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**News** around the world

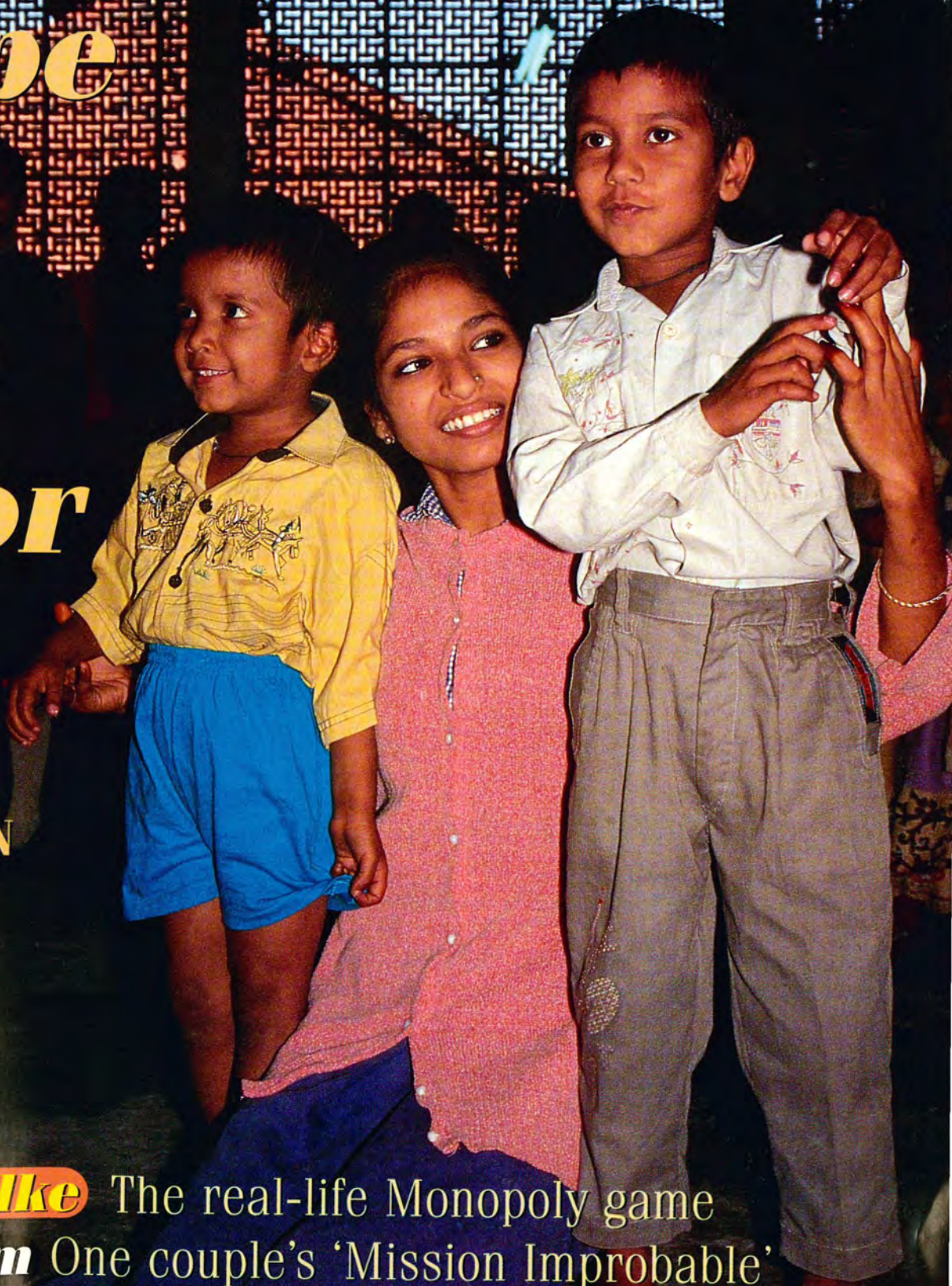
**Focus** on Belgium

**Action teams** in Asia

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**Steve Chalke** The real-life Monopoly game  
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In the grand scheme of things, we're not so badly off in Britain. This nation generally

does not witness the scenes of abject poverty which adorn the promotional literature of aid organisations trying to meet some of the needs of the Third World.

Britain is not trapped in the same kind of fiscal spiral into which developing countries have been squeezed through a combination of heavy loans and wildly fluctuating world market prices for their goods.

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Richard Wells

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# Missionary Herald

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A worldwide look at their place in society

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A land of contrasts

FRONT COVER: School helper Pinki with Akash and Bikash, slum children from New Market, Calcutta, who are educated under an Emmanuel Ministries outreach programme.

PICTURE: Richard Wells

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## MONEY-GO-ROUND

# Careful FOR A GROWING



ILLUSTRATION: SARAH PRENTICE

**C**hurches and their mission agencies are becoming increasingly committed to holistic approaches to mission. They are learning to share in the whole of God's work in the world; mission to the whole person in the context of their family and community life. One consequence of this is that Christians are getting involved in community development initiatives. We now see projects which improve the welfare of the poor as an essential part of the ministry of the church.

One of the difficulties associated with traditional approaches to development is they have tended to ignore the economic context of the poor and so have failed to address the roots of poverty. In addition they have tended to rely on help being given from outside rather than on encouraging the poor themselves to find the right solutions.

The poor have been offered health care but this may have little long-term impact if the issues of diet and low income which keep people unhealthy are not addressed. Good quality training is of little use if the economy cannot provide jobs. People may be helped to improve crops but if they cannot get the extra yield to market, their income will not increase.

Many development specialists have come to see revolving credit

funds as a means of overcoming these problems. A sum of money either saved by the participants or donated by an external agency, or a combination of the two, is used to make small loans so that people can invest in their own small businesses or micro-enterprises.

When the money is repaid it is used to finance further loans. If the interest rate or administration fee is sufficient to cover the costs of the scheme, including inflation and an allowance for bad debts, then it is possible for the fund to become self-sustaining and be a continuing source of investment funds for the community concerned.

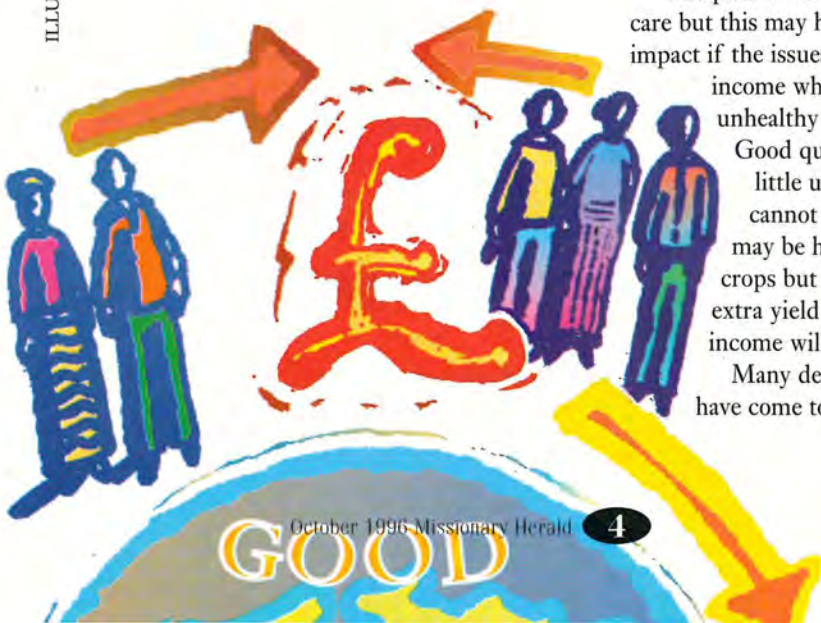
There are many different kinds of schemes and they help different sectors of the community in different ways. One particularly impressive scheme is in Honduras where the agency World Relief has promoted a network of women's community banks.

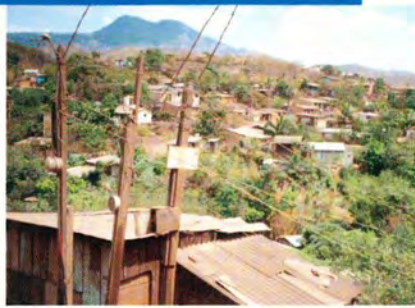
In 1994 the programme had 113 banks with 4,000 members. Participants receive loans of as little as US\$50 which they invest in ways which will supplement household income. They sell tortillas, sweets or cosmetics, they make and mend clothes, they repair and sell fridges, they run small shops.

As a result their homes have more income and their children are better fed and better educated. They repay the loans little by little at weekly meetings and are encouraged to save.

The banks, largely self-organising,

*Continues*





# Cash

## ECONOMY

CREDIT SCHEMES ARE POWERFUL TOOLS FOR MISSION AND TO HELP THE POOR FIND THE RIGHT SOLUTIONS, BUT THEY NEED CAREFUL PLANNING, SAYS **STEVE FINAMORE**



# Careful Cash



are run by elected committees, so women gain experience in running meetings, looking after funds and keeping records. They take responsibility for solving the problems of their own communities and grow in confidence when they realise what can be achieved by working together.

Many groups invite teachers to their meetings to learn about primary health, have literacy classes or do Bible studies. In the right circumstances revolving credit schemes can be a tremendous tool for mission to the poor.

But there are potential problems.

Some schemes offer loans to only a few residents of a given area. Their businesses may offer spin-off benefits for the community but it is also possible for the overall effect to be divisive. A scheme may encourage individualism and result in people working for their own benefit rather than helping communities work together.

Local churches need to be wary of becoming too closely involved with credit schemes. There is a temptation to favour church members over others and this means that the fund stops being a tool for mission. Furthermore, sometimes people do not make their repayments and the church officers, including the pastors, end up being

responsible for debt collection.

Next, loan funds which become too concerned about ensuring that they survive in the long-term become reluctant to take risks. This means that they end up behaving more and more like banks. In the end they may end up refusing to give loans to the poor – the very people they were set up to help.

Finally, many agencies establish credit schemes from ideological motives. They appear to believe that free market capitalism and entrepreneurship are going to save the world. As Christians we know that this is not true. These things are not always liberating; sometimes they are used to oppress people. Any mission tool must go hand in hand with the call to repentance and the proclamation of God's kingdom.

When used appropriately, revolving credit schemes can be a powerful tool for enabling poor communities to work for their own liberation. They remove the mystique from handling money and empower people to take control of their own lives. As such they are a powerful tool for the mission of churches and agencies which seek to share in God's mission in the world and to demonstrate in tangible ways that Jesus Christ brings good news to the poor. ●

Steve Finamore is minister of Westbury-on-Trym Baptist Church, Bristol, and economic development consultant to Tear Fund.

## Poverty drives the minister's wife on to the streets



Usually, Rosemary Williams is in church on Sunday mornings. In fact, as the minister's wife, people expect to see her around.

So it would not have been surprising to see eyebrows raised one Sunday morning when . . . she wasn't there.

She wasn't in the Sunday school.  
And she wasn't at home.

She was out on the streets, standing on the pavement of the High Street . . . watching the small town of Alcester, in Warwickshire, come alive – bleary-eyed residents creeping out for the odd carton of milk or loaf of bread, early-to-rise readers buying their Sunday papers, parents out with their children, pet owners walking their dogs, friends from the five worshipping communities going to church.

The minister's wife had been driven there by poverty.

Not that The Manse was about to be repossessed or that the minister keeps her short on the housekeeping . . . Rosemary had taken the message of the world's poverty sufferers on to the streets of her town.

It was Alcester's annual street market and she was manning a Traidcraft stall, along with many other charity groups in the town. She saw it as a chance to put fairly traded goods in front of a different group of customers and to explain about fair trading.

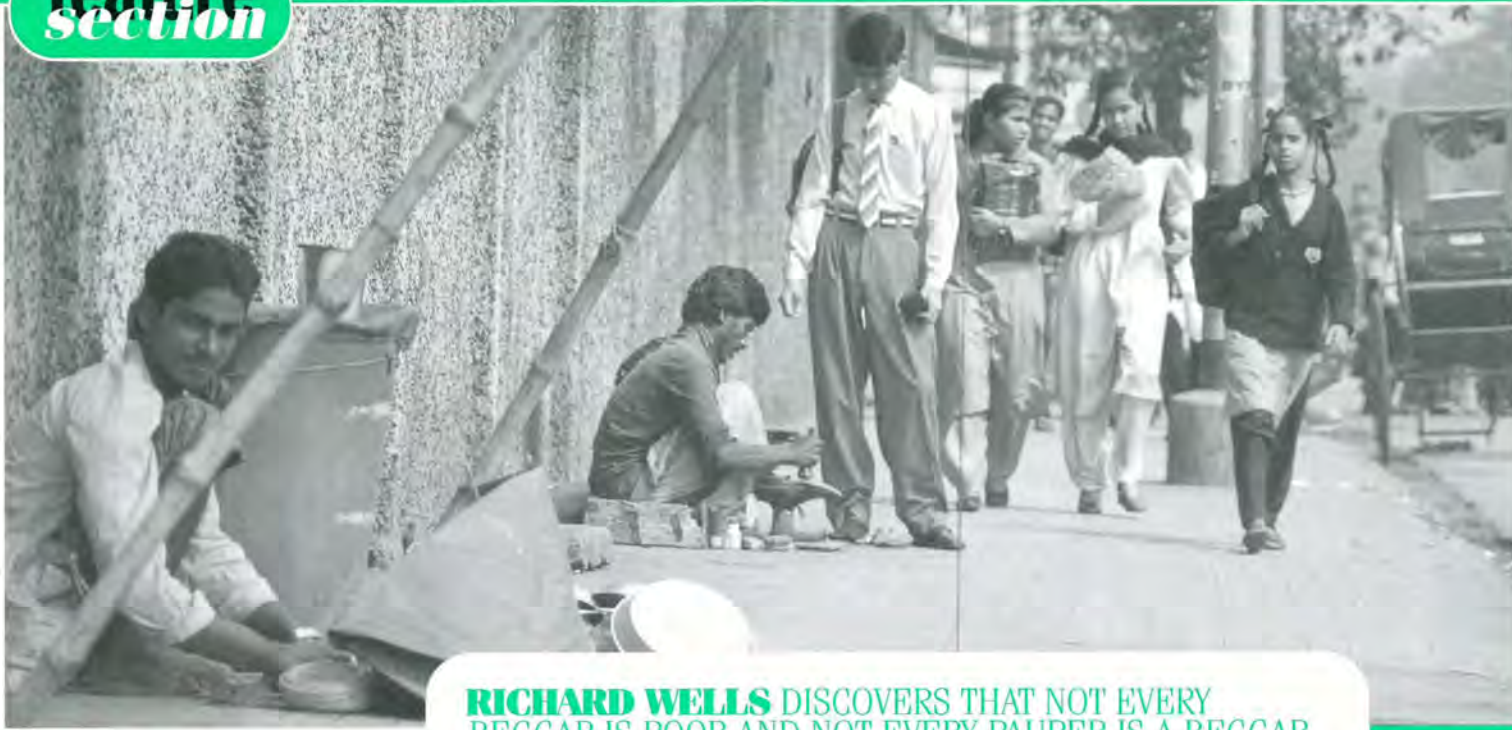
Traidcraft is one of a number of organisations which provides an outlet for the skills of craftspeople in Third World and developing countries by marketing a wide range of products and paying the makers a

fair price to give them a better standard of living.

