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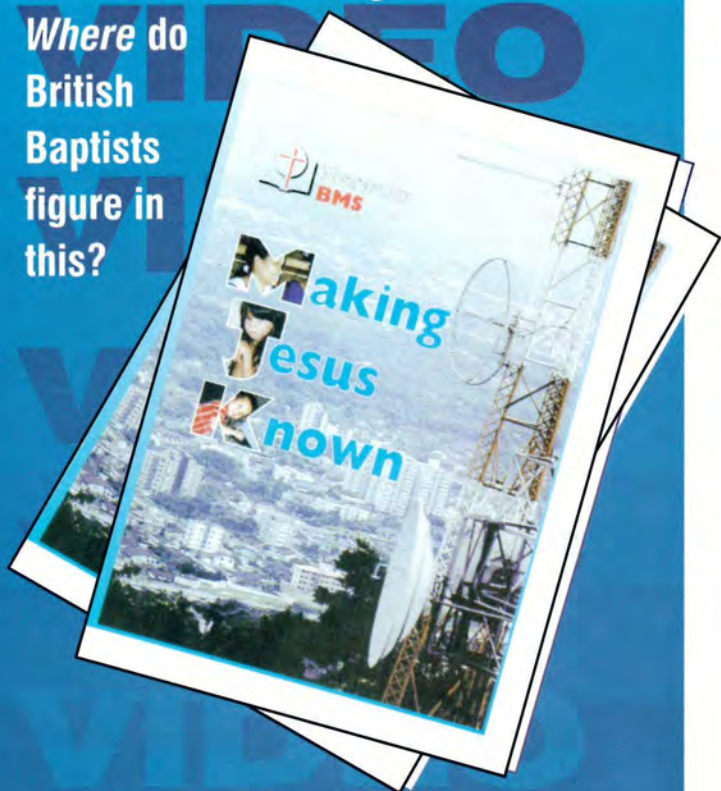
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British

Baptists

figure in

this?



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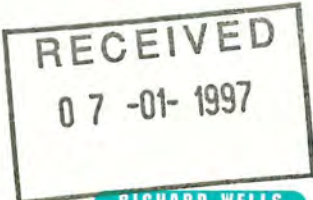
WORLDWIDE

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ISSUE - MISSION

contents



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RICHARD WELLS

So Steve Chalke's changed our name! He can't do that without permission. But he has.

What do I tell the BMS President? Worse still, what do I tell my mum?

She'll never understand. She'll think it's one of these take-overs – or else she'll think I've got another job.

I can just hear her: "Changed your job again? You can't stick at one for five minutes, can you? Stability, that's what you need, son."

"But it's Steve Chalke, mum, he didn't really mean it in November's *mb*. It was only a metaphor – a figure of speech. He used it to make a point – (I hope she understands) – you know, tongue-in-cheek."

"What's a bit of a cheek, son? Changing your job without telling me?"

"It's not my job that's changed – well it has, but that'll only confuse you. It's not changing its name – the society, I mean."

"The building society? Next you'll be telling me they're floating it on the Stock Exchange."

"No the Baptist Missionary Society. We're not floating, we're not changing our name, we're not... I mean, if we were really thinking of changing the name we wouldn't do it without an official notice, without telling the President, or the ministers, or General Committee, or the Baptist Times – or you!"

I figure we'd have to tell my mum – I might never get another piece of her Yum Yum Cake again.

Perish the thought.

After all that, welcome to the new-look *mb*. with your free BMS Prayer Guide. You'll receive a new prayer guide in May and September.

In this issue of *mb*. we focus on the topic of mission, bring you a new series written by church leaders who have been inspired by tours in overseas mission locations, a new series called Our Town examining the places where BMS colleagues are located, and for 1997 BMS columnist John Passmore is joined by Owen Clark, that veteran of mission who has a way with words!

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Printed by Alden Colour Didcot, Oxfordshire

Subscription for 1997 *mb* and BMS Prayer Guide are published as a complete package. £6.00 through church *mb* distributors. £7.98 by direct mail (inc p&p). Six issues of *mb* with three of BMS Prayer Guide plus free Annual Review. Overseas p&p at the rate applicable.

