still, I'll keep going for a bit.

The village has people, of course; small build in the main, sturdy legs but the kind of legs that knot into a cross-legged position without any bother.

Clothes are a bit rough-and-ready for ordinary wear, but more up-market in quality and colour for special occasions. Hands are working hands – no manicuring in this village. Brown eyes are bright and no-one's ribs are sticking out. Things are organised and there is food and land to cultivate.

When the visitor arrives, everybody gathers round. There is no embarrassment at the unexpected visitor, no muttering behind covered mouths about how inconvenient it is. Instead, it's out with a few bottles of luke-warm Coca Cola for a mini-celebration. Naturally, there is a bit of beetel nut chewing and spitting going →

BELOW:
Angus MacNeill

BOTTOM:
Think of a church building – and Thailand will provide a different picture

And there we have it – our first difficulty – because it's not anything like the place you are thinking of.



OCUS

as well but that is par for the course.

Is the picture more or less complete now?

“More or less,” you say, trying hard to wrap your imagination around a situation that seems to have no reference points to your town, street or neighbours. After all, when last did your neighbour spit beetle nut juice over your garden wall?

Now we can ask the big question at last. What does it mean to be a Christian in this environment?

Is there a distinctive quality of Christian living to be seen in this village? In what essential way will the life of Christians in Huey Phaak, a village similar to all others in the area, be different?



As a westerner living and working in Thailand for the moment, I continue to stumble with these questions. It is obvious that I should not be looking for some kind of transplant of western-style church activity. Not for the Huey Phaaks of this world are the church committees, social evenings with an interesting speaker, seminars, conferences,

coffee mornings, profound discussions at the weekly house group, hunger lunches . . .



But then, the incarnate son of God did not live in that kind of church activity whirl either.

I still have only the glimmer of a feeling for what it is like to live and be raised in this kind of village. How will the love of God in Christ take on flesh in this situation? What do worship and prayer mean for this people? Where does shalom (peace and wholeness) find entrance? What does the command “You shall be my witnesses” mean for these simple villagers?

I have much to learn as I strain to see the Kingdom of God rooted in conditions so different from my cultural background.

But, I am not quite finished yet.

There is a church building in Huey Phaak, still sporting the banner, Merry Christmas 1991, over the doorway. It is not much of a building – a simple bamboo structure with an earthen floor and no pretensions. It is the one visible sign of the Christian presence in this village; nothing elaborate, nothing much to boast about. But was I imagining things when I thought I had a glimpse of a simply clad, simple-speaking, rough-handed Christ sitting on one of the bamboo benches?

The King at home among his people.

The light begins to dawn.

When the King is there, it is only at the edges that things are just a bit a different, not at the centre.

Angus and Carol MacNeill serve with the BMS in Sangklaburi, western Thailand

RICHARD WELLS DISCOVERS A GREAT RESPECT BY THAILAND FOR ITS ROYAL FAMILY

March 10 1996 was a key date in the royal calendar of Thailand. It was the day that HRH the Princess Mother's body was cremated. It was also a day that allowed the rest of the world a glimpse of the high regard in which the nation holds its royal family.

Beamed across the globe were satellite television pictures of a nation in mourning for their beloved Princess Mother. Viewers tuned in to the news channels would have seen the result of elaborate preparations for the funeral – a 4,000-strong procession involving the royal family, high-ranking Buddhist monks, civil servants, soldiers and schoolchildren, and an ornate and delicately crafted crematorium, specially constructed close to the grounds of the royal palace in Bangkok.

That alone, a labour of devotion by hundreds of artisans over many months, provides indisputable evidence of royal fervour unmatched in western kingdoms – and certainly not in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Far from a preoccupation with the private lives of royal family members, the Press in Thailand reflects the people's love of their King and Queen; the Bangkok Post devoted a front and back page in colour to a detailed description of the Princess Mother's funeral preparations but if there was any room for fabrication based on rumours of a playboy lifestyle by the crown prince, it would not have been found in Thailand's newspapers.

The cynic might argue that this is the result of a heavy official hand bent upon using the media as a propaganda tool. But the royal family's story of active concern for their subjects is powerfully persuasive.