As Rosemary sat on the pavement with her stall, waiting for the market to open, she reflected on other pavement people of the world.

"I couldn't help thinking of the streets of Calcutta, Dhaka, Rio de Janeiro, Bangkok Nairobi and so many other big cities," she says. "People on the pavements for a lifetime – cooking, eating, sleeping, being born and dying there. They have no choice – no employment, no money, no home.

"Traidcraft and other similar organisations are working to help such people, giving them employment and paying them a fair wage in their villages, so that they don't have to flock to the big cities . . . and sit on the pavements." ●



**RICHARD WELLS** DISCOVERS THAT NOT EVERY BEGGAR IS POOR AND NOT EVERY PAUPER IS A BEGGAR

Business as usual: Calcutta's crowded pavements

**Y**ou hardly leave the dowdy airport building in Calcutta before they're there. They emerge with alarming speed from the anonymity of the crowd and attach themselves, burr-like, as you scan the potholed car park for your lift.

They can be alone or with partner and small child in tow. They always seem to wear pathetic, pleading faces.

They are the beggars.

They plead their repetitive script in faltering English as you stumble, baggage-laden, searching for your lift.

Compassion, come on, where's your compassion? You reason with your conscience that you don't have a hand free to offer anything and, anyway, you don't have Rupees.

"No Rupees, no money." But they stick with you. It's almost as though they can read your conscience . . .

Calcutta's streets are littered with beggars, many in various states of limbleness but nonetheless agile. Their pleading faces penetrate. But you recall the travel handbook which warns you not to part with cash; rather, give to one of Calcutta's missions to the poor.

This advice is supported by those working among the poverty-stricken of Calcutta's 14 million population, among them Emmanuel Ministries (EM), an evangelical Christian group who work with streetchildren at headquarters rented from the BMS.

These are the ragpickers of the city. They come in for breakfast, a bath and

## The Begging Game

a morning of school lessons they would not otherwise have received. Their forlorn-looking mothers sidle through the gates to look and disappear back to the slums or on their daily mission of industry – to sift others' throw-aways.

They seem to be very discreet. And they don't appear to be begging. But there is no doubt – they're poor.

On a tour of the city's slum area in the EM minibus, we are approached by a plainly-dressed woman holding a young child, hoping for alms from "the tourists". There is a brief dialogue with the driver and she moves on.

"She's refused our help many times," he explains. "She'd rather beg. It's good business."

And so it is. We see a pathetic wizened whisper of a woman crouching in the gutter, receiving the occasional coin from passers-by.

I stand at a discreet distance and raise the camera. Suddenly this mild, pleading figure contorts in anger, releasing a torrent of Bengali towards me. Our companion smiles: "She's been there for years. She lives in a nice house and her daughter went to a good school," he says.

Not everyone who occupies a space on Calcutta's cramped and dirty

pavements is in the begging business. There are scribes, repairers, barbers, shoeshiners . . . You have to look carefully to find those whose poverty excludes them from even the most basic necessities. You might just pass them by because they blend so well into the constantly moving streetscene.

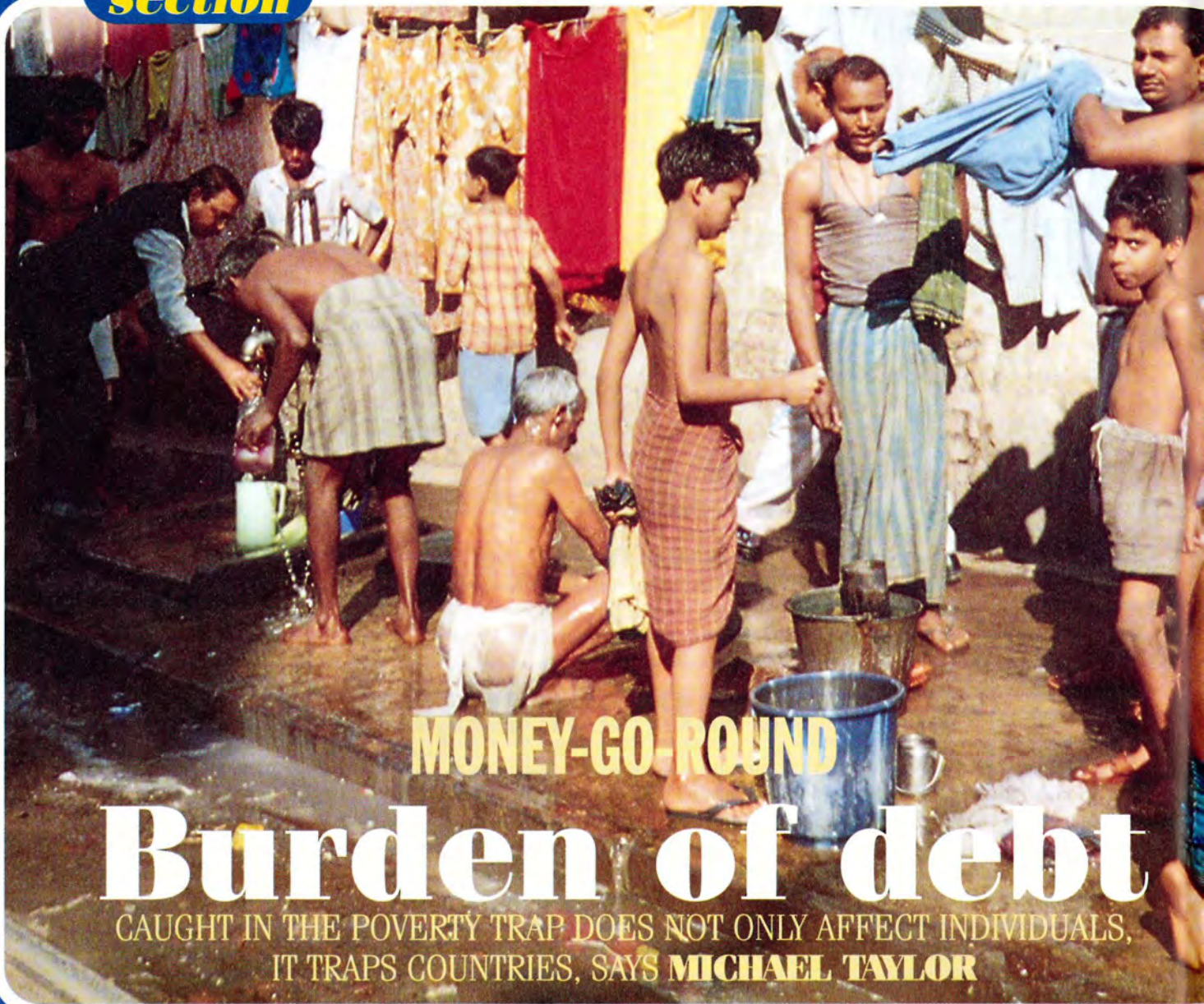
Thankfully there are those who are attuned to the signs. Like the Revd Vijayan Pavamani, whose enthusiasm and vision to reach Calcutta's lowest caste with the love of Jesus fires the hearts of Emmanuel Ministries' teams who work daily with streetchildren.

Like Mother Teresa, from whose mission a few doors along the street spill streams of white-garmented Sisters of Mercy to visit those in need and to search for others who might be.

This diminutive lady's sparkling eyes and pin-sharp mental machinery are a clue to the vision which, like Pavamani's, has fuelled the enthusiasm of hundreds of volunteers.

Brandishing a leaflet, she puts her hand on my arm. She'll want money; could this be the salve for my airport conscience? I begin to reach for my Rupees – but . . .

"Pray," is her single request. "Please pray for us." ●



MONEY-GO-ROUND

# Burden of debt

CAUGHT IN THE POVERTY TRAP DOES NOT ONLY AFFECT INDIVIDUALS, IT TRAPS COUNTRIES, SAYS MICHAEL TAYLOR

**I**n March I was in Jamaica, a country which looms large in the history of the BMS. I spent a day in one of the worst slums in Kingston. The smell is enough to drive you away but the smiles and determination of the people draw you in.

They were celebrating the opening of a marvellously hygienic toilet – to be shared between 10 families! It would help to keep down the level of disease.

The Jamaican government would like to spend money on better health care for its people, but it can't afford to. It has to spend what money it has on paying its debts. That is the inhuman face of our global economic system, and if it is inhuman, it is also ungodly.

Uganda, to take only one more example, is at the centre of an AIDS

epidemic. If you need to blame anyone you can hardly blame the children, but they suffer from it as well. The government spends £1.69 per person on health and £19 per person on debt repayments.

In many countries, poverty cannot be tackled until the burden of debt is lifted.

If you think loans to poor countries are acts of generous kindness by rich countries, remember it suited the West to make the loans in the 1970s to earn interest for itself on otherwise idle capital.

If you think debtors should repay their debts, remember that many countries have long since repaid the money they originally borrowed, but interest rates have shot up. In 1993 sub-Saharan African governments paid

£169million more to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) than they received from it.

If you think poor countries should get on their bikes and earn their keep, remember that African countries have increased their exports by 50 per cent and could have paid their way if prices on the world market had not fallen.

If you think that government aid goes to help the poorest in Africa, remember that over half of it is used to repay rich creditors like ourselves in a crazy money-go-round.

If you think this is all economics and has nothing to do with our faith, read what the Bible says about selling the needy for a pair of shoes, and putting the last first, and debt forgiveness and justice and good news for the poor in the year of God's Jubilee.





These debts are owed to our government – which has tried to persuade the G7 countries to do something about them without too much success – and to the World Bank and the IMF for which our government is responsible, and to the commercial banks where some of us hold accounts.

If you want to do something about it, write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the Treasury in your own words and tell him you want these debts dealt with once and for all; and then join the campaign for debt forgiveness being mounted by churches and others as a marvellous way to celebrate the millennium.

And make it a Jubilee year. ●

Michael H Taylor is Director of Christian Aid, an official agency of British and Irish churches.

# Steve Chalke



## LOADED DICE

Life isn't fair. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

If you've ever been tempted to doubt the truth of this statement, try playing Monopoly. Though all players start from a level playing field, a system is quickly built which works in favour of some and, at the same time, cripples others. Exactly how unfair it all is becomes obvious if everyone agrees to swap positions once all the properties have been bought. The worse your hand, the harder it is to stay in the game. In fact, it's virtually impossible to recover if all you inherit is the Old Kent Road and the Water Works! By contrast, it takes very little skill to win if you have the good fortune to be handed Park Lane, Bond Street and their sets. Rich players get richer while poor players lose even the little they have.

Poverty is a massive, global and urgent problem. According to UNICEF, for example, 35,000 children under the age of five died every day in 1990 from preventable causes linked to hunger and malnutrition – that's almost 1.3 million needless deaths in one year. More than one every 2.5 seconds! And 1990 wasn't unusual; estimates of annual infant death from poverty-related illnesses vary between 12 million and 15 million, while the World Health Organisation calculates that one third of all the world's children are malnourished.

A few years ago, my friend, Dr Tony Campolo, made himself unpopular in some circles when he told an audience of British Christians that "40,000 children died last night, and most of you don't give a shit!" There was a shocked silence as people wondered if they'd heard him correctly. But the well-known Baptist minister wasn't finished. "What's even worse," he went on, "is that most of you are more offended by the fact that I just said 'shit' than by the fact that 40,000 children died yesterday!"

So what should Christians be doing to seek justice, encourage the oppressed, defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow (Isaiah 1:17), as the Old Testament prophets and New Testament writers constantly exhort us to do?

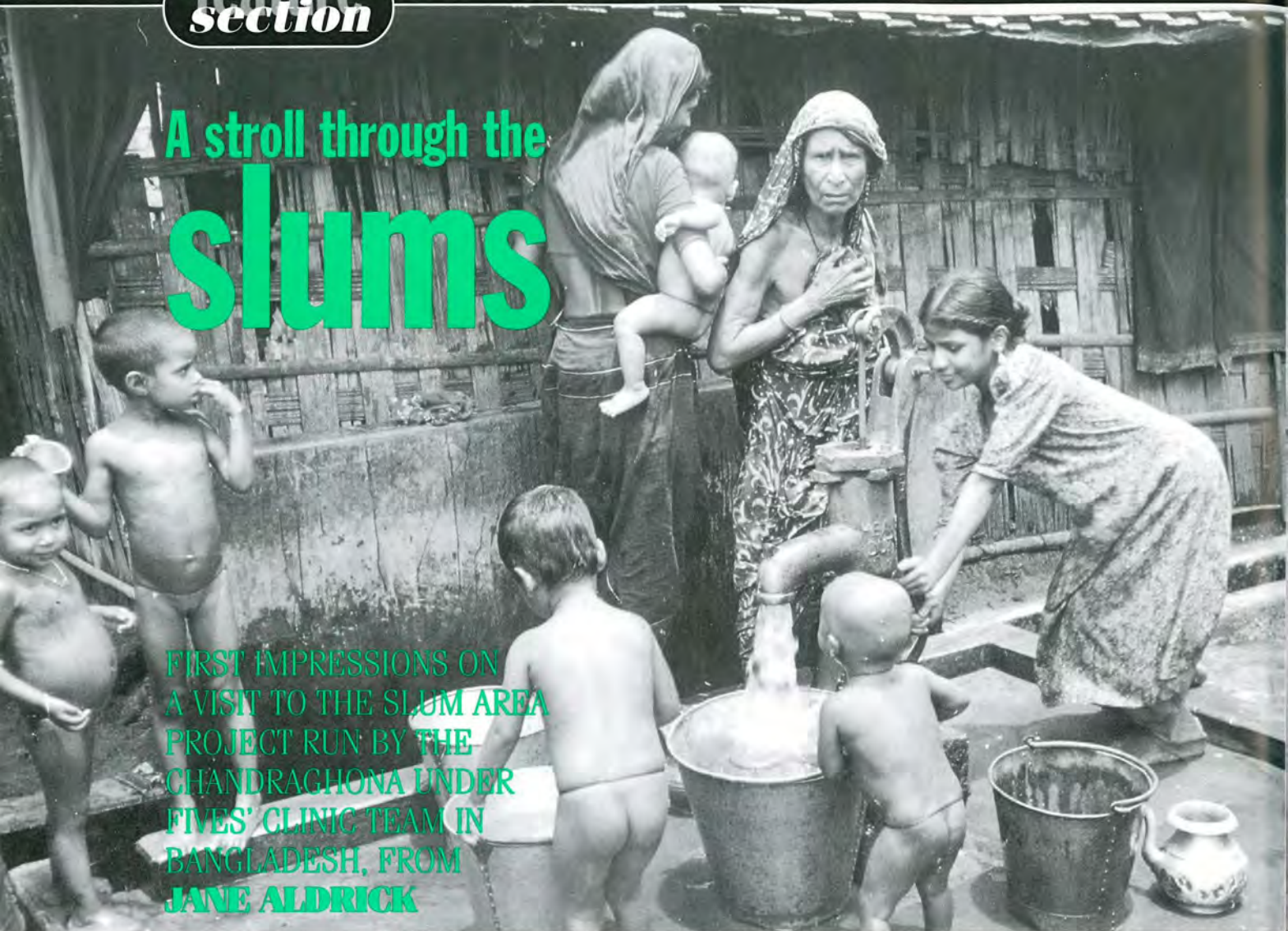
Our first response to poverty, injustice and oppression has, quite rightly, been charity, aimed at alleviating some of their more dramatic consequences. But, to continue the Monopoly analogy, letting another player off their rent when they land on your Mayfair hotel, or even giving them a generous hand-out, without taking any measures to alter the system itself, only prolongs their agony: sooner or later they'll be forced to sell what they have to cover their debts and this will make their position in the game even worse.