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

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4

COMING HOME
What does 'for life' mean?
Susan Chalmers reflects



6

HIT & RUN
Havoc or harvest?
Agne & Elvie Blomvik tell their story



8

HOME & AWAY
Absent but not forgotten
Pat Dunning tells her vision for mission

10

TALKING WITH PARTNERS
On the receiving end
A Brazilian pastor speaks out

FEATURES

12

BMS NEWS

14

WORLD NEWS

16

WORLD MISSION LINK

NEWS

18

CENTRE SPREAD
Global mission schooling

20

OUR TOWN
NEW SERIES Tirana, Albania

26

PASTORS ABROAD
NEW SERIES David Morris visits Brazil

28

TAKE TWO
Mission file of facts, figures and background

30

ACTION TEAMS
They're out at the sharp end

32

MISSIONARY DIGEST
Prayer points to support BMS colleagues

35

JOHN PASSMORE
The last word

REGULARS



COVER IMAGE
WORSHIPPER AT UPTO CHURCH, ZAIRE
PHOTO: PHIL HINDLE



Missionary Herald the magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society

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Registered charity number 233782

NEXT ISSUE MARCH-APRIL

Leadership
What makes a good leader?
Does leadership come to an end?

Why they're coming

Some people analyse how long missionaries stay overseas and the reasons why they come home for good. It's their job. It's not just a pen pushing exercise; there's a real concern that fewer people are offering for long-term service and even fewer actually serving long-term.

For the first two-thirds of this century, when a person felt the call to mission, it was expected that this would be a long-term commitment. For many people it was a life-time commitment. Studies have shown, however, there is a consistent trend towards a lower average length of service and an increase in those who have served a mission society for five years or less.

Does this mean that Christians are less committed to mission today than they were 50 years ago?

Are fewer missionaries needed today?

Is more work being done by national Christians?

Are missionaries less able or less willing to continue in difficult circumstances?

There are no easy answers. The world has changed almost beyond recognition since World War II. Television and ease of travel mean that the world has shrunk to fit our living rooms. We speak to people who have visited Outer Mongolia and the jungles of Africa and South America.

It is true also that missionaries do not stand apart from their culture. My father

WHERE ARE ALL THE LONG-TERM MISSION PERSONNEL?

SUSAN CHALMERS SAYS THE ANSWER IS IN OUR SHORT-TERM SOCIETY

began work in the 1920s with one organisation and retired from the same organisation in the 1970s. Most people stayed in the one job or with one organisation for their entire working life.

Today, the way to advance is by changing employer. It is expected that someone will consider moving after five or six years, if not sooner. Major career changes are quite common and many people will make at least one such move in their life. Career development, financial considerations, social advancement, pension prospects, job security are all important factors. Christians will often have a different agenda from others but it is not always possible to run totally counter to all social and cultural trends.

Short term overseas experience and gap years are popular with young people. Missions which offer these types of opportunities have a steady flow of applicants. Commitment for a year or two is the upper limit in most people's thinking.

In some situations short-term workers can be a real bonus and can make a really

valid contribution to the work of the church and of mission. In others the "hit and run" approach does little good; it only leaves damage and the long-term worker has to pick up the pieces. In many situations the need is for steady ongoing work which will break up hard ground, sowing seed over many years in the hope of a harvest.

In 1995 I asked a group of former cross-cultural missionaries why they had returned to the UK. This group had worked for various missionary societies in a wide variety of locations. The most common reasons given for returning home were:

- Health.
- Children, their education, health and adjustment.
- Elderly parent or relative in need of care.
- Move to other work.
- Completion of work.

Only 12 per cent of the group gave a single reason for their return. More than 25 per cent gave two reasons and another 25 per cent gave five or more reasons.

Society has changed and with it



Today: National Christians are partners in the work of the gospel

home

SO SOON



Former days: "Going" on mission was a life-long commitment

people's expectations. Short-term commitments are common, like short-term contracts. In a rapidly changing world five years can seem a very long time.

Missions may dislike the changes but must accept the reality. Education by mission societies is important, but mission candidates are the product of their culture. A large part of the culture

of a Christian is the church.

The key to commitment and to perseverance is the training and discipling of young Christians in the local church. Many younger people who now offer for overseas service do not come from a Christian or church background. They come out of the secular "instant" society.

If it's commitment and endurance

we're looking for, then these qualities need to be demonstrated in the lives of mature Christians and church leaders. Only then is there any real hope in reversing the trend. ●



Susan Chalmers was a BMS missionary in Zaire (1982 to 1992) and now works for Action Partners, an interdenominational missionary society, based in Doncaster.

Hit and run mission



Visiting teams: How do you measure their effect?

Our first “hit and run mission” was in 1988. A choir from Sweden came for a weekend and sang in the streets and performed in an open air theatre, and we also organised a gospel concert in a hall.

We were three years into church planting and there were about 10 people in the church. This was a big event for us. For the new French Christians it was stimulating to meet a big group of young

Christians from another country.

A year later we had an Operation Mobilisation team from Sweden, England and France for two weeks in the summer. We did some singing in the streets, showed films and invited people to have a cup of coffee and chat afterwards.

By then the church had been growing a little and some of our young people took part.