Take the Princess Mother; records show that in her early years, visits to remote parts of the Thai kingdom where the lifestyle of the people is plain and poor, had such a profound effect on her that she was moved to live a more simple, rural life. Her action was a clear visual aid to the majority of the 52 million population with whom she was identifying; she began to understand and empathise with their situations, and devoted large portions of her personal wealth to build, equip and staff schools for their children.

Small wonder that hundreds of craftsmen were willing to carve 20,000 pieces of timber to decorate a 30-metre high structure to honour her memory; a structure which was never intended to be permanent but be dismantled just a few days after her funeral.



PICTURES: THAI TOURIST BOARD

A family revered

The present king, who celebrates 50 years on the throne, is just as fondly regarded – a monarch of high integrity, commanding a good deal of respect and having a strong unifying and stabilising role nationally. He carries on his mother's work among rural communities, not out of an imperious sense of duty but from personal interest.

He takes a great interest not only in things educational but also agricultural. In the palace grounds in central Bangkok the king has established an agricultural research centre and personally oversees the development and testing of crop varieties which will be more effective and productive. When he suggests their adoption by farming communities, they can be confident of success because the royal green fingers have tried them first.

The consequence of his concern for people's welfare and his command of their respect is that the king has more of an influence in the country's political affairs than western monarchs, a fact that becomes clear from an eight-facet display of his life in the centrepiece of The King's Park, Bangkok's equivalent of St James' Park, London. Here, in picture window displays on the external walls of an octagonal conference centre, are recorded key aspects of his life as a family man, a technological

innovator, an agricultural developer, and so on.

Thailand means "land of the free" but as the king grows older, concern grows among the Thai people about the kind of ruler his successor will be. The princess has already won hearts with her concern for welfare through an active role in clearing slum zones of Bangkok; she has been instrumental in the construction of apartment blocks to house shack dwellers in the central city area.

There are many who regret that the throne will not pass to her.

TAKE 2

Photocopy this panel, and give a copy to all the young people in your church - or if you like to live dangerously, give a copy to everyone in the church!

What is the minimum age that someone is ready to:

What is the maximum age that someone should:

Teach in Sunday School

Teach in Sunday School

Be a youth leader

Be a youth leader

Be a deacon

Be a deacon

Be an elder/minister

Be an elder/minister

Get involved in overseas mission

Get involved in overseas mission

Lead a weekend retreat

Lead a weekend retreat

Disciple a young Christian

Disciple a young Christian

In the context of a Sunday Service

What is the minimum age that someone is ready to:

What is the maximum age that someone should:

Give the notices

Give the notices

Do a Bible reading

Do a Bible reading

Take the offering

Take the offering

Do the children's talk

Do the children's talk

Preach the sermon

Preach the sermon

Play a piano solo

Play a piano solo

Lead worship

Lead worship

Distribute bread and wine at communion

Distribute bread and wine at communion

NOW ASK:

What is the average age people do these things in your church?

Would you like to see them done by younger people?

Analyse your findings.

QUESTIONS

Are there some jobs that people think can be given to young or youngish people, whereas others are definitely left to the middle-aged and wrinklies?

If that is so, is there a reason for that?

Is it a good reason? Or one that assumes young people can't be given any responsibility until they have held down a job for five years?

If a member of your youth group felt called to leadership within your church, what would your reaction be? Would you encourage them?

SURVEY: What do they say?

Think about the activities that need willing personnel in your church and other jobs that need doing. Are they always done by the same people? Do young people ever get a chance to do them?

Are older, married people more acceptable to take up a key role than younger, single ones?

Do you as a church encourage people of all ages to progress in their Christian lives, which may mean a change of role within the church fellowship? What is your attitude to people stepping down in order that somebody newer and younger can take over?

BOOK review

Why bother with mission?

by Stephen Gaukroger, IVP, £3.99 with Bible Study Guide, 50p

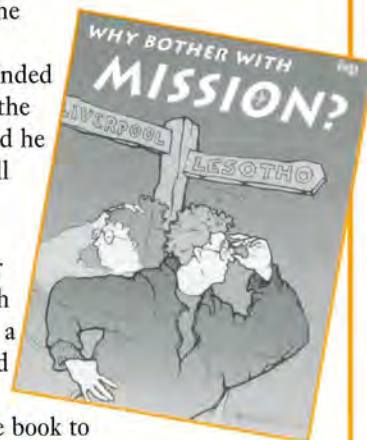
On opening the cover of this book one can see immediately that it is different to most books about mission. The foreword contains an attempt to stop you reading the book and the 'afterword' is an encouragement to apathy and inaction, both signed 'Lucy Fer'.