The problem, as Archbishop Helder Câmara – shortlisted for the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his actions on behalf of Brazil's poor – famously lamented, is that, "When I feed the poor, they call me a saint; when I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist." Ironically, in spite of the example set by heroes like Wilberforce and Shaftesbury, many Christians are wary about becoming politically involved and working to change the system. Somewhere along the line, we've swallowed the misguided notion that religion and politics – especially party politics – don't mix. It's a dirty, secular game that truly spiritual men and women should avoid.

The truth is, however, that political involvement is all part of our Christian responsibility. (In fact, the word "politics" literally just means "citizenship".) And in reality, even the most politically-allergic Christians get involved in political issues when it suits them: eg abortion, divorce and Sunday trading. But our full-blooded involvement isn't a case of straying from our Christian commitment to fight poverty and injustice. Rather, it's an essential part of it, as we seek justice, encourage the oppressed, defend the cause of the fatherless (and) plead the case of the widow.

STEVE CHALKE IS INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR OF OASIS TRUST

# A stroll through the slums



FIRST IMPRESSIONS ON A VISIT TO THE SLUM AREA PROJECT RUN BY THE CHANDRAGHONA UNDER FIVES' CLINIC TEAM IN BANGLADESH, FROM JANE ALDRICK

Camera rolling? ACTION! I'm on a film set – is it Ghandi? Heavy monsoon rains torrent along this muddy lane. Deep swirling pools of refuse and sewage combine to make walking hazardous. A cast of thousands. Smiling naked children, ragged saris and lunghis and a tee-shirt recommending GOLF.

Alas – this is no film set. This is horrifically for real. I am moving into the inner-city riverside slum settlements of Chittagong.

My beautifully sari'd health worker guide, my black umbrella and my Fuji camera conspire to make me feel like the Queen. The bush telegraph buzzes and the slums erupt with curiosity to stare at my wealthy, white skin. I feel ashamed!

Begging bowls, the sick, the lame. White-eyed blind old men, desperate mothers with baby on hip. In the hubbub we're invited and jostled across

the open sewer into a leaking mud slum. Lying on a rotten piece of old wood is the deformed 50lb frame of an old man, a frame that I wouldn't have believed could sustain life.

Crippled for 15 years with polio, this man presented

us with his plight. He was a beggar, wheeled daily out to beg and his garry (trolley) had finally broken. Could we give him money for its repair?

Around most corners in Bangladesh is yet another picture of desperate, irreconcilable poverty. My loose change could repair his garry but what then of the blind new mother? The limbless child?

A stroll through Chittagong's slum streets with BMS missionary Sue Headlam and her team of Under Fives' Clinic workers created in me massive confusion and conflicts. Where is Jesus here?

## Alas – this is no film set

In the slums this new Christian initiative provides health care – ante and post natal care, treatment of illness, health education, an immunisation

programme and family planning. All are offered to the slum's

mothers and children. Yes, this is Christian action.

The deformed man with his broken garry? What's to be done for him? But the bright-eyed, generous hearted lively children who danced around us have the right to health and some sort of hope on this the lowest rung of the world's ladder.

My stroll through the slums silenced me.

This is a place where hope and despair meet. ●

Jane Aldrick is a journalist who attends Moortown Baptist Church, Leeds.



**MISSION NEWS FROM HOME AND ABROAD**

**Four head for foreign parts**

Four new mission candidates have been accepted by BMS General Committee, which met at Loughborough Baptist Church.

School teacher Anne Roberts, head of biology at Llandrindod High School, in Wales, will work in Albania, supporting women's and young people's work.



Anne (44) was educated in Wales – at Holyhead and Barry – and after nine years with the Medical Research Council, she took a London University Post Graduate Certificate in Education before teaching in the Ruislip and Northwood area of Middlesex.

As a member at Ruislip

Baptist Church, she sat on its missionary executive committee, and on moving to Llandrindod Wells, where she belongs to the Newlife Pentecostal Church, she helped to start a Youth for Christ group.

Anne is currently taking a Certificate in Christian Studies and will start a year of training in the summer to include theology, cross-cultural studies and a course on working with children and young people, during which time she will link with a Baptist church.



BMS volunteer Geoffrey Timms has been accepted for full-time agricultural work in Albania.

Geoffrey, a member of Camberley Baptist Church, Surrey, has been a volunteer in Albania since November 1994, working with a seed distribution project, in agricultural education, computer training and English teaching.

While there he has taken part in new worship group development and leadership.

Geoffrey (23), who has an agricultural economics honours degree from London University, will spend a year at St Andrew's Hall, Birmingham, to study for a Certificate in Mission and undertake horticulture training. He is expected to return to Albania in summer 1997.

Chartered engineer Anthony Sykes and his wife, Judith, have been accepted for service in Vellore



Hospital, south India.

The couple, members of Norton Baptist Church, Stockton-on-Tees, are to spend a term at St Andrew's Hall for mission and cross-cultural studies, and expect to leave for India early next year, provided a visa can be obtained for a civil engineer's post in Vellore.

Anthony (34) has worked with AMEC Civil Engineering since graduating from Loughborough University in 1984. Judith (30) works at a Christian family home for the mentally handicapped.

Both are involved in youth leadership and teach on Sunday mornings. ●

**Memorial fund for training leaders**

A project to raise £1,800 to support and encourage women in training for Christian ministry has been launched in memory of former BMS missionary Ruth Page, who died in July.

Ruth, a life deacon at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church in London, served with the BMS in Zaire between 1945 and 1975. During her service she was highly regarded for her leadership in education and in the life of the church.

The church which, through its Christian Connections



UK-SA organisation, has enabled students and leaders in South Africa to start and continue studies, wants to continue this work through a Ruth Page Scholarship fund.

The aim is to send four women to a school of theology, enable two women to continue a degree or diploma course, send 10 church leaders on a weekend theological seminar and allow three students to attend a one-week theological seminar.

It is hoped to raise the £1,800 necessary to achieve these aims before Christmas. ●

**BMS** 116443

## Cutting Edge Carolyn at the Leading Edge

BMS President Carolyn Green was among a strong line-up of speakers at Leading Edge, the Baptists' first Bible week, held in Norfolk at the beginning of August.

Although not planned as part of her national tour – At the Cutting Edge – to inspire church members and leaders in world mission, Carolyn grasped the opportunity to lead a seminar – BMS, The New Vision.

Sharing the platform with speakers like Steve Chalke, David Coffey, Steve Ibbotson, Douglas McBain, Colin Marshall and Rob Warner, Carolyn was encouraged to hear the challenge repeated to “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and ends of the earth mission”.

While her seminar unpacked the new BMS vision and strategy for the 400-strong event, Carolyn smiles as she points out that the BMS vision has always been the same – to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“I changed the 18th century words to the ones we use today and I showed by colour and word pictures what’s going on with God in BMS round the world,” she said. “I hoped to open up a new vision in those who came to the seminar.”

She realised that she was not having to work very hard; Christians at Leading Edge were on her wavelength. “I have

not heard such strong support of BMS in other quarters,” said Carolyn. “The challenge to world mission was exciting and to have the BMS available as the means for Baptists to do this was thrilling. I wish there had been more folk there to hear – but there’s always next year!”

Leading Edge, which aimed to be a low-cost family event to encourage Baptists in their Christian faith, in their salt-and-light mission to the nation and in their desire for God to revive the church, is already scheduled for next year.

Among the speakers at the event – from August 2 to 9 – will be Ian Coffey, Steve Gaukroger, Rob Gordon, Norman Moss and Rob White. Youth events, similar to those run by Dennis Pethers and Viz-a-Viz this year, are also planned.

Meanwhile, Carolyn’s national tour continues this month with breakfast and lunch meetings for church leaders in the Greater London area, and celebration meetings for all ages at Haven Green, Ealing, west London, and Trinity, Bexleyheath, in south east London.

● For At the Cutting Edge details and contact telephone numbers, please turn to the World Mission Link news section on Pages 16 and 17. ●



### 01235 512077 OFF THE SHELF

If you haven't yet ordered your Christmas cards, don't delay – order from us.

BMS Christmas greetings cards are great value for money and proceeds from their sale go to help the work of sharing the gospel overseas. There are three different

designs – a calligraphic card in a pack of 10 for £1.95 and two picture designs at £1.95 each for packs of 12. If you order five packs, you'll get them for the price of four.

New out this month is the latest BMS video, Making Jesus Known. It shows, in six short programmes,

where we feel God is leading us as a missionary society as we approach the 21st century.

There's a free workbook for personal or group study and the package costs £9.95. Order it through the new BMS Christmas catalogue.

**Christine Neilson – Telephone 01235 512077 – Christine Neilson**

## Release into the wild



The small Christian community throughout Thailand waits with eager anticipation for the release of 35 young graduates crammed with theological training and bursting with fresh enthusiasm.

They will have spent three or four years accumulating knowledge, skills and some work experience through the faculties of the Bangkok Institute of Theology (BIT).

Now they get the chance to do it for real.

Actual hands-on experience . . .

This is the class of '96, and they're raring to go.

They seem almost too young to be let loose on the Christian Church in Thailand. After all, they look no older than A-level students. But what they lack in wisdom and experience, they can more than make up for in commitment – they've heard God's calling and there is no holding back.

Thirty five full-time Christian workers in a country covering an area of 513,120 square kilometres with a population of more than 59 million may seem a bit thin on the ground. But the church is not very big – 2,000 small congregations, outnumbered one to 12 by Buddhist temples.

Thai society, dominated by a strong cohesive Buddhist culture, is not readily accepting of another belief which appears foreign, so growth has been hard to come by since protestant missionaries started their intensive gospel efforts 160 years ago, and stagnation and nominalism figure in church history.

Yet, when you examine the kinds of posts these 35 fledgling theologians will be taking up, you realise that the vision of the church in Thailand is changing. Far from being a pastoral backwater where they will be able to shepherd small flocks in tranquil religious sterility, this is front line stuff.

BMS missionary Geoff Bland, who lectures at BIT, says most of them will be engaged in evangelism, youth work,

THE NEXT BATCH OF  
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TOUGH, REPORTS  
**RICHARD WELLS**

church planting or church growth work.

Santi, for example, a young man from the Lahu hill-tribe in northern Thailand, is off to plant a Thai church in western Bangkok where, it is hoped, a rallying point will develop for the many Lahu who move south to work in the city.

He will have the support of Ajarn Shin, a Korean missionary at BIT who has worked in Thailand for more than 30 years. His organisation – World Mission Partners – has started a new church in Bangkok every year for the

past seven years, financed by Korean Christians.

Gittiya and Gittiporn, both from Isan – north-east Thailand – are returning to work on the Cambodian border with a congregation supported by one of Bangkok's larger churches and pastored by one of last year's BIT graduates.

Geoff says: "The Bangkok church want to make a real go of it, so these two young women in their early 20s will be working with him. But if having a team of three workers in one small church seems a luxury, it's an indication of how little church workers here get paid!"

Four young BIT graduates will head south towards the Malaysian border to work among Thai people with Chinese origins, many of whom will be Muslim rather than Buddhist.

Geoff urges prayer for these young Christian workers. "It's daunting and difficult for them," he says. "Most of them will be in lonely situations where they'll quickly miss the spiritual stimulus and fun they've known at BIT."

Those continuing their studies at BIT will now be reflecting on their summer work placements – a foretaste of the rigours of church work and evangelism to come. "Without a doubt, this is strategic work," says Geoff. "This will be of future benefit throughout the land."

● Geoff and Chris Bland (pictured above) both teach at BIT. Geoff specialises on the New Testament and Chris tutors in English.

**KUWAIT**

Leaders of Christian groups have expressed amazement at the number of conversions to Christ in the wake of former Muslim Robert Hussain's declaration that he had become a Christian. Four more Kuwaitis, using pseudonyms, have told their conversion stories in the Al Hadaf weekly newspaper there. Sources estimate the number of Christians in Kuwait at 150,000 and in the two months following Robert's testimony, a local Christian resource centre sold more than 6,000 New Testaments. (CIN)

**VIETNAM**

Thirteen protestant prisoners of conscience are being held in the socialist republic, all pastors and evangelists of house churches. They are variously accused of illegal religious activity, resisting arrest or abusing their rights as citizens, and one is known to have been tortured. The arrests concentrated on Vietnam's Quang Ngai province and half those held are from ethnic minorities. In July 10 Christian workers were released from detention after advocacy by Korean church leader Dr Paul Yonggi Cho. (CIN)

**AUSTRALIA**

A memorial fund to train young Third World Christians for missionary service has been set up following the death of a 19-year-old student missionary. David McGirr, from Ulster, had just returned from an outreach to Vietnam and Thailand and was surfing south of Perth when he drowned in a strong current. The fund, to which Aus\$20,000 has so far been donated, will set up a Youth With a Mission discipleship training school for candidates from developing countries. (YWAM News)

**ZAIRE**

Two Russian pilots whose plane was involved in the air crash which killed more than 400 Zairians in January have been jailed for two years, report sources in Kinshasa. A seven million French francs fine has been imposed on two operating companies, Air Africa and Scibe – the aircraft was an Air Africa plane flying under licence to Scibe. The Russian-built Antanatotv 32 came down after take-off on to the crowded market of Type Ka.

**AMERICA**

A group of young Kenyan Christians visited Richmond, Virginia, one of the centres of former slave trade to express their sorrow for the past and leave a message of hope for the future. The 35 teenagers had a challenging message for their hosts: "Forgive us . . ." Spokesman John Kisamwa said: "Africans also played a part in slavery. We sold our brothers to the slave traders." Their message came at the close of a powerful gospel drama performance in the city. (YWAM News)

**Growth among the**

In the heart of the South American continent lies the Pantanal, the largest swamplands in the world, covering an area almost the size of the UK and occupying a large part of the Brazilian states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul, writes Mike Gardiner.

It is one of the world's richest breeding grounds for freshwater fish, and among the beneficiaries of this is an enormous variety of birds which attract ornithologists from across the world.

One of the gateways to this ecological treasure chest is the old city of Pocone, 70 miles to the south of the Mato Grosso capital of Cuiaba, and situated at the northern end of the dusty Transpantaneira, the unsurfaced road which crosses the region.