Although we prayed with some who wanted to make a decision for Christ, we

VISITING TEAMS TO RUN MISSIONS MAY NOT ACHIEVE INSTANT GROWTH BUT **AGNE AND ELVIE BLOMVIK** FOUND THAT THEY HAVE ENCOURAGED THE CHURCH AND FORMED AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

did not see direct results, like people coming to the church. Afterwards, we lost sight of almost everyone.

But it was a very stimulating experience, especially for the young people in the church, to realise people's spiritual needs. It also gave them an opportunity to be visible in town, demonstrating that they were not ashamed of the gospel.

It was not until May 1994 that we had another opportunity to organise a mission, partly as a result of a visit by a couple in our church to friends in Christchurch Baptist Church, Dorset, sharing the needs in France, and partly as a result of a visit from a student from Moorland's Bible College, preparing for missionary service in France.

These contacts resulted in a week-long joint mission between the college and Christchurch Baptist Church. People from Christchurch came for almost the whole week, and some others for the weekend, joining five young people from our church and nine students from Moorlands. We reached out through children's work and street activities like singing, sketchboard, mimes and preaching, and we also showed the Jesus film.

As in 1989 we did not see much direct fruit in terms of people converted and added to the church but we did notice an increased interest when working in the street. People were accepting of us and listened and talked with us. We prayed with eight people for salvation, but none of them came to church!

Since then we have stayed in contact with Christchurch Baptist Church and exchange visits have been organised.

Another link, this time with two churches in the Bristol area, came through one of the Moorlands student who took part in the mission, and who is

also preparing for missionary service with his family in France. They also established a contact between our church and his home church.

This was to lead to a more sustained effort. Over the first eight months last year, these churches sent teams and leaders for weekends and twice for a whole week.

The first weekend, in January, was dedicated to prayer for the Cherbourg area. On the second, in February, we covered the suburb town where our church is located with Christian tracts. People were motivated to take part – even some elderly people participated, doing as much as they could in distribution and supporting the rest of the team in prayer.

Encouraged by this support, we decided to try to reach out to Valognes, a town south of Cherbourg. In April, a mission week included street activities, tract distribution and the showing of the Jesus film.

In June, another small town nearby received the same tracts, and in August, a new week mission was arranged with gospel evenings in the suburbs around, and the Jesus film was shown again in central Cherbourg. Tracts were again distributed in Valognes and we were able to put a book stand on the market places in two other towns.

Yet there was still an absence of immediate or direct fruit – nothing apparently to show for these “hit and run” missions.

Despite this, the church is encouraged. The members have been inspired by special event evangelism,

considering that it is as necessary to sow the seed widely as it is to plant the gospel in people by personal witnessing, though the fruit that will come from this may not be measured the way we would like to do.

In May, another mission is planned with Moorlands, Christchurch Baptist Church and New Life Church in New Milton, reaching out through a Christian Film Festival and open air activities to Cherbourg and neighbouring towns.

Nine years on, what began as “hit and run” missions has developed into a strong partnership, allowing British and French Christians to work together to share the gospel.

It is quite encouraging to notice that several other Baptist churches in Normandy and Brittany have received help from England and Jersey. Such missions, if planned together with the local churches and with an understanding of the spiritual and cultural situation in France, can become a real blessing.

Through this help, we have been able to reach out and become a missionary church in our region. ●

Yet there was still an absence of immediate or direct fruit – nothing apparently to show for these “hit and run” missions.

Agne and Elvie Blomvik, Swedish missionaries now in their forties, have been working since 1985 in Cherbourg, with a population of 100,000, planting churches with the French Baptist Federation



THEY MAY BE FAR AWAY BUT THEY'RE CLOSE TO THE HEART.
PAT DUNNING TELLS *mb*. HOW THEIR VISION FOR MISSION WORKS OUT

Home & away

“Greetings from the Home Team!” So begins a monthly letter to those Godalming Baptist Church have sent in full time service. There is a long tradition of supporting missionaries and ministry students in this Surrey fellowship. In the early 1990s they were helping to support at least 13 people around the world and at one time had a representative on every continent.

Individual missionaries they may be but to Godalming, they're the Away Team – Steve and Elizabeth serving with BMS, Jonathan and Linda and Eddie and Daphne with WEC International, Tony and Nan are Interserve Partners, Jeanne lives in Chiapas, Mexico, where she and her husband worked for over 30 years, and Ross manages a Christian Outdoor Sailing Centre in Essex.

Over the years many young people have gone for short term service and several with the BMS 28:19 Action Teams.