Every chapter is punctuated with quotes, cartoons and anecdotes along with scripture references and lists of practical ideas for putting into practice the suggestions made and the whole book is written in a clear and straightforward way.

Every chapter concludes with questions for discussion, reproduced with a summary in the accompanying workbook and a helpful resource list is provided.

The author addresses the need for individuals and churches to be mission-minded without ignoring some of the difficult issues involved and he challenges his readers to all play their part in world mission.

This is not the book for anyone seeking an in-depth study on missions but it is a very readable, practical and broad introduction to mission - and an enjoyable book to read!



Sue Millar - minister, South Harrow Baptist Church, London

RESOURCE

RESO

10 WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN BE A YOUNG PEOPLE FRIENDLY CHURCH

- 1** Talk to them in church, and when you see them out-and-about. True, it might not give them much street cred to be seen talking to you, but once they get to know you, that won't be a barrier.
- 2** Write to them when they go away to college - and keep writing! It's really demoralising to receive one letter, and then nothing more.
- 3** Encourage them when you know they're going through a tough time - family problems, exams, boyfriend/girlfriend trouble etc. But don't be too quick to offer advice - wait for the right opportunity.
- 4** Support any and all young people's ventures that are put on through your church - even if you'd rather be doing something else!
- 5** Invite them for a meal. Get to know them. Find out what makes them tick, what their hopes and fears are, what they like and dislike.
- 6** Don't criticise their clothes, make-up, hair-dos, body piercing or taste in music. You were young once, and it is the nature of youth to strike out for independence.
- 7** Encourage them to each find out their gifting as Christians, and having done that, encourage them to work out that gifting. Give them opportunities to try it out.
- 8** Give them the freedom to fail. Just be there to pick up the pieces if necessary. And if you need to admonish, deal with the issue but sandwich it with praise and positive thinking.
- 9** Be willing to train them if their calling matches yours. Young people need role models so that they can develop in the faith.
- 10** Pray for them !

ACTION *card*

COMMUNITY FARMING

A visit to the rural service centre at Galaha near Kandy in Sri Lanka projects a powerful message. This is an organic farm in the central Sri Lankan hills founded by the Christian Workers' Fellowship and with three main aims:

CONSERVATION; RE-CYCLING; DIVERSITY

The farm is 55 acres with very little topsoil, owing to the earlier tea bushes. The big tea estates are all privatised in Sri Lanka and vary greatly in working conditions and opportunities, or lack of them, for the workers.

The farm at Galaha now has livestock, cows, goats, rabbits and poultry. It makes the maximum use of compost, crop rotation and terracing, with minimal use of imported feedstuffs, artificial fertilisers and insecticides. There are flourishing crops of fruits and vegetables, including winged beans and peppers, potatoes and cabbages.

The farm is a training centre to which people come from a wide area. Eight trainees stay for six months and others come for short courses. Each of the cowsheds has a biogas generator and the gas is used for all the cooking. Extension work among local farmers goes on all the time, including the encouragement of co-operatives and small loan schemes.

The centre forms an inter-faith and multi-ethnic community. It focuses on the people and on developing balance between the people and the land, helped by appropriate technology.

Please send this month's card to the Revd Harry Hass at the Woodlands Community, working for community development and small scale farming like that at Galaha and supporting the tea workers in their efforts to improve their lives.

Address:

Woodlands Community Network, 30/6
Esplanade Road, Bandarawela, Sri
Lanka.

Find out about **Benchmarks**, which is exploring ways to challenge companies around the world to develop environmentally friendly and community based policies.

Contact:

Crispin White, ECCR, 11 Burnham
Wood, Fareham, Hants, PO16 7UD.