Pocone, a typical small Brazilian interior city with an economy dominated by cattle ranching and tourism, has a

images of saints and noisy fireworks. But typical of modern Brazil, very few seem to have a living faith in Jesus Christ and only about five per cent are to be found in church – catholic or protestant – on Sundays.

Against this background the Mato Grosso Baptist Convention responded to the Fund for the Future appeal from BMS in 1992 and earmarked Pocone – at that time without a Baptist church – as one of its expansion points in the drive to evangelise the whole state.

The £21,750 project was approved and, thanks to the generosity of those who contributed, BMS promised to pay a pastor's salary for two years. Pastor Cesar Augusto and his wife, Noemia, responded in April 1994 to God's missionary call to leave the comfortable south east of Brazil and take on the challenge of pioneering a new work with

their children, Danielle and Ismael, now eight and four.

At the same time the American Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board agreed to earmark Pocone for a team of volunteers to build a simple

church building.

Now in its third year the Pocone Baptist congregation is showing healthy signs of growth. Hallmarks of this young church are fellowship,



population of 45,000. A large number of Pocone's population participate in the traditional festivals of the Roman Catholic calendar, celebrated with processions,

# Update

## enthusiastic poor

**Hallmarks of this young church are fellowship, love and warmth which draw families in.**



love and warmth which draw families in. The church has about 30 members but Pastor Cesar says, ruefully, that an equal number have moved away after being baptised chiefly in search of work.

As in most Brazilian churches, building projects are not a matter of bank balances and contractors' estimates, but more... "let's start next Saturday!". And that's just what happened.

One Saturday all the men of the church started digging the foundations of what will be three Sunday school rooms behind the church building, then on Sunday everyone had lunch at the church before the men started work again – joined by several not-yet-converted husbands of the women who prepared the lunch.

While waiting for lunch to be prepared on a little

stove in a lean-to at the back of the church, we joined youngsters in a hilarious Portuguese-English chorus singing session that made us feel so privileged to be representatives of British Christians working in partnership with the poor, but enthusiastic, Baptist believers of rural Brazil. ●

### Prayer points

- Praise the Lord for the fruit that the BMS Fund for the Future is producing in Pocone.
- Pray for Pastor Cesar, who still weeps for the thousands blinded by idolatry and superstition.

Mike and Jean Gardiner serve with the BMS in Cuiaba in theological seminary and church work

## Swift aid for tornado victims

Baptist aid workers have been counting the cost of the tornado which wreaked havoc and destruction in Bangladesh in May.

It claimed the lives of 559 and seriously injured 22,000. But its effects were felt by more than 65,000 people living in 69 villages and communities. At the final count, 16,225 homes had been destroyed and another 6,765 badly damaged, while 31 schools had been razed to the ground. Half the ripened crops in the area's paddy fields was destroyed along with 1,561 livestock.

James A Singha, Director of the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha's Social Health and Education Development Board, described the area as a bombsite. "Some of the areas looked as though there had been carpet bombing there," he said. "Dead bodies were strewn over the paddy and football fields."

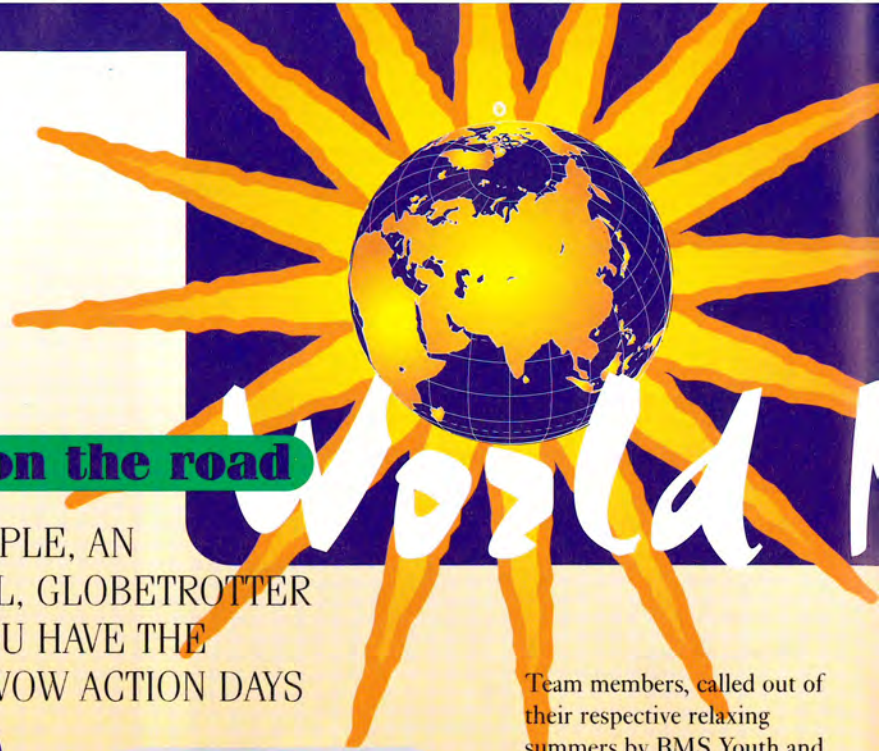
It was into this devastation that the board speedily distributed emergency relief in league with the local government administrators and the Bureau of Non Government Organisations.

Thanks to a BMS Relief Fund grant of £5,000, a total of 675 families in the Tangail district of the affected area each received a woman's sari, a man's lungi, towelling, a bucket and a hurricane lamp.

"We were able to get emergency and necessary goods to the victims directly," said Mr Singha. "In this way Christians were supported in their faith and witness as well as in the reality of the economic restraints, and the concept of Christian service was demonstrated to the majority who are not Christians."

Mr Singha was pleased that the name of the Baptist Sangha has been widely distributed. Every item contained the Sangha's logo. ●





## World mission on the road

TAKE FOUR YOUNG PEOPLE, AN INFLATABLE EARTHBALL, GLOBETROTTER AND BOOMER – AND YOU HAVE THE PERFECT RECIPE FOR WOW ACTION DAYS

Team members, called out of their respective relaxing summers by BMS Youth and Children's Co-ordinator Phil Marsden to take the manic programme to all parts of the UK to excite and exhaust hundreds of children.

From doing the conga, to writing to missionaries, from sketches with shaving foam and clowns to Pingu videos . . . and a giant inflatable earthball, the children joined in everything. Get a child of five or six face to face with the truth of Jesus Christ and the uncompromising gospel and they want to be involved.

The programme ran from 10am to 4pm in eight locations around the country – a morning roadshow, packed lunch, an afternoon of activities and a challenge to everyone.

And the reward for the team? The glowing smile on the face of a small girl when she was told that SHE was a missionary in her own school.



## WOW! It's manic action

Two cars, six people and an impressive collection of electrical equipment and costumes – not to mention an array of sunglasses – and the WOW Action Days hit the road with a vengeance.

Working with the BMS is obviously addictive because the team was made up almost entirely of ex-28:19 Action



### 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.

#### Presidential tour

In October Carolyn Green will be in the London and South East Area, and move to Bristol at the beginning of November  
At the Cutting Edge – Celebration of Mission for everyone.  
**Horsham, West Sussex. Friday 11 October at Haven Green Baptist Church, Ealing, west London. Saturday 19 October at Trinity Baptist Church, Bexleyheath, south-east London. Thursday 7 November at Westbury-on-Trym Baptist Church,**  
Details: Derek Mucklow 0181 393 6017

#### Other dates

**Saturday - Sunday 12-13 October**  
Hull District Mission Weekend, focus on Zimbabwe, Cottingham Road Baptist Church.  
Details: Brenda Cook 01482 506452

**Sunday 13 October**  
Europe Day (mission focus) at South Parade Baptist Church, Leeds.  
Details: Anna Appleford 0113 294 5782

**Monday 14 October**  
West of Scotland Women's Missionary Fellowship, monthly meeting, St Stephen's Church Centre, Glasgow.  
Details: Ann Durning 0141 641 6248

**Thursday 17 October**  
Norfolk District Support Group Autumn Rally at Norwich.  
Details: Raymond Lewis 01603 743685

**Tuesday - Thursday 22-24 October**  
BU of Scotland Annual Assembly: Missionary Tea on 22 October, Mission Evening 23 October. Guests include retiring BMS General Director Reg Harvey and incoming General Director Alistair Brown.

**Saturday 26 October**  
On the Internet a BMS/HM day conference exploring our commitment to mission worldwide at Braintree Baptist Church, Essex.  
Details: Jim Clarke 01353 778984

Oct  
96

## World Mission for Churches



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

# Mission Link

LEFT: WOW action with the giant inflatable Earthball.

BELOW LEFT: Eltham Park – a French welcome for BMS missionaries.

BELOW RIGHT: Puzzling challenge at the Cambridgeshire open garden.

## Active welcome

John and Sue Wilson and their family received a mission welcome with a French flavour when they visited their link church at Eltham Park, south east London – it was the church's world mission event.

It was a day for revolutionary active participation with an It's a Knockout challenge, model painting, an art group and the release of dozens of red, white and blue balloons.

The weekend event coincided with Bastille Day celebrations and co-ordinator Shirley McWilliam said that as John and Sue serve with the BMS in Morsang, France, it was too good an opportunity to miss. "We were also able to add, as we'd hoped, £150 to the BMS fund," she said.

## Open air aid for BMS

For the third successive year two Cambridgeshire gardens were opened to the public during the summer raising more than £700 for the BMS.

With support from the Cambridgeshire Baptist Missionary Fellowship, Kay and Keith Rawlinson opened their garden gates in Willingham, near Cambridge, to visitors. And in Great Shelford the garden of Gwen and Hugh Oliver became a hive of activity with games and competitions for families.

The sale of cakes, jams, plants, books, lunches and refreshments swelled funds, and the open gardens allowed 40 churches to take part.

## Reinforcing the links

Haydn Davies is a seasoned visitor to Albania – he has made five eventful

trips there, two while the country was still in the grip of communist dictator

Enver Hoxha.

When he arrived this time he was left without any clothes but those he was wearing. BMS missionaries Roger and Nikki Pearce came to his rescue and lent him some while his luggage caught a later connection from Vienna.

Haydn, who has pastoral charge of Maesyrrhelem, Pound, Penithon and Gravel Baptist churches near his home in Llanbadarn Fynydd, Wales, was in Albania to visit his churches' link missionaries, Roger and Nikki, and nine-month-old son, Jamie.

While in the capital of Tirana, Haydn attended the Baptist church, where Roger was able to translate the sermon, and another evangelical church. He also accompanied the Baptist church on an outing to the beach at Durres.

Haydn is keen on strong links with missionaries. "I'd encourage churches with mission links not only to write to their missionaries but to send someone to visit," he says.

*Dear Audrey...*

**Q:** We're doing a series in church at the moment; we'd like a BMS mission speaker but we don't think we can fit one into the schedule. Can you help?

**A:** This is not a problem. Here are a few ideas:

- Let the mission speaker or missionary see details of the series you're following – he or she will be able to bring a different dimension to what you're doing.
- Get the Junior Church or young people's leaders to talk to a BMS missionary or mission speaker about what the youngsters are doing. The speaker may well be able to build on it for what they want to say about the work they have been doing.
- Change your programme! After all, world mission is all about changing things!

**PS:** Mission speakers are in great demand at harvest time for messages from the developing world. But what about other times of the year, like Lent, or Advent, Palm Sunday or Mothering Sunday, or Pentecost? They may be just the opportunity your church needs to get them really involved in world mission.





FRED AND ELLA PREECE SEEMED TO HAVE THE GOLDEN TOUCH – UNTIL GOD BROKE INTO THEIR LIVES. THEN THEY FOUND A GREATER TREASURE, AS HEALINGS AND CHANGED LIVES FOLLOWED THEM AROUND . . . **GARY PRITCHARD** REPORTS

# Mission impossible

**W**ith their breathless tales of God's goodness, and eyes wide with anticipation of their next divine appointment, they reveal an excitement typical of young missionaries returning from their first assignment.

But Fred Preece has just celebrated his 90th birthday.

He and his wife, Ella, have been sharing the good news of Jesus for the past 25 years. While most couples their age have settled neatly into their retirement plans, Fred and Ella have broken the mould. They jostle to tell the next story of God's wonderful grace, and exude enough energy to wear out someone a quarter of their age.

But it wasn't always so, as Ella remembered the early days.

"After the death of my mother, and then my sister – horribly with cancer – I got very depressed and had an overwhelming fear of death," she says.

That desperate time in Ella's life was masked from those who knew her. For on the surface at least, the newlyweds had been enjoying a prosperous lifestyle. Fred was an entrepreneur. His seemingly golden touch left its mark on everything he put his hand to – becoming a

professional footballer, cycling champion and confident businessman. Fred painted a picture of enviable success.

"We lived life just for ourselves," Ella admitted. "We had everything – comfortable home, plenty of money and the rest. But I was desperate. We even came close to parting at that time."

The turning point came in the summer of 1972. Fred and Ella were out exercising their dogs, when they stumbled across an unusual sight – a huge tent and a bustling, excited crowd.

Ella takes up the story again: "I saw the sign over the door of the tent – Way to Life. I just wondered if there could be any hope for me. I asked what it was all about, and I was told it was the last weekend of a crusade."

Much to Ella's astonishment, Fred agreed to accompany her the next night. They became so bowled over by God's reality, they responded to the gospel appeal.

The change was as dramatic as it was immediate.

Fred had a business meeting on the Monday morning.

"I had an appointment with an important client over a new business contract," he says. "I

found myself telling him everything that happened.. I think this man was so astonished, he gave me the deal – but he kept shaking his head in disbelief."

Life would never be the same again for the couple, as God began to use them in a remarkable way. "Fred says I was like a bull in a china shop around that time," Ella recalls. "But all my life I'd been without hope – and I was just desperate in case I might lose what I'd found in Christ."

They started holding Friday night gospel meetings in their home, with up to 50 people crammed into the living room. "It was amazing really," says Fred. "The word went around and people just turned up."

Many people found faith at those house meetings and there were stories of healing and release. But that was just the start of God's training for them. There were even greater adventures ahead.

Fred and Ella struck up a friendship with the Revd Alex Stein. That would prove to be a fruitful partnership, as the couple travelled the world with Stein's mission organisation. In their 70s at the time, they found God to be faithful whether it



m

going under the knife.

After reassuring her, Ella was able to share her faith. "This terrified woman spoke of the overwhelming peace she felt as she was taken to the theatre the next day," says Ella. "This lovely lady went on to know Jesus for herself, along with her husband, and we became good friends."

Fred and Ella continued to gossip about Jesus wherever they found themselves welcomed, and were still travelling the world regularly as recently as 1992. Fred joyfully recalled a favourite story of a special week of mission in his home town of Manchester.

"We'd been knocking on doors and were finding it pretty tough going," he

vocabulary is "retirement". Fred still answers regular requests for preaching around the country, and continues to see God move through his ministry. "Even recently I've seen God perform a wonderful healing to a woman with cancer in my local church," he says.