TAKE 2





Land where they thirst for God

DESPITE THE POVERTY OF ALBANIA, THE BMS 28:19 ACTION TEAM FOUND A GENEROUS SPIRIT AMONG A PEOPLE ONCE UNDER SEVERE OPPRESSION BY A DICTATOR WHO 'ABOLISHED GOD'

Albania – a European country and yet many of us would be hard pressed to locate it on a world map. This tiny nation, no larger than Wales, with a population of 3.5 million – half the size of London's – located opposite Italy and below the former Yugoslavia, has been closed to the world's attention for around 40 years due to the policy of isolation followed by the communists. This was home for one 28:19 Action Team who lived and worked there for six months.

Albania was bound by the oppressive communist dictator, Enver Hoxha (pronounced Hodger), who ruled with an iron fist from 1946 to 1985. Hoxha proudly declared that Albania was the "first atheistic state" that the

world had ever known but his successor, Ramiz Alia, announced that Hoxha's statement was a mistake.

The dictator's mission to abolish God meant that the word "God" was even edited from the dictionary! His fierce attack on all religions began in 1967 as a result of which 2,000 mosques, churches, monasteries and seminaries were shut down, closed, burned or converted into cinemas, gymnasiums or museums. Leaders and believers of religions were to be "wiped off the face of the earth", and so a systematic extermination policy was carried out.

Even amid all this God was at work. Far from throttling the church at source, the persecution deepened many people's faith. People began to turn

up to church in even greater numbers than before!

It was hard for us to comprehend the environment of fear which Albanians have lived in for so long. Most children have grown up with no concept of God after being told repeatedly that he did not exist. It was such a privilege to share in the Christmas celebrations when some of the children in Sunday school were hearing the wonder of the story for the first time.

While we were in Albania, a significant birthday occurred; the First Baptist Church of Tirana celebrated the grand old age of one! At present, the church meets weekly in a cinema which it hires. Soon, space within the cinema will become a problem due to the rapid growth –

something to give praise to God for!

The cinema is not ideal, especially when the electricity fails, plunging the congregation into darkness. The church has about 100 members and numbers are on the increase; this summer some 30 people will be baptised at a local beach.

Sunday morning, 9.30am, a cacophony greets the ears as laughter, chatter and singing is heard at the Baptist Centre in the heart of Tirana. Both young and old have arrived for Bible lessons – Sunday school isn't just for the children; in a country that has not known religious freedom for 25 years, it is necessary for all to be taught. There is certainly no despondency, or even room for sadness at such gatherings as these.

The lives of Albanians

2015



are harsh. Time after time we wondered how it was possible for these people to survive. No jobs, and little prospect of gaining one in the near future meant that some families lived from one day to the next to survive.

Communism has left Albania shattered; Hoxha managed to convince the people that they had the highest standard of living in Europe. Unemployment is estimated at between 60 and 70 per cent. Figures are unclear because Albania is a place of change, where statistics alter daily.

One man we met was so desperate to feed his family that he could see no other solution than to sell his blood. This is the reality of Albania. This story has a happy ending as God answered our prayers by providing the man with a

job and for a good wage. God surely worked a miracle then.

As we walked the streets, shouts of "Americano" would follow us as our nationality was easily mistaken. The best word to describe Albanians' reaction towards us was curiosity. Travelling on packed 1960-style buses and, if we were fortunate, on a seat that was more spring than bounce, meant we experienced a bombardment of questions.

The whole inquisition could be an exhausting experience but it was one of the best places we had an opportunity to practise our language skills and to witness as best we could.

Access for Westerners into the country was severely restricted during the communist era and, if a Westerner was in Albania, it

was strictly forbidden for an Albanian to speak with them. Even now it is something of a novelty to speak with a Westerner and it's true to say, none of us misses the Mastermind sessions!

The generosity and warmth from Albanian people never ceased to amaze us and at the time, was humbling. During a Bible study in Laprake, a suburb of the capital of Tirana, we experienced one of the many frequent power cuts. With no torches, gas lamps, candles or matches, we were all ready to say our farewells and cancel the evening's session.

At that moment, there was a tap on the door and a woman who lived nearby appeared with candles and matches. Without even having asked for help,

someone had approached us freely wanting to help us.

This was not an isolated experience; throughout the six months we found similar reactions, albeit in slightly differing circumstances. It was a challenge for us to be servants when so many Albanians wanted to help, wanted to give, and with no apparent limitations.

So, is Albania a place without hope, a place with no future? From our six months experience, amid the struggles and aches, we witnessed God at work among his people, bringing relief, joy and a certainty that there is someone who cares for Albanians.

It was a privilege for us to be involved in this.

The BMS 28:19 Albania Team — Hugh Clements—Jewery, Andy Third, Melanie Fernandes, Helen Coles, Gavin Carpenter.

prayer focus

A regular update from BMS colleagues around the world compiled by **Sam Gibson**

nepal



Martin and Katrina Butterworth

TRAINING

Martin and Katrina have begun mission training at St Andrew's Hall Missionary College in Birmingham with a view to going to Nepal in January 1997.

They have few details as yet on what they will be doing but it is likely they will live in Butwal, in western Nepal, the base for engineering work of companies started by the United Mission to Nepal.

There is always a need for doctors with Katrina's skills, so there should be plenty of work for her to do.

She recently gained a Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene with Distinction. The six people who gained distinctions in her course were interviewed about their work and

Katrina was awarded the gold medal in International Community Health.

Usually very nervous and unable to sleep the night before exams, Katrina felt strangely calm, slept soundly and went into her examination in the morning singing hymns.

Afterwards, she was told that the Monday evening congregation at the Baptist Assembly in Blackpool had been praying for her – this being the night before the big day.

Katrina is convinced that God is going to use her skills and her gold medal in a special way.

The Butterworths are studying a two term Award in Mission which includes mission theory, biblical studies, world faiths and mission in practice and communication.

Please pray:

- for studies at St Andrew's Hall Missionary College, Birmingham.
- for firm details about the work they will be involved in when they go to Nepal.
- that there be no problems with arrangements for leaving the UK, including visas.

albania



David and Yvonne Wheeler

Yvonne is head nurse at Tirana's ABC Health Centre, which is expanding to meet the demands of the mission community, embassy staff and other Albanians. A house next door has been rented where a doctor who arrived in April now lives.

The administrator has moved out of the clinic and into an office in the house leaving space for a laboratory. The doctor is to stay for six months with another following for a year. In a country with no adequate medical services, this clinic is outstanding.

David oversees the construction work of the European Baptist Federation and is now responsible for all the music at the Baptist Centre in Tirana which he and Yvonne attend. Five young people are learning the guitar.

Please pray

- thank God for the provision of a doctor for the health centre.
- thank God for the difference the young musicians are making to the church worship, pray they be encouraged to continue developing their skills.



Phil and Rosemary Halliday

FRANCE

Since Massy Baptist Church was planted around 20 years ago, it has been a work of the French Home Mission Board. In March, however, it was constituted as a church in its own right.

The Home Mission Board encouraged the church to take this step believing that it is

sufficiently mature and of a size to become independent but it will retain its links – Phil is a Home Mission minister, invited to France and placed in Massy by the French Home Mission Board.

In order to be fully self-supporting, the church needs to provide somewhere for the minister to live and needs to be able to pay the minister's stipend. Plans for the church to purchase the apartment which the Hallidays rent are underway, but it is not yet in a position to pay its minister's wages.

At the moment, Phil's allowance is paid by BMS but when the church is in a position to pay this money itself, Phil and Rosemary will move on, making way for a French minister.

April saw the launch of two new housegroups, one of which marks the continuing integration of Haitian Christians into the church. There are around 40 Haitians in the Baptist church at Massy. Many of them arrived in France as political refugees around 15 years ago and were housed in a hostel.

Since then, they have moved into more permanent accommodation and have become French citizens but integration into a local French church has been a slow and difficult process, in view of the natural desire to stick together, and some French Christians in the past have not been as welcoming as they could have been.

For many years, the

Haitian Christians have held a monthly Sunday afternoon prayer meeting in Creole, their own language. In February, they decided this meeting should be held in French and that it should be opened up to everyone.

Now, in order to be integrated further, the Haitian Christians have decided to replace this Sunday afternoon meeting with a housegroup, thus entering more fully into the church programme. This is a great breakthrough.

Please pray:

- that the church will meet the commitment it has taken on in buying the manse.

- that the increasing integration of the Haitian Christians into the church will bear fruit in the church and community. Pray that there be forgiveness for any hurt caused in the past.