The couple seem to take the saying "living life to the full" as if it was written just for them. Devoted to each other, as much as to God, they see each day at their Herefordshire home as another opportunity to serve their Saviour.

"We have a lovely daily routine," says Ella. "We start our day in the scriptures and then work our way through our prayer list." They see it as a privilege to be able to live for Jesus.

"We'll never retire as long as we can continue to serve his purpose for our lives," says Fred. "Material things don't matter any more. We're more concerned with helping people who have problems of their own – and our home is always open for those who want to come in and talk.

"You'd never think that anyone could change their way of life as we have done." ●

was in their living room, or thousands of miles away on the other side of the world.

One of Fred's more outstanding memories was of a mission trip to Australia. "I'd led a 14-year-old boy to the Lord that day, and had taken him home to tell his mum the good news," he recalls. "She was a godly lady confined to a wheelchair with a crippling disease. As I went to leave their house, God told me to pray for her.

"With great nervousness I laid my hands upon her and the Lord completely healed her. To the astonishment of the medical staff, she walked into the hospital for her next appointment where they confirmed the 'unexplainable' healing."

On another occasion, while Ella was in hospital awaiting a major operation, she found herself in a bed next to a woman who was petrified with fear of the thought of

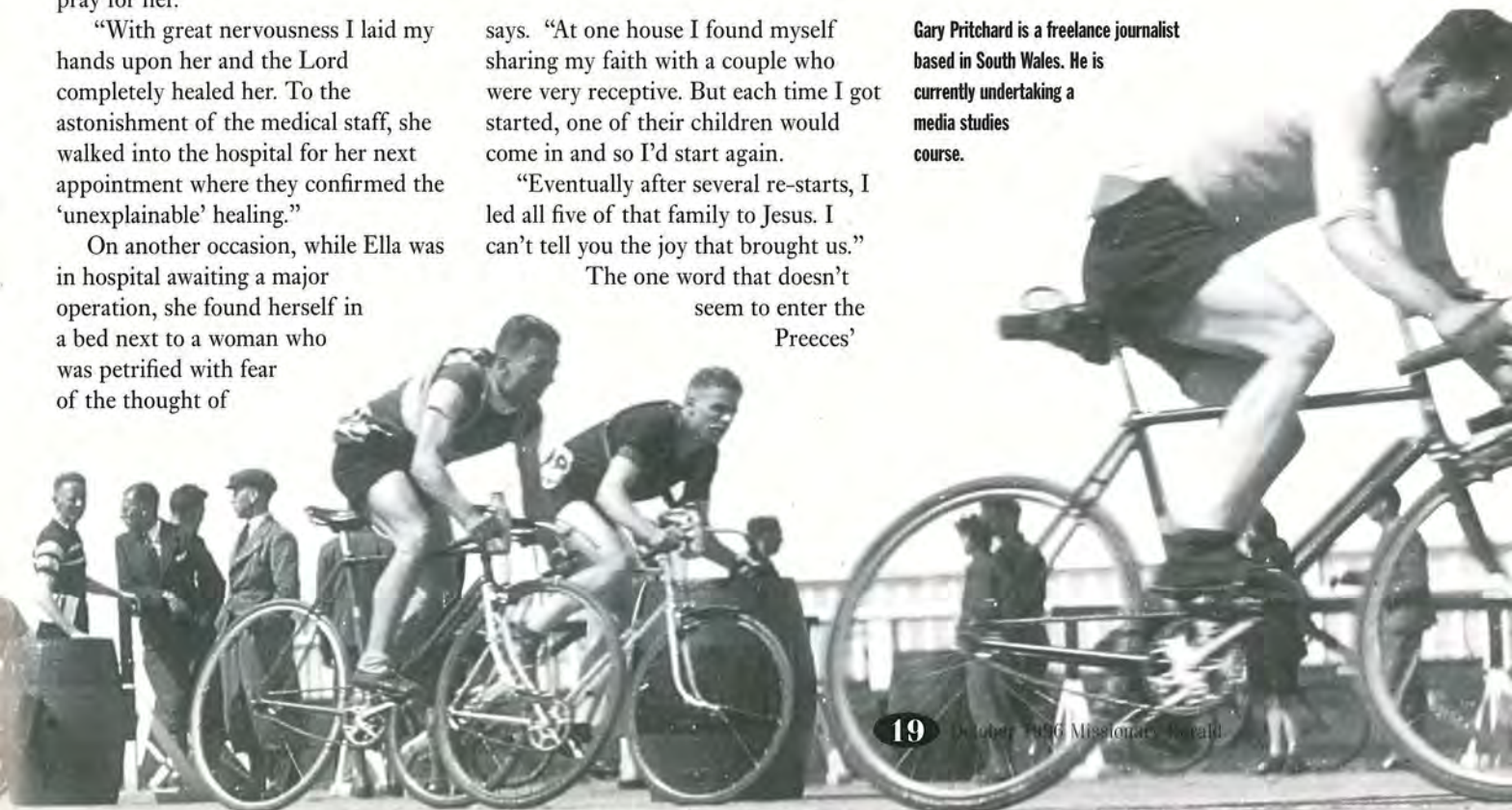


says. "At one house I found myself sharing my faith with a couple who were very receptive. But each time I got started, one of their children would come in and so I'd start again.

"Eventually after several re-starts, I led all five of that family to Jesus. I can't tell you the joy that brought us."

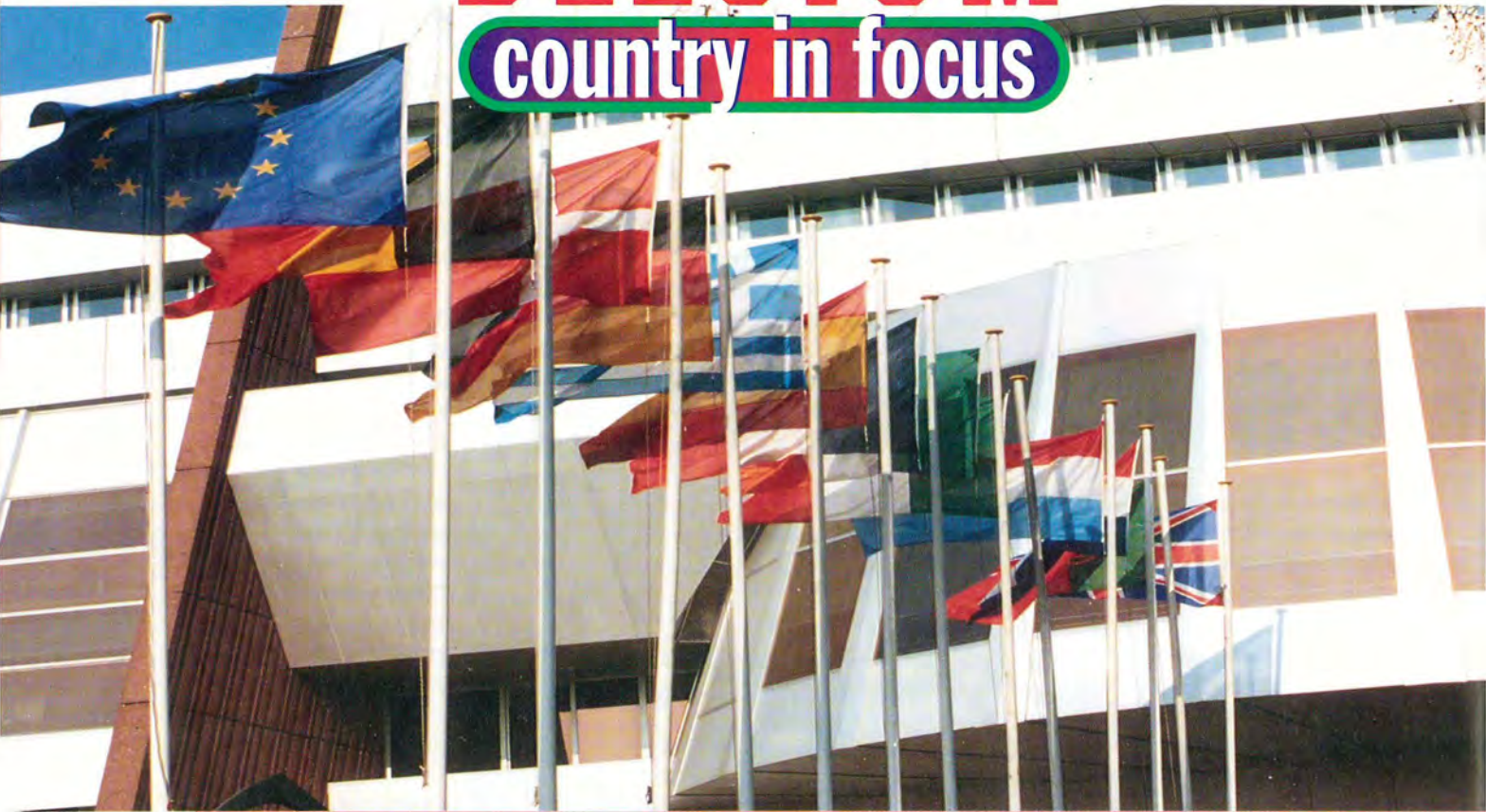
The one word that doesn't seem to enter the Preece's

**Gary Pritchard is a freelance journalist based in South Wales. He is currently undertaking a media studies course.**



# BELGIUM

## country in focus



## Land of many divisions

**Focus for the nations of Europe: Belgium has become one of the three Euro parliament centres**

As the second most densely populated country in Europe, Belgium is a land of many divisions. There is first of all the division of language. Flemish speakers (a Dutch dialect) make up 55% of the population whereas Walloons a little over half of that figure, at 32%.

Geography coincides with the language division. Flemish is spoken in the north and west, whereas French is the main language in the south and east. Brussels is bilingual.

There is also a natural dividing line, that of the River Meuse, dividing the land into uplands, coastlands and the Meuse valley which is the industrial centre of Belgium.

These divisions are the stuff of geography text books, and that is where they have to stay because for the last

160 years the Belgians themselves have been opposing these divisions. In 1970 a law was introduced that divided the country into four. Today there are 10 Belgian provinces comprising five Flemish provinces in the north and five French in the south.

The capital Brussels is also the capital of the European Community and the headquarters of NATO.

Nominally most people are Christians, with the vast majority showing allegiance to the Roman Catholic faith. About 600 Reformed churches had been founded following the Reformation, but many of these were destroyed in the Spanish Inquisition. Today there are fewer than 200 reformed churches. Protestants make up less than 1% of the

population, and churches such as Baptist churches have a hard time as they are perceived as being no different to sects. People are therefore wary of them and their teaching. ●

### Fact

Former USA President Jimmy Carter wrote a personal letter to the Belgian government asking that Baptists be no longer treated as a sect, but be allowed their full rights as guaranteed by the constitution.

A politician on Belgian TV said they planned to stop all religious groups and sects from functioning in Belgium.

## Facts and figures Belgium

Area: 33,100 sq km  
 Capital: Brussels pop. 1,100,000  
 Population: 10,020,000 (1994)  
 Annual population growth: 0.08%  
 Children per woman: 1.6

**People groups:** Flemish 55%, Walloon 32%, Other foreign 7%, EC citizens 6%

**Religion:** Christian 89% (of which Roman Catholic 87%, Protestant 1%, others eg Orthodox, Marginal 1%), Non-religious 7%, Muslim 3%, Others 1%.

**Languages:** Official languages are Flemish, French and German

**Literacy:** 98%

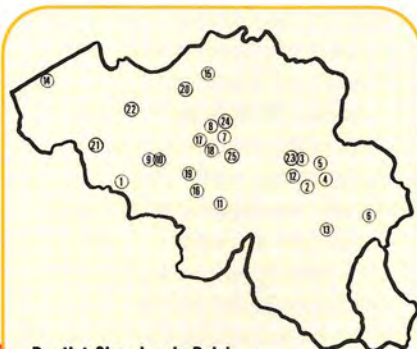
**Health:** One doctor for every 310 people  
 Under five mortality: 10 per 1000 (1991)



### Baptist Churches in Belgium

Key to map showing locations of Baptist churches

- |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Peruweltz (French)      | (French)                    |
| 2 Ougree (French)         | 14 Middelkerke              |
| 3 Grâce-Holagne (French)  | (Dutch/French/English)      |
| 4 Liege (French)          | 15 Anvers/Antwerpen         |
| 5 Glain (French)          | (International)             |
| 6 Malmedy (French)        | 16 Morlanwelz (French)      |
| 7 Wezembeek-Oppem         | 17 Uccle (French)           |
| (International)           | 18 St Gilles (Spanish)      |
| 8 Laeken (French)         | 19 Haine St Pierre (French) |
| 9 Jurbise (International) | 20 Bornem (Dutch)           |
| 10 Jurbise (French)       | 21 Dottignies (French)      |
| 11 Mont-sur-Marchienne    | 22 Melle (Dutch)            |
| (French)                  | 23 Grâce-Holagne (Italian)  |
| 12 Jemeppe (French)       | 24 Evere (French)           |
| 13 Aywaille-Remouchamps   | 25 Waterloo (English)       |



Baptist Churches in Belgium

## So near and yet so far

The Kingdom of Belgium is perhaps one of the least popular places in Europe to visit. Many people pass through it on their way to somewhere else, without giving it a second glance. Yet it is one of the UK's nearest neighbours, only 65 miles from Britain. It is a small country of around 10 million inhabitants.

Although they do not live far away, Britons tend to know little about these neighbours. The key to understanding Belgians probably lies in their strong respect for the Catholic church, although this is now faltering. The country is 89% "Christian" of which 87% is Roman Catholic. However, only 30% of the population claims to practise their religion.

Even for those who do not attend church and even claim not to believe in God, it is wise not to criticise the Church or the Pope! There is a deep distrust of protestants and especially Evangelicals. Baptists are classed with Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons.





**So far!**

Here are two illustrations of the difference from Joyce and Stuart Filby who are BMS missionaries in Belgium.

1: Joyce and Stuart met a young man at a youth camp in Belgium. His father had died of cancer the week before, aged only 39. He had become a Christian a few months previously. His wife found the whole situation confusing but appreciated the love shown from people at the church. However, the man's mother had openly declared that her son's death was a punishment from God for joining the Baptist 'sect'. She said that worse would follow for the rest of the family unless they repented. She said that the Baptist church was 'the very seat of Satan.'

2: Belgians do not appear to have the same attitude to Christmas as we do in Britain. The Filbys' postman was intrigued at the number of Christmas cards they received. "We were able not only to share about God giving Jesus at Christmas but that outside Belgium there are many folk prepared to be our friends even though the Belgians believe we belong to a small sect."

**So near!**

This is the testimony of Yvonne D'Hollander, aged 63 and a member of Morlanwelz Baptist Church.

"I have always lived in Morlanwelz, and I think I have always believed.