- that the church will soon be in a position to provide its own minister's stipend.

albania

Ryder and Heather Rogers

Ryder and Heather are responsible for leading a church at Bregu-i-Lumit. Martha and Rick, American missionaries in Tirana for language study, help Ryder and Heather and have begun a children's choir which is proving very popular. Rick, who was a music director in the USA, has properly scored some songs written by some girls in the church.

The church now has a team responsible for distributing aid, which is a great relief for Ryder and Heather. Compassion Ministry is a team of people within the church who pray about who should receive help and then take it in person. Whenever they visit people, they ask if they can pray for the person's needs.

Recently, two ladies went to a Sunday meeting at the church as a result of such a display of caring and they gave their lives to Christ there.

Please pray:

- that more people would come to God through Compassion Ministry.
- wisdom for those in charge of distributing aid.
- that plans to establish a Bible study in the next door village of Instituti would be done in the right way and on the right level.



Europe

EUROPE

brazil

South America



Stuart and Georgie Christine

BRAZIL

Stuart is involved with the Urban Impact Project, a growing project with several programmes in the favelas of São Paulo.

They have recently completed a pilot Frontline Team scheme taking 12 young people from local churches to work weekends over three months involved in evangelistic and social projects in the favelas.

The scheme has been a great success and a new team, double the size, is expected to begin running in October when the Christines will also be joined by a BMS Action Team and an Oasis team from the UK.

The next new initiative is to set up a fitness centre and non-alcoholic bar under the Urban Impact Centre for young people from the favelas.

Owing to Stuart's increased involvement in the project, it has become impractical if not detrimental to the Jardim Olinda Church for him to continue as its founding pastor. A Brazilian pastor has now been called to work

with this newly formed church. Isaque, a final year student from one of the seminaries where Stuart is a lecturer, was inducted on June 15.

The project also needs a Brazilian Baptist to lead the pre-school work among under sevens as Georgie no longer has the time and energy to give the daily direction and administrative support that this growing programme needs.

It has been the key to unlocking mission interest and involvement in the local churches and the door of opportunity for hundreds of children and their families each year.

It now has 10 schools and its aim is to have 1,000 children in 25 centres by the end of 1998. As well as their work with the project, Stuart teaches evenings at two theological seminaries and Georgie is a librarian.

Please pray:

- for Isaque and his wife Christina as they begin this new work.

- continued wisdom for Stuart and Georgie as they re-focus on the work God has called them to and let go of that which is no longer theirs to lead.

- for God to provide the right person to lead the under-sevens.

- for continued growth and development of the Urban Impact Project, that it continues to make a difference in people's lives.



Colin and Marcia Pavitt

BRAZIL

Colin and Marcia are working with a new church planting/social project in Eldorado do Sul, 12 miles from Porto Alegre at the southern most tip of Brazil.

The land was purchased cheaply as it is low lying and floods when it rains. To overcome this, the whole building was raised 3ft above ground level. This entailed 80 lorry loads of infill, the construction of concrete bases and a system of columns and beams being laid deep in the ground to provide a secure foundation for the building.

After prayer, an experienced worker was found to take charge of the work when Colin and Saturnio, a Bolivian structural engineer, are not present. The church contracted a man called Carlos who is working well and he, his wife and daughter have all been regularly attending Tuesday and Sunday meetings at the church.

In March, a

team of 46 North Americans arrived to help with building work and along with 25 Brazilians, the structure was completed in six days to the extent that a thanksgiving and dedication service could be held.

The arrival of such a large group of Americans in a small Brazilian town to work on a church - community

project caused a lot of interest and the project was featured in all the newspapers and on the local TV news.

Attendance at the church services has been encouraging with 42 children under the age of 16 and 25 adults. Of these, only six are church members and so a baptism class has been started.

Please pray:

- that the rest of the building be finished quickly and with no problems.

- for continued growth of the church.

- for the continued interest of local people and the media in this project.

- that the project be quickly and firmly established as an excellent community outreach.





John and Norma Clark

BRAZIL

John and Norma are now in the UK on Home Assignment until the beginning of September.