I was visited in 1983 by the Jehovah's Witnesses, and I followed them. I attended their meetings for

**QUOTE**

**"Being a Baptist Christian in Belgium today means being a person full of expectation of what God will be doing next, full of dreams for the future. We enjoy the positive changes in our Union, in our churches. We are sure God will continue to add new members to our churches as long as we stay faithful and we enjoy particularly the fact that most of the new Christians are young people."**

Ria Deneut, President of the Women's department, Belgian Baptist Union

seven years. I was really sincere and I loved God with all my heart. I followed the teachings, but I had problems in remembering biblical passages. They forced me to do door-to-door work, but they were too strict with me.

One day a Christian woman of Morlanwelz Baptist Church invited me to a meeting and I went, thinking to myself, "too bad for the Jehovahs."

I was really seeking the truth. When I entered the church, I really felt that God was present, a gentle warmth, a peaceful atmosphere. I was amazed to see young people sitting next to older ones. After a few meetings, I understood that I had to give my heart to the Lord, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, the Saviour.

Today, I find it difficult to pray, but I feel that God is with me, and that he helps me day by day. I believe I have eternal life and I am happy."

A former 28:19 Action Team working in Belgium were doing door-to-door evangelistic work. They found it hard work, but did have some encouragements, like this man.

"One elderly man told us that when he was young, he fell in love with a woman who was a Jehovah's Witness. In order to marry her, he had to become one, too. He never really understood their beliefs, however. Now his wife has died and he has abandoned his contacts with the JW's. He was pleased to share his confusion with us and to talk about his search for truth. He has asked for a pastoral visit to talk more." ●

Helen Matthews

**QUOTE**

**"I can say, after having helped my husband in his ministry in Zaire, that Belgium is a much more difficult field to work in."**

Gilberte Rivez, wife of Daniel Brennet, pastor at Morlanwelz Baptist Church.



Sunday market at Liege

# Epistle from Middlekerke

**F**rom the saints at Middlekerke Baptist Church, to the sisters and brothers in Great Britain, greetings!

I, Samuel Verhaege, with my wife, Annick, and our children Rebekka, Ruth, Sarah and David, bring you our love in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As pastor of this church I bring you our joys and trials for your prayers.

"We are not a cult nor are we part of the 'New Religion' movement. We are simply people who believe in Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures . . ."

This is how we began our leaflet which was given to homes in our district. We have to try to explain what a Baptist is, because most people in Belgium are so suspicious of us.

Most of our members are French-speaking Belgians, but we do have others amongst us. We have one Romanian family, a couple who have both found work. We helped them with their papers. We do have some political

refugees from Romania in our country, but they are not usually officially recognised as such.

We took two lorries full of Bibles and toys for the children to Romania. In the orphanage we found four boys sleeping in one bed. We were just like Father Christmas to them, giving out toys. However, we heard that when we left the securitate took the toys and sold them on the black market.

We have tried to help the refugees in our community. We had 40 all together and bought them Bibles. They came to our church about six Sundays.

There are four African converts in our church, from Rwanda, Togo, and Zaire. There are several Zairians living in Ougree, a suburb of Liege. They are able to go to the Baptist church in Ougree on a Sunday and receive a packet of food to last them the week. They call this the 'food bank'. The church has one room converted into a grocery store.

At Middlekerke, we have a lot of refugees passing through the church and we try to help where we can. Gabriel is one of them. He is quite a young boy.

Then there is Matthieu. As he spoke French, it was too difficult for him to stay in Flanders so we transferred him to Liege so that he could continue his studies. The Baptist church there gave him an apartment in the building. The organisation Carpenters for Christ from the USA renovated it for him, installing central heating.

We try to deal with each

situation as it arises.

There is a big problem of drug addiction in Flanders. Our vision is for a home here to help those addicted to drugs and alcohol.

There is no Christian place like that in Belgium – I have sent several people to Holland. People need a very strong will to go there, as it's a long way from home.

The problem begins in school. Sometimes drugs are put into chewing gum and so the whole school is affected.



In many ways Ostend has the same problems as London or Amsterdam.

We have a deaf and dumb person in our church. He has been with us for 10 years. Like all our members, he needs time. It takes time to show people that you love them and to give them a chance to grow.

Many Belgians tend to be rather hard and materialistic. However, the saints here are very generous. Church members give more than a tenth of their income to the work here. Also there are many special gifts, for Romania and for needs within our community.

We had to buy our church building. Here in Belgium Baptists are regarded as a cult and have difficulty renting a building; so, if we are allowed to rent one and then make improvements, then we are thrown out.

Because we bought the building, the people cannot afford to pay a pastor as well. We support youth work in Belgium, which we see as very important. We give to the Union and home mission too. With only 33 members, what more can we do?

There is so much to be done in the Baptist church in Belgium. We long to spread the good news of Jesus Christ, amongst people whose hearts are hardened to the gospel.

It's a long, hard job. When the pastors are working hard to earn a living, they do not have the time and energy to motivate the other church members.

Please help us. We are your neighbours.

With love from your brothers and sisters in Christ, not far away.

Sammy Verhaege:  
Baptists are not a cult

Day to day transport  
in Ostend



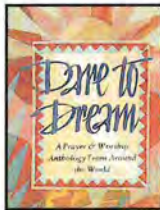
# book reviews

## Dare to Dream

**a prayer and worship anthology from around the world**

*Edited by Geoffrey Duncan*

**Fount £7.99**



In a world filled with poverty, oppression and discrimination, our hopes and dreams of a better future can, at times, seem impossible to fulfil. This anthology, compiled by the Council for World Mission, not only helps to keep dreams alive, it stimulates appropriate action.

Material is drawn from a rich variety of Christian experience around the world. A selection of prayers, litanies, poetry and readings draws world issues into sharp focus. Again and again one's conscience and emotions are stirred. They bring you face to face with world forces that diminish people and thwart God's purposes.

Designed for worship and prayer, both public and personal, here is an excellent source book for ministers and worship leaders who want to keep alert to the world and its needs. Regular use will broaden horizons and deepen understanding. I have found it helpful in personal devotion as a stimulus to prayer and action.

There are five sections. First, concerning creation and environment. Next, issues of poverty and pain, followed by those that affect women and children. Then, community dreams and nightmares are explored leading, finally, to protest, action and dreams fulfilled.

As the cover says: "Dare to Dream will inspire you to do just that; to keep your dreams of a better world alive." I would add: "With Jesus as your inspiration and his Spirit as your resource, it will challenge you to begin to turn dreams into reality."

**Peter Tongeman**

distils the major themes of modern cross-cultural mission. Thoughts from a wide range of writers are skilfully interwoven into the book.

The different themes of the Church Growth Movement, African Indigenous Churches, Liberation Theology, Signs and Wonders, Urban Mission and Inter Faith Encounter are all helpfully summarised. The author does not avoid the painful questions arising from the genocide in Rwanda where there had been revival in earlier years.

I warmly commend this book to all who want to learn more of how God sends and uses his people to do his work in the world. It is excellent for use by individuals or groups.

• Roger Bowen is newly appointed General Secretary of Crosslinks, formerly tutor in mission at St John's College Nottingham.

**Derek Rumbol**

## So I Send You

**a study guide for Mission**

*by Roger Brown*

**SPCK £8.99**



There is a freshness in approach to this study guide to mission which makes it very readable, informative and challenging. Each chapter opens up a subject in a clear way using stories and case studies to help the reader. There are suggestions for study and questions on applying the material to the cross-cultural world in which we live.

The author selects certain key themes from the Bible with many a telling phrase to shed new light, and then

## Tinker, Taylor, Missionary

*Michael Griffiths 1992 222pp*

**IVP £3.95**

It is not that just over a year into retirement I hear the call to missionary service, but rather that the title of Michael Griffiths book caught my attention. The chapter headings take up the theme of the popular rhyme to reflect on such things as the personal cost of missionary work, training, family issues, relationships in another culture, and whether or not it is a life-long calling. The final chapter highlights the role of the church in encouraging members to go rather than individuals always waiting for a personal call.

However, it was not just a fascinating read. I was able to look back over my years in ministry and mission support remembering how we had coped (and sometimes not coped!) as a family. I reflected on what I knew of friends and colleagues who had been drawn by God into cross-cultural mission. Michael's book struck many chords, offered sound common sense, and certainly did not dodge the tricky issues.

God may have a different ministry for me at this stage of my life, but here are principles I would have been glad to read in the 1950s when I was considering ministry and mission as a young man. The book's subtitle "Options in a changing world" reminds us that there are plenty of opportunities for new areas of work in our lives if only we will give the Lord



authority to implement changes that will make our discipleship of worth in the Kingdom.



It is not only the book but the rhyme also which puts the challenge: Tinker, tailor... this year, next year, sometime, never?

Leslie Gregory

### Who won the '94 World Cup?

by Alex Ribeiro (ex-Formula One driver)  
Rivers International (paperback) £6.99



When this book came in to the office for review, I pounced on it in true Seaman-style being both a football and Formula One enthusiast.

It's coming home, it's coming home, it's . . . I couldn't wait for the working day to finish to read what World Cup '94 was all about. And boy, was I surprised!

This book is not a dull, dry, documentary like the '94 World Cup final between Brazil and Italy turned out to be. The tension, the drama, the penalty shoot out, the humour . . .

"Everybody began to swear. First they cursed the referee, then the referee's mother, the coach . . ."

It could be England in Euro 96!

The author, ex-Formula One driver Alex Ribeiro who acted as pastor to the Brazilian team, gives the reader an informed backdrop to this spectacular World Cup year – a black year for Formula One when Ayrton Senna died tragically on track and Brazil mourned their national hero for 10 days.

"For those like Ayrton, who have had an encounter with Christ, death is not the end but only the starting flag for eternal life."

There are great pix too (yes, it is only a paperback); eight glossy, colour shots of the Brazilian side in action. Six Christian footballers in the Brazilian squad were not simply acting out their mission impossible. This was going to be World Mission on a grand scale.

Do you remember seeing – along with 2,500 million others; half the world's population – the entire Brazilian team in a circle after the match and wondering what on earth they were doing?

"They were praising and thanking the name of God." Powerful stuff.

And though this book has none of the Euro or American hype that we are used to before any great sporting event, it deserves the attention of not only the Christian as a golden goal for faith, but also the non-Christian as a means of beginning to hear about God through their love of football.

Diane Hayward

# LETTERS

I read with interest your article about giving responsibility to youth (mh July/August 1996). I once was young. Now I am 73.

I was, and am still, in the process of retiring from a number of Christian and small public services. Not that I intend to do nothing but I felt that the time had come to give younger people the opportunity to take on responsibilities.

I was 16 when World War II began and I went to work in the office of a business which was on war work. At the age of 18 I became assistant to the accountant but when I reached call-up age for women I was deferred annually until the war ended. It was responsible work.

In my spare time I worked in Civil Defence. I trained as a lecturer in fire fighting and prevention of fire spread with 10 men and one other lady. It was a rigorous course, and only two of us qualified – myself and an older man.

Lecturing stopped when V-1s began. I became one of our three Post Leaders. At most I was 21. When the V-2s started, more girls were called up for part-time Civil Defence and, as the lady with experience, I was put in charge of three teams of three ladies to man the post three nights a week.

And I've had responsibilities ever since the war ended.

There were thousands of young people who held responsible posts during the war.

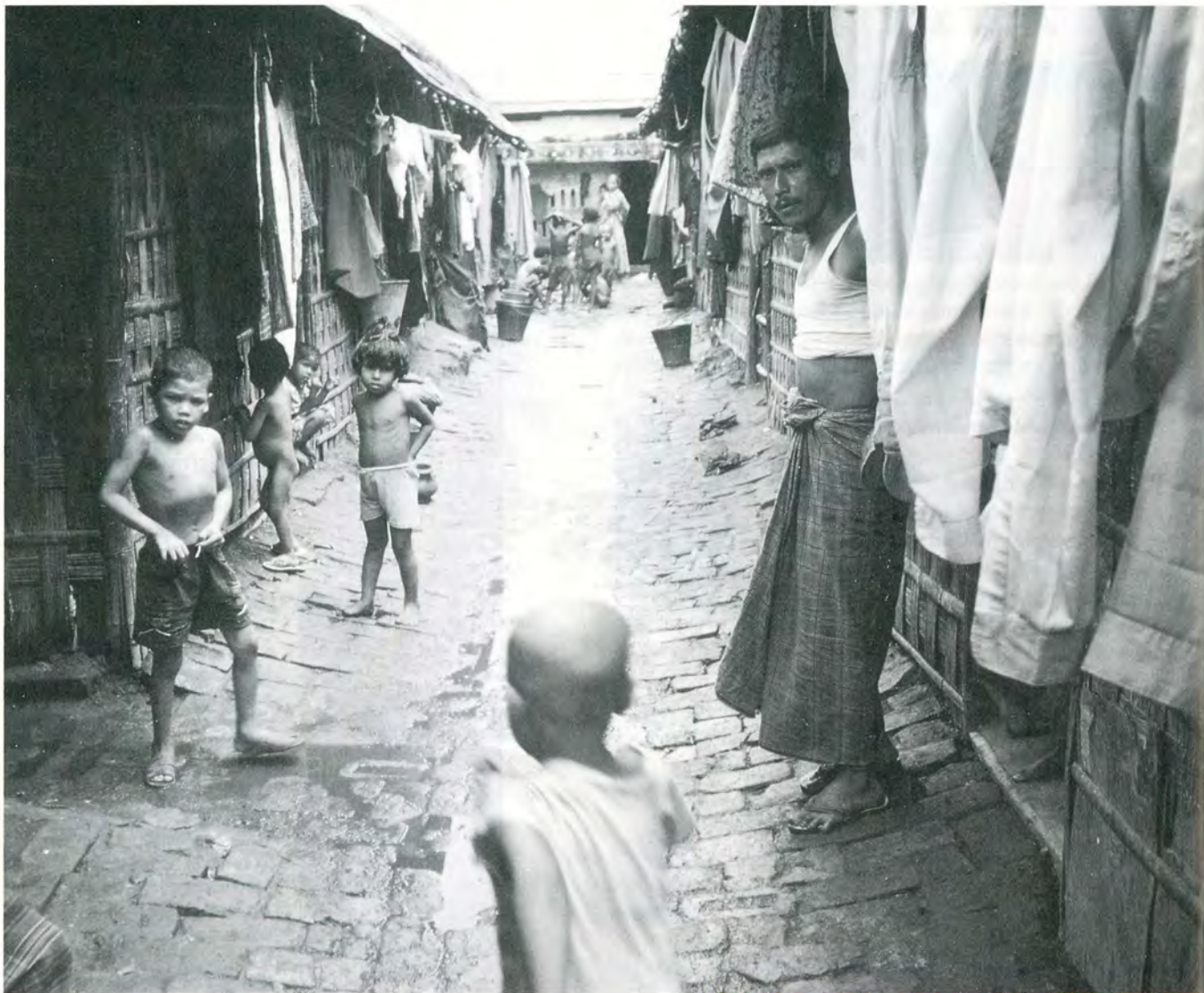
Two of my young friends received medals for bravery; one of these was a posthumous award.

Young people can do.