Their church, Hope Church in Fortaleza, is growing. The number of people in membership has doubled over the past two years and the Sunday school has seen even greater growth. The church has reached the limit of its available space and is trying to work out where to go from here.

One ministry of the church is to help people find jobs. Unemployment in Brazil is as high as in the UK but with no social security safety net. God is answering the prayers of the church, however, who have seen members find employment.

One such person is Raimundo who is now selling cleaning cloths at garages. The young people in the church bought the

material and helped him to make the cloths.

Finding work can be life changing – a man called Cleberon has been transformed in both physical appearance and attitude. He now hopes to be married to Deborah, the church treasurer. He has been going out with her for seven years!

Please pray:

- praise God for growth at Hope Church and pray for space to accommodate its expansion.
- for God's blessing on the work among the long-term unemployed.
- that John and Norma quickly settle into Home Assignment and find time for relaxation.

brazil



Andy and Linda Eaves

Andy and Linda work with a children and family project run by the Baptist church at Limoeira do Norte.

The young people in the church have impressed members with their maturity and ability. The 14-20 year olds took on the preaching and leading of services while the pastor was away recently. They also make up the majority of those attending regular Saturday evening evangelistic services, which are usually held in front of someone's home. More good news is that the school run by the church, which was forced to close when its funding was abruptly cut, has now reopened. It was closed for two months earlier in the year when the pastor was on holiday.

On his return he sought new funding and was able to identify suitable funds from a number of available options which will support the project for the foreseeable future.

Please pray:

- thank God for the young people, may God continue to bless them and develop their ministries.
- thank God for the interest local residents are showing in the Saturday evening evangelistic services. Pray for the spread of God's word in the community.
- thank God for the reopening of the school which provides a decent daily meal for the children as well as a free education.

JULY/AUGUST 1996

Arriving in UK

Valerie Hamilton from Dhaka
Iain and Karen Gordon from Kathmandu
Joy Ransom from Kathmandu
Neil and Ruth Abbott from Clermont Ferrand
John and Sue Wilson from Morsang-sur-Orge
Gwen Hunter from Kimpese
Pat Woolhouse from Kimpese

Departing UK

Sheila Samuels to Delhi
Neil and Ruth Abbott to Clermont Ferrand
Phil and Rosemary Halliday to Massy
Ian and Pauline Thomas to Carcassonne
John and Sue Wilson to Morsang-sur-Orge
David and Ann MacFarlane to Altamura
John and Norma Clark to Fortaleza
Mike and Daveen Wilson to Mossoro, Rio Grande do Norte
John and Valerie Furmage to Paraná
Mark and Andrea Hotchkin to Conakry
Helen Johnston to Kathmandu

Overseas Visits

David Martin to Hong Kong
Sian Williams to Colombo, Calcutta and Delhi

Anonymous gifts

For April 1996

We are indebted to the generosity of those who give to the work of making Jesus known through BMS colleagues across the world and acknowledge:

TOTAL £1,589.42

Legacies

For April 1996

We are grateful for the support of those who remember the work of the gospel in their wills and we give thanks to God for the following bequests

	£
Belton Miss Eva	17,770.31
Berry Mrs D G	43.04
Burton Miss Edith M	500.00
Clark Miss Evelyn W	1,000.00
Field Miss D	500.00
Gutridge Miss Enid L	619.95
Higgs Miss Elizabeth	350.00
Linnington Miss Evelyn	50.00
Pringle Miss Gladys C	74.02
Selby Mrs Freda P	2,459.97
Thomas Miss Doris M	2,405.93
Turquand Mr Walter H A	1,000.00
Webster Mrs Gladys M	200.00
Wildgoose Mrs Hilda E	500.00
Yates Mr James A	5,751.00
TOTAL	33,224.22

BMS projects

The totals raised to June 7, 1996:

	£
Breaking Chains	34,018
Mighty Warrior	326
By His Stripes	481
Arise and Build!	1,258

Brazil

Sealed with a Kiss

One of my worst childhood memories is of the ghastly moment when the elderly lady visitor bends down suddenly and amid a flurry of fur coat, large hat and pungent scent, approaches to bestow an unwelcome kiss. There's no escape as the glistening lips approach: nothing you can do, rooted to the spot, to avoid the inevitable. She's determined to kiss you. Arrgh!