Connie Holland  
Holland-on-Sea



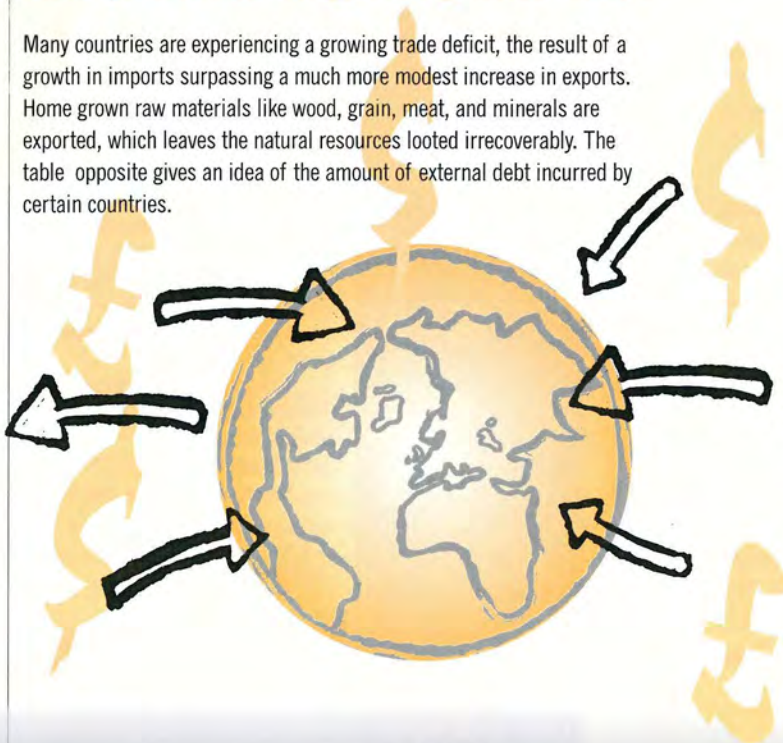
TAKE  
2



PHOTOGRAPH SUE HEADLAM

### The problem of getting into debt

Many countries are experiencing a growing trade deficit, the result of a growth in imports surpassing a much more modest increase in exports. Home grown raw materials like wood, grain, meat, and minerals are exported, which leaves the natural resources looted irrecoverably. The table opposite gives an idea of the amount of external debt incurred by certain countries.



Country	Total external debt (millions)	External debt per capita
	1992	1992
Brazil	121,110	787
Mexico	113,378	1334
Indonesia	84,385	458
Russia	78,658	528
India	76,983	87
China	69,321	60
Argentina	67,569	2041
Thailand	39,424	680
Portugal	32,046	3270
Hungary	21,900	2126
Bangladesh	13,189	115
Nicaragua	11,126	2853
Zaire	10,344	244
Panama	6,505	2602
Congo	4,751	1980
Jamaica	4,303	1793
Zimbabwe	4,007	385
El Salvador	2,131	395
Nepal	1,797	90

*Taken from Third World Guide*

## Average earnings

Country	Annual earnings per person in US dollars	Percentage of average American's earnings
Afghanistan	\$230	1.1%
Angola	\$620	3%
Argentina	\$2128	10%
Bangladesh	\$180	0.85%
Belgium	\$14,880	71%
Brazil	\$2550	12.1%
Bulgaria	\$5300	25%
Cameroon	\$1010	5%
Canada	\$19,020	90%
CAR	\$760	3.6%
El Salvador	\$1040	4.9%
France	\$17,830	85%
Haiti	\$400	1.9%
India	\$350	1.6%
Indonesia	\$490	2.3%
Italy	\$15,150	72%
Jamaica	\$1080	5%
Japan	\$23,730	116%
Moldova	\$3600	13%
Nepal	\$170	0.9%
Portugal	\$4260	20%
Sierra Leone	\$200	1%
Sri Lanka	\$470	2.1%
Thailand	\$1170	5.5%
UK	\$14,570	69%
Zaire	\$260	1.2%
Zimbabwe	\$640	3%

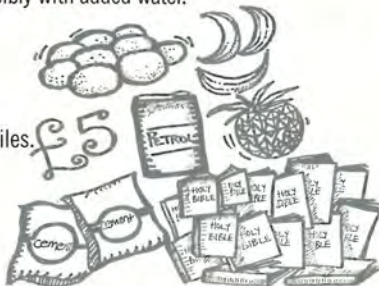
## What a fiver will buy

We chose two African countries – Zaire and Cameroon – and asked missionaries what the equivalent of £5 would buy.

### Cameroon



- 10 large bottles of Guinness.
- Half an academic school year's fees (village school).
- Coach ticket to travel about 400 miles.
- Five pairs of shoes.
- 25 pairs of flip-flops.
- 50 pineapples.
- More bananas than you'd care to count..
- Three months' electricity for a typical house with only lights and no fridge.
- 40 postage stamps (or 10 overseas stamps).
- Three gallons of petrol – possibly with added water.
- Five kilograms of fillet steak.
- 15 Bibles (cheapest style).
- Two sacks of cement.
- 400 doughnuts – without jam.
- 50 taxi journeys of up to 10 miles.



# ACTION card



## LIVING ON THE EDGE

The theme for One World Week becomes more intriguing and provocative each year. For 1996 we have Living on the Edge which conjures up extreme vulnerability (on the margins) and considerable excitement (at the cutting edge). Both of these were evident when television reporters descended on a Baptist church in east London in March 1994. One of that church's elders, Sunday Ogunwobi, had taken sanctuary there when threatened with deportation after 13 years, living quite openly and happily in London. The technology of the broadcasters contrasted with the plight of that family, living on the edge.

A change in legislation put the Ogunwobis in the "illegal overstayer" category and, despite approaches by MPs, churches, other sects and well-known figures, the Home Office will still not concede their right to stay in what is now their home country.

This is the longest running sanctuary known in Britain. It is planned to hold the national one World Week service at the church as a sign of solidarity.

You could use a card this month to order One World Week material. OWW, PO Box 100, LONDON, SE1, but much better to send it to The Ogunwobi Family Campaign, Hackney Downs Baptist Church, LONDON, E5 8DS, with a word of encouragement, or to the Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, LONDON, SW1H 9AT, with a word of protest. Or you could do all three.

### Zaire



- Breakfast for 20 people of one bread roll, one portion of uncooked peanuts, one mug of tea.
- Two small chickens.
- One large fresh fish, enough for three portions.
- A meal for six people made of frozen fish, fufu flour, maize flour, tomato paste, onion, garlic, beans, bananas.
- 15 lined exercise books, 15 squared exercise books, 15 pens.
- One litre of cheap ice cream.
- Five Mars bars.



# TAKE 2

IT MAY HAVE TAKEN A LOT OF COURAGE TO STEP OUT ON THE STREETS OF CALCUTTA BUT THE BMS 28:19 ASIA ACTION TEAM FOUND GOD AT WORK



# Challenge working there

The thought of spending three months in Calcutta was frightening. It was several days before we felt ready to brave the cluttered streets. But on that very afternoon, unintentionally, we ended up in the company of Mother Teresa.

After a short acquaintance she asked us what kind of work we'd come to do for her, so we quickly put her straight by explaining we were working for her friend at Emmanuel Ministries (EM) a few houses along the road.

Mother Teresa encouraged us with the verse from Matthew 25:40: "I tell you the truth whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine you did for me."

We went on our way quite bewildered and amazed by her humility.

The first three months were spent working at two different projects for street and slum children. Sarah, John and Sarah were at the EM Pavement Club which provided around 80 children with informal education, medical care, food and a

place to wash both themselves and their clothes. It was a secure place for the children to get away from the daily pressures of survival for awhile.

Nigel and Jo were at EM's New Market project provided for the children from one of the main slum areas in Calcutta. It also provided basic education and food for around 80 children.

We spent the majority of our time at these schools, trying to develop new and creative ways of teaching – often making a spectacle of ourselves at the same time.

Calcutta is considered the third largest city in the world with the lowest urban standard of living. Its population is equivalent to roughly a quarter of that in Britain alone. The city is named after the Hindu deity

Kali, the goddess of destruction. Hinduism is the dominant religion, followed by Islam, and Bengali is the main language. It is the area where William Carey, the founder of the Baptist Missionary Society began his mission in India over 200 years ago.

Out of 14 million in the city, 4.5 million live in squalid slums, and one million on the streets. More than 2,000 immigrants come into the city every day with the hope of a better existence.

Knowing of Calcutta's clutter and noise could make it the last place on earth that you would want to visit, but after spending three months there, we were able to discover a lot more than the

# Change of going with poor working with



average tourist.

Underneath the dust and rubble is a fascinating and beautifully intricate city. With its vibrant colours, its potent spices and great sense of community, it is a rich place to be and it was a privilege to be able to experience life there.

We were able to experience God at work, especially within the organisation for which we were working – Emmanuel Ministries. From a home counselling agency nearly 25 years ago, it has grown into a network of projects reaching out to the neglected and abused members of society.

Life in Sri Lanka was a different story. The first thing we appreciated was cleaner air and open space

that we'd missed in Calcutta.

We spent three months moving around the island working at different Baptist churches. We assisted pastors with the churches' weekly events leading Bible studies, prayer meetings, organising children's events, taking part in services, Sunday schools and house visiting.

The island consists of two main people groups. The Sinhalese represent nearly three quarters of the population and are mainly Buddhist. The Tamils are the second largest race and are mainly Hindu. For many years there has been fighting between the two groups but it is only a minority of people causing the unrest. Nearly three quarters of the population live in rural areas, many cooking on open fires

and drawing water from wells. The poverty is less obvious than in Calcutta.

It was a busy time for us packing up so frequently and moving on to the next destination. We prayed a lot about settling in quickly and adjusting to the many new locations we visited. God did answer our prayers about this. The more we travelled from place to place, the more we learned about entering a new situation and how we could be most effective in the short space of time we had there.

Throughout our time abroad we were all faced with new challenges from God. We were led to depend on him in ways that we'd never done before. This dependency, often accompanied by fear drew us closer to God. It enabled us

to experience him within our lives in ways we'd never known before.

As a team we believe God has truly blessed us. We are certain that our time abroad has been beneficial to each of us in many different ways. Our experiences are of great worth and value which we feel will stay with us and continue to help us in our daily Christian lives.

**The BMS 28:19 India/Sri Lanka Action Team – Jo Pillinger, Sarah Barker, Nigel Cope, John Condie and Sarah Brown.**

# prayer focus



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

## Americas



Keith and Barbara Hodges

### BRAZIL

Keith has now officially ended his teaching ministry at Parana Baptist Seminary. He has worked at the seminary for nine years and held the posts of Dean and Head of the Old Testament department.

He is sad to be leaving the seminary but pleased that it is now fully run by Brazilian people.

The student body of the seminary has nearly doubled in number over the past two years and the future looks very bright.

Keith and Barbara were given a wonderful farewell service by their friends and colleagues, at which quite a few tears were shed.

They have also been ministering at Piraquara Baptist Church, a fellowship with many problems but one which is stronger and healthier now than it has

been in the past.

A group which separated from the main church has now begun a work in one of the poorer suburbs of the town and the main church is seeking God's guidance for its future.

Keith and Barbara returned to the UK on Home Assignment recently. Their term of service in Brazil is now complete and in January 1997 they will begin a new ministry in Portugal in the Lisbon area. There they will be pastoring a church and teaching Old Testament at the seminary in Queluz.

### Please pray:

- for the new leaders as they settle in at Parana Baptist Seminary.
- for Piraquara Baptist Church, that they would find the right person to head up the fellowship and that God would show them clearly his will for the way ahead.
- for a refreshing Home Assignment.
- for Keith and Barbara as they prepare for a new ministry in a new country. It has been a big wrench for them to leave Brazil.

## france



Ian and Pauline Thomas

At the beginning of August, Ian and Pauline spent a week in Provence with Open Air Campaigners brushing up on their sketch board skills. The week was all practical with the main focus being the Avignon Festival. It was the ideal context for street work, passers-by were relaxed and happy to stop, watch and listen. Some remained behind for a chat after the presentations. It's an area with great potential.

### Please pray:

- for the future as Ian and Pauline may be moving on from Carcassonne; pray for guidance as they seek God's will.

## EFFECTIVE PRAYER SUPPORT

BMS personnel around the world often testify to the effects of prayer in their work. They appreciate the support of Christians who remember them regularly. Use this section of *mh* individually or in a group as fuel for your prayer support for BMS missionaries, volunteers, Action Teams and home staff.

If you would like to pray more specifically and personally, please ask about the BMS missionaries' prayer letter service. Telephone Diane Hayward on 01235 512077.

AMERICAS

## Worldwide



BMS 28:19 Action Teams – 1996-97

Jones (18), from Didcot, Oxfordshire, Fiona James (21), from the Isle of Wight, David Cobby (21), from Longhope, Gloucestershire, and Emma Boswell (18), from Braintree, Essex. They will be working throughout the National Baptist Convention area, visiting and praying with families, speaking at services and participating in the general life of the churches.

**NEPAL:** Chris Peacock (18) from Torquay in Devon, Helen Schwier (18) from Huntingdon, Edward Dix (18) from Penarth, South Glamorgan, and Emma Ryan (18) from the Isle of Tiree, Scotland. They will work with BMS missionaries Tim and Caroline Trimble involved in singing and playing in churches and youth groups, setting up a village school library, teaching English, helping at homes for mentally handicapped children and teaching guitar and keyboard.

**JAMAICA:** Stephen Thomson (20) from Aberdeen, Jo Chidgey (22)

from Worcester, Matt Swan (21) from Lytham St Annes in Lancashire, and Ruth Bidnell (18) from Penarth. They will be working with the Jamaica Baptist Union in the youth department, church programmes and a discipleship training.

**PORTUGAL:** Charlotte Newson (18) from Leigh on Sea, David Bullen (19) from Reigate, Surrey, James Gardiner (18) from Ashford, Kent and Liz Tedbury (20) from Gosport in Hampshire. They will be working with Norman Harrell, a Southern Baptist missionary from the USA involved in youth outreach, publicity, evangelism and leading church services.

**MALTA:** Simon Church (20) from Blackwood, Gwent, Catherine Crump (18) from Cambridge, Darrel Eaton (18) from Potters Bar, Herts, and Mhairi McKie (22) from Dumfriesshire. They will be involved in friendship evangelism mainly through open air work.

**BRAZIL:** Esther Potts (22) from Leeds, Laura

Williams (18) from Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, Catherine Ley (18) from Weston Super Mare, Avon, and Sarah-Jo Baldwin (21) from Burnley, Lancashire. They will work with BMS missionaries David and Cath Meikle in São Paulo involved in children's work, a new church plant project, door to door evangelism, radio and street rallies and helping at a local clinic.

**THAILAND:** Jennie Gilmore (18) from Cambridge, Leigh Cumming (22) from Fife, Sarah Teague (18) from Rochdale, Lancashire, and Ellen Armstrong (18) from Leeds, will divide their time between working with BMS missionaries Jacqui Wells in Chiang Mai and Geoff and Chris Bland in Bangkok. While they are in northern Thailand, team members will teach PE and English at the New Life Centre for girls rescued from an enforced life of prostitution and teach children at a Karen hill tribe village. Moving south, they will be involved in church work in the new town of Bang Phle, outside Bangkok, and run a summer holiday programme at Klong Toey, in Bangkok.