It seems that modern children may be spared the worst of this where in our northern European political correctness adults no longer kiss strange children or even nieces and nephews half as much as they did a generation ago. With the passing of that terror for children it's now adults who need to be on their guard.

At any social gathering, without warning or the chance of escape, the lunging embrace and kiss can happen at any minute. Everybody's doing it, politicians, royalty, artists (of course) and were you in Blackpool at the Baptist Assembly?!

Is this all good preparation, I ask myself, for my present job travelling Europe and taking on the culture of kissing in all those Latin countries? Sometimes it's two kisses, sometimes three or even four and in other places it's just the one.

Remembering which country I'm in and how many kisses are required is very important! Get that wrong, or which side to aim first, and it can be a very bad start to a visit not to mention decidedly embarrassing.

Another problem I have is my moustache. While exchanging those skilled "air kisses" I have to avoid becoming entangled in dangly earrings, usually on women, and other bushy moustaches, usually on men. Misjudge the angle and the Velcro effect could be disastrous.

Then, of course, there are those for whom a mere cheek is not enough. In several of the former Soviet republics and elsewhere nothing short of lips-to-lips will do. Imagine the horror when the realisation first dawns that this is not to be a waft of near contact, impersonal and polite.

I sat amused in a large Baptist gathering in eastern Europe as delegates from western countries swayed first one way and then the other seeking a cheek before being lined up for the frontal attack. Surely this is taking the injunction to greet one another with a holy kiss a bit too far!

All that is in stark contrast to Bangladesh where customs were very different. No physical contact between the sexes in public and although I could not touch my wife it was perfectly all right to walk hand in hand with any colleague of the same sex.

I knew one married couple where the wife had short hair and wore jeans and a baggy T shirt – all very uncultural. She was often mistaken for a male and they made the most of the situation, holding hands in the

street and other public places when others could not follow suit.

Is all this kissing a sign of the creeping European influence, another import from the continent? What do the Euro sceptics say about it all? Is this something else we can blame on the Tunnel?

Well, it's back to work and it must be Albania.

Now how many kisses is that?

John Passmore is BMS Europe Representative and spent 10 years as a missionary in Bangladesh



John Passmore takes a sideways view

waves

YOUNG PEOPLE AND MISSION

Older folk are always trying to get younger folk involved in mission – hey! no bad thing. The 28:19 Action Teams demonstrate the real benefit of mission experience both to the young people involved and to those among whom they work.

The above said, the encouragement given to young people to be mission motivated and involved, remains in many places not simply out of date in terms of presentation, but worse, patronising and shallow in terms of content. If there is to be appropriate challenge and encouragement to young people, we need to take the following seriously.

Firstly, issues of the mind. There are many intellectual questions concerning mission work that are being posed by trends in society.

For example, in a multi-faith world, where tolerance and pluralism are key ideas, should it be done? Oh I know that this is not the stuff of a glitzy presentation, funny and appealing – but if we do not engage in the argument for the minds of young people, then we will lose their practical involvement and support.



Secondly, issues of the heart. Young people are not moved by missionary organisations. They are moved and motivated by people and their needs. We need to show them people, and demonstrate how the group we represent is touching the lives of those people and can help them to do so, if they sense that this is something that they are being “called” to. Any missionary group which does not facilitate the working of people in God’s name for and with people, is a waste of space.

Thirdly, issues of the will. We can provide information and opportunities, called biblical challenge, but in the end the action of a person being convinced (“called”) in heart and mind so that it affects their decisions for the future, is God’s work. Here we need to pray for decisions of heart and mind that will affect the will – for service and sacrifice.

Stuart Blythe is one of the ministry team at Kirkintilloch Baptist Church, Scotland



AVAILABLE NOW!



Support Project 96 by buying this full colour postcard. Available from Christine Neilson at BMS. 25p each or 6 postcards for £1

Join with Christians in Zimbabwe, Africa, in their vision for church planting and evangelism. Help to raise **£36,500** to support BMS work in ZIMBABWE.

ZIMBABWE



AVAILABLE NOW!

Telephone Christine Neilson, BMS Literature Secretary on: 01235 512077 if you want to support Project 96, and for your Project pack. Audio visual material will be available in June '96.