For many of these young people it will be their first time away from home and while being apprehensive, they each feel that God has led them to this point in their lives and that he will be with them.

### Please pray:

- for safe flights.
- that they quickly settle into new countries.
- for homesickness.
- for good health.
- for team relationships.
- for families and friends left behind.

Lift off: Ruth Bidnell prepares for a sponsored parachute jump to raise money for her place in the Jamaica Action Team

## ITALY

David and Ann MacFarlane

The MacFarlanes moved in August from Altamura to pastor the church at Barletta, leaving Nicola Nuzzolese, an elder at Altamura, to take a pastoral role. David has also been appointed to co-ordinate the youth work in the regions of Puglia and Basilicata which includes around 30 churches. The move will provide a better base for the MacFarlanes' work among Baptists in the south of Italy and they will continue to be involved with the church at Altamura.

### Please pray:

- for the new roles David and Ann are taking on.
- for Nicola Nuzzolese, elder of the Altamura church who will now take on a pastoral role.
- for the MacFarlane children as they settle into new schools.

Italy

# prayer focus



## Asia



Martin and Katrina Butterworth

### NEPAL

Martin and Katrina are currently studying at St Andrew's Hall Missionary College in Selly Oak, Birmingham, prior to leaving for Nepal early in 1997.

When in Nepal, Martin will be working as a Quality Manager for Nepal Hydro Electric and Butwal engineering works, a project producing electricity for villages.

The post will involve training employees and improving the quality of equipment and service. Technically, Martin feels that he has suitable background experience but the post also calls for "a lot of tact and perseverance" and "a high level of personal integrity".

Martin and Katrina are aware that problems can often arise from the completely different culture, values and priorities that people in Asia have compared to those in the West.

They are also aware of the need for God's guidance in helping them to discern

how they should react to different situations. Katrina continues to look for medical work in Butwal, about a seven hour road journey from Kathmandu, where it seems likely they will be living.

### Please pray:

- for the remainder of their time at St Andrew's Hall, that they would emerge spiritually strong and prepared for the future
- preparations for a new life and work in a very different country
- language study upon arrival, they expect to find this difficult and are looking for a Nepalese family to live with while at language school in Kathmandu.



Margaret Gibbs

### NEPAL

Margaret, who is attached to the International Nepal Fellowship, teaches the children of parents who work in the Tuberculosis and Leprosy project at Surkhet, in mid-west Nepal.

From time to time, Margaret takes them to a nearby leprosy clinic to meet the in-patients, sing for them and shake hands with

them. The patients love this as they get very little entertainment and just recently, four of them asked to be taken to church for the first time.

Margaret returns to UK this month for Home Assignment. Teachers Dale and Doris Urbain from the USA will be covering her work while she is on leave.

### Please pray:

- thank God for providing teachers to take on Margaret's work, pray that they quickly get up to speed with the work
- for Margaret to quickly settle into Home Assignment and return to Nepal refreshed early next year

President and his guard and the former Presidential guard and their leader. A compromise government is in place but it is not certain how long this will last without problems as peace is being maintained by a high profile French army with small tanks and armoured personnel carriers.

When Adrian and Sylvia returned to Bangui in early July – following their evacuation (report *mb* September) – all was calm. Officials were pleased to see people returning after the evacuation of the majority of expatriates in early June.

It would appear reports in the press about the level of destruction in the city have been exaggerated and many businesses do not appear to have suffered too much harm.

Supermarkets were open when Adrian and Sylvia arrived although most were empty. The French were still advising non-essential personnel to wait in Europe a little longer and no families had returned then. This leaves businesses with no customers.

There have been some anti-French demonstrations by people angry at the army's intervention

## Africa



Adrian and Sylvia Hopkins

### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Following a short-lived civil war in May, violence in the capital of Bangui was brought under control by the intervention of the French army. No political solution has been found however to solve what is in the main a battle between the



Africa

asia & africa



but the French government has attempted to pour oil on troubled waters by paying some of the salaries backlog of government employees. They were paid their May salary in August.

The River Blindness Control Programme, run by the Christoffel Blinden Mission, with which Adrian works, continued to operate throughout the troubles.

**Please pray:**

- for complete and lasting peace in CAR
- for safety as Adrian and Sylvia travel constantly through the Central Africa region



Steve and Pam Seymour

**ZIMBABWE**

God has been answering prayers for the Seymours, who have been working on business training and development programmes to help Zimbabweans start and manage their own businesses.

After a five and a half month appeal, they have been granted a two year extension to their work permits. This takes them to July 1998.

Also, Steve and Pam had made no headway looking for another house

after the owner of the one they were renting said he wanted to sell. Prices were far too high. Recently, the owner telephoned to say he had decided not to sell after all and they could rent the house for another two years.

Steve and Pam are involved in several development projects, including one in response to community requests, to empower people to prepare for drought.

It involves soil, water and

tree conservation, livestock and grain storage. They are also working on a micro hydro electric scheme for a primary school.

**Please pray:**

- thank God for visas and houses to rent.
- pray for the health of the family, Pam has been quite unwell but is now on the mend.
- for the development programs Pam and Steve are involved in through BWAid.

# zaire



Stephen and Elizabeth Allford

Stephen and Elizabeth work in the missionary affairs office of the Baptist Community of the River Zaire (CBFZ) Kinshasa, keeping the administrative wheels turning in a country where good communications are almost non-existent. Stephen also manages a maintenance service for church Land Rovers; Zaire generally is not known for its adherence to a strict vehicle maintenance regime!

They are expecting the birth of their first child in December and will return to the UK for Home Assignment next month, although Elizabeth may have to leave a little earlier – leaving Stephen with the end of year accounts! Before they return, Stephen has several jobs to complete on missionary houses in Kinshasa and Elizabeth is hoping to print a songbook she has been preparing over the past 18 months.

Recently the Allfords played host to a Christian video team, from Tandem TV & Video, of Hemel Hempstead, Herts, who have been shooting sequences for the new BMS video, Making Jesus Known, to be launched this month.

**Please pray:**

- for Elizabeth's health throughout her pregnancy
- for safe journeys home to the UK
- for Stephen completing end of year accounts for the CBFZ

**Nepal**

## OCTOBER

### Arrivals

Margaret Gibbs from Surket  
 Joy Knapman from Colombo  
 David Kerrigan from Colombo  
 Derek Punchard from Curitiba

### Departures

Bob and Ruth Ellett to Butwal  
 Iain and Karen Gordon to Kathmandu  
 Chris and Sarah Mattock to Ferrara  
 Joy Knapman to Colombo  
 David Kerrigan to Colombo  
 Derek Punchard to Curitiba

### Overseas Visits

David Martin to Sri Lanka  
 John Passmore to Italy  
 Bill Slack to Italy  
 Derek Rumbol to Zaire  
 Phil Hindle to Zaire  
 Delyth Wyn Davies to Zaire

### Anonymous gifts

For May 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 £2,544.89

### Legacies

For May 1996

	£
Evans Mrs P M	500.00
Hampson Phyllis	500.00
Lawton Miss A E	200.00
Wilmot Mrs Clara	853.92
Preston Miss Jessie	3,734.94
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£5,788.86</b>

### BMS projects

Up to August 28 1996

	£
Breaking Chains (1995)	35,316.97
Arise and Build! (1996)	5,399.27
Mighty Warrior (young people)	782.06
By His Stripes (WOW)	2,459.56

# Diary of a diary: the missing hours

It's not really too bad being dragged around, what seems like, every country in Asia and Europe. Having had those 10 years in Bangladesh, in some ways Europe now seems quite tame. Some things, though, come round with monotonous regularity, like having the new pages for the next year inserted into my genuine leather cover every autumn (I used to be called a Filofax but now I've grown up I'm just known as an organiser) and the panic I hear in John's voice when I can't be found.

It's on to my blank pages, which come after the actual diary bit, that John writes the notes of all the incidents he's been recounting in *mh* and as I said last month I was, of course, there for most of them anyway. Not all, however, and the other incidents I recount from hearsay. I don't know

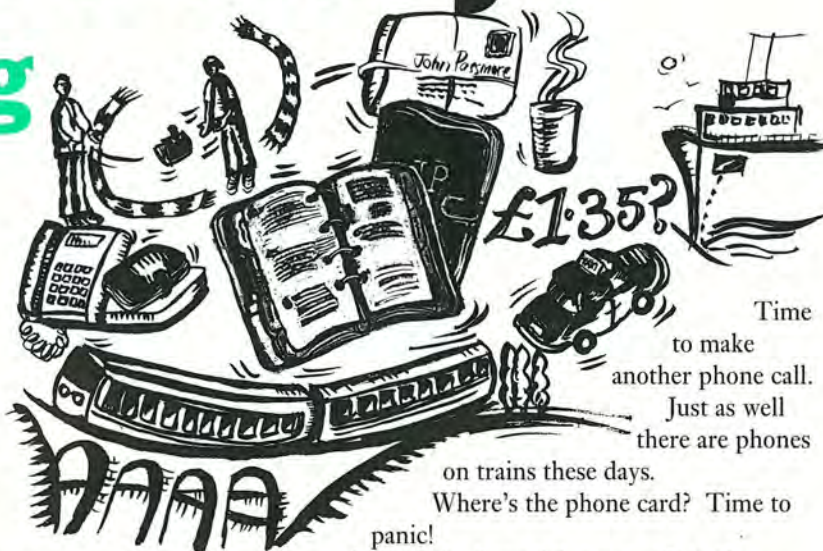


ILLUSTRATION: SARAH PRENTICE

## John Passmore takes a sideways view

what would have happened if I had been lost at the bottom of the Grand Union Canal. Money, credit cards and diary all in one and all gone!

I do know, however, what did happen one day on Winchester station. It was Saturday afternoon and it should have been a straightforward journey from Didcot Parkway to Portsmouth Harbour and a ferry crossing to Le Havre. But BR was carrying out repairs to the line and so it was only at the last moment that we learned about the changed route which required an extra, very tight, connection in Winchester. The train from Reading was on time and the station screen showed a few minutes to spare before the Portsmouth train was due at platform one. Time for a quick call home to assure everyone that we'd made the connection and there was no need to worry.

While on the phone the station public address system announces a platform change. The Portsmouth train now arrives at platform five. The phone call ends abruptly and a mad dash made to said platform forgetting what was left on top of the phone.

### John's story

Phew, just caught the train. This calls for a celebratory polystyrene cup of BR coffee. Ah, but where's the money? Where's the diary?

At least the ferry ticket was still in the overnight bag along with a little small change. On arrival at Portsmouth a quick call home from a coin phone box to get the credit and bank cards cancelled and then to the ferry. But wait, is that the courtesy bus I see disappearing into the distance? Now there's a new problem.

### Diary's story

This is the bit that John didn't know. The next people to use the Winchester, platform one, phone box were a group of teenagers returning home to London from a football match. After making ribald comments and using me as a rugby ball for a while they investigated my contents and saw the sticker with an emergency number to be phoned in case of loss.

They followed the instructions, home was notified that the diary was found and in due course I was returned by post.

Brilliant.

Faith in today's youth restored.

### Back in Portsmouth.

John to taxi driver: "How much to the ferry terminal please?"

Taxi driver: "Four pounds."

John: "I haven't got that much."

Taxi driver: "Tough."

John: "How far is it to walk?"

Taxi driver: "Too far in the time. You'll miss the ferry."

John: "Thanks!"

Starts walking.

John to second taxi driver: "How far will £1.35 get me towards the ferry terminal?"

Second taxi driver: "Jump in, I'll take you there, no problem!"

Brilliant.

Faith in taxi drivers restored.

John Passmore, the BMS Europe Representative was a missionary in Bangladesh for ten years

# waves

## WHOSE PROBLEM IS IT ANYWAY?

They satanise us, Milanko, a Christian Serb, told me. What I saw, when I was in his country, seemed to bear out the truth of what he said.

Sympathies have been easily stirred, and rightly so, for the dreadful situation of people in Croatia and Bosnia. It is less easy to raise compassion for the Serbs, who are seen as aggressors. Yet there are as many Serbian victims in this terrible civil war in Yugoslavia, which few people wanted and fewer understand.

Novi Sad in Serbia, although untouched by bombs, has immense social problems. The population of 250,000 has risen to at least 370,000, due to an influx of refugees from Croatia and Bosnia, with more expected in the next year as a result of the Dayton agreement. Many have lost all they possessed, and have little hope for the future.

In another place I visited, a group of about 30 people of all ages and both sexes live and sleep together in one large room, their possessions, pathetically few, stored under their beds. They have no money for basic needs, such as medicine, and nowhere to go.



Whose problem is it? For any country, such a rise in population would be difficult to cope with; for Serbia, virtually penniless after massive inflation and a costly war, it is impossible. Local Christians do their best. Tabita is a relief organisation, staffed by workers from the Baptist church. These hard-working people show the love of Jesus by distributing material aid and sharing the gospel. Some refugees have come to Christ as a result. But Serbian Christians are themselves very poor, and the needs are overwhelming.

What is the church in the West doing? Trucks bringing aid from Holland and Germany arrive from time to time, but sometimes the food is so old, or so mice-infested, that it has to be destroyed. One group of Baptist churches in South Devon sends aid that is welcome and greatly appreciated.

Jesus told us to love our enemies. The Serbs aren't that, though they may not be very high in Britain's popularity charts. Their needs are desperate.

Whose problem is it anyway?

Margaret Pitt is a volunteer working with BMS in Serbia teaching English as a foreign language. She started her voluntary service in March.

**BMS presents**

# Get Real!

**an outrageous roadshow for teens and twenties**

**including**

**around the world in 80 seconds!**

**the toilet!**

**10 things to do with a boring christian!**

**the mad half hour!**

**how not to fall asleep in church!**

**mission impossible!**

## THE CHALLENGE

**With Phil Marsden and the UK Action Team**

**It's the fast moving, rib tickling, eye opening, interactive mission show you simply can't afford to miss ... especially as admission is absolutely free!**

**Contact your local organiser for further details.**

Fri 25th Oct 7.30pm  
Sat 26th Oct 7.30pm  
Fri 1st Nov 7.30pm  
Sat 2nd Nov 7.30pm  
Fri 15th Nov 7.30pm  
Sat 16th Nov 7.30pm  
Fri 22nd Nov 7.30pm  
Sat 23 Nov 7.30pm

St Thomas Baptist Church, Crookes, Sheffield  
Methodist Central Hall, Edinburgh  
Castleton Baptist Church, Cardiff  
Princes Drive Baptist Church, Colwyn Bay  
Bromham Baptist Church, Bedford  
Trinity Baptist Church, Bexleyheath  
Green Lane Baptist Church, Walsall  
Zion Baptist Church, Creech St Michael

Cath Mawson 01274 487341  
Bill Mason 0141 639 5471  
Roger Foster 01633 680132  
Caroline Thomas 01492 531681  
David Richardson 01234 825521  
Irene Woosnam 0181 304 1858  
Ron Mason 0121 422 6727  
Mary Stephens 01823 442534