In 1995, following a visit from Stanley Davies, of the Evangelical Missionary Alliance, the church produced a written mission statement, which is now church policy, but as they wrote it, they were conscious of committing to paper what was already happening. They also established guidelines to leaders and

those who felt called to full-time service. At the hub of it all is the World Mission Action Group, chaired by one of the church leadership team and comprising minister Martin Poole, a secretary/co-ordinator, a mission treasurer, and others who have specific roles like caring, publicity, youth, and two who have had mission work experience.

When it comes to support for the Away Team, and mission generally, there

Ambassadors' Fund to regulate financial support fairly to each individual and their children. These days many in the congregation do not specifically give to the account but expect the treasurer to allocate part of their giving as appropriate.

In recent years their commitment to mission and their Away Team has been around 50 per cent of the total budget.

When there is a specific need, special gifts are made. When they come home to Godalming, they're there to help – like providing a full larder to welcome them.

Far from being a once-a-week commitment, the Away Team are a daily concern. Every member of the congregation is given a daily prayer card on the first Sunday of the year in the form of a bookmark, with an Away Team family or member for each day. News updates for prayer and praise appear in the monthly church magazine

Over the years many young people have gone for short term service and several with the BMS 28:19 Action Teams.

are three things on the Home Team's hearts – money, welfare, and prayer.

Martin knows each Away Team member personally, and church members felt it was a priority to enable him to pay a pastoral visit to each of them over a period of time. Although this programme is still not complete, it has been a great encouragement to missionaries, and has given Martin greater insight and an opportunity to teach.

It was as long ago as the 1950s that the church set up an



and prayer letters are regularly distributed.

Prayer figures significantly in the life of Godalming Baptist Church. In members' homes on the first Monday of each month, a small group has been meeting specifically to pray for the Away Team. As if that wasn't prayer enough, the church's housegroups support one or two Away Team members by prayer and contact, fostering closer fellowship. Urgent requests for prayer can be put on a confidential emergency prayer chain which exists within the fellowship.

And they pray for their Away Team at midweek and Sunday services, remembering them in intercessory prayers at Communion.

High technology has joined traditional letter writing in maintaining contact with the Away Team. Some members use e-mail, others faxes and the church have regular telephone live-links in their services

Many of the organisations and groups in the church have specific missionaries to whom they relate and these links seem to be a key to raising the awareness and challenge of mission.

The challenge to shift mission in any shape or form from being a low priority in many minds was grasped in 1995 when Godalming held a mission awareness year, each month focusing on a mission society or organisation connected to the fellowship.

Using magazine articles, displays, speakers, members of the Away Team, including a mission matter on the agenda of every church organisation and, in April, holding a mission awareness week, the challenge to serve was presented to every member.

Now they have the big picture of world mission. ●

Pat Dunning is the outgoing Secretary/Co-ordinator for Mission at Godalming Baptist Church, Surrey



Right: Missionaries to China in the last century – many never came back...

Below: Godalming's mission prayer warriors; the mission notice board; minister Martin Poole flanked by Pat Dunning and husband John, chairman of the church mission action group

Demands my life...

GOING FOR GOD SOMETIMES MEANS DICING WITH DEATH, SAYS **JAN KENDALL**. OCCASIONALLY, YOU DON'T COME BACK

A friend who, as part of his medical training, decided to spend a year in Uganda, recalls someone asking him: "So you're trusting God to take you out there and bring you back then?"

"No," he replied. "God has only showed me that he wants me to go there. What happens after that is up to him."

The perilous aspect of mission work is not something that is talked about today. Of course, there are freak accidents, kidnappings and even murder of mission personnel, but things like that would not happen to Baptists, would they?

History has shown that Baptist missionaries in a given location are not immune from the dangers that beset everyone else living at that time in that place. For BMS founder William Carey, it was the climate more than anything else that claimed its victims. Having spent months in getting to India, some like Daniel Brunson died within weeks. In a period of 12 months spanning 1811 to 1812, 10 people associated with

the mission in India died, including five children.

William Carey's son, Felix, moved on to work in Burma where his first wife, Margaret, died when she was only 19. His second wife and two children died while on a boat trip to the capital



Amarapura.

And so it was in every other frontline situation. Missionaries gave their lives wherever they were sent.

The threats were not only foreign germs, heat or hazardous travel. During the Boxer Rising in northern China 1899 to 1900, 159 Protestant missionaries, including 12 BMS workers and three children, were killed. Others were captured and imprisoned. A few weeks later eight more BMS missionaries were beaten to death. Within a month BMS had lost all its staff at

the Shanxi mission.

As medical care and knowledge about disease has increased, so the number of mission personnel dying while working overseas has decreased. But it would be naive to assume they will automatically be spared, and that "death in service" won't happen today. BMS mission colleagues still get close to the cliff edge in life and death situations, like being:

- Evacuated from Angola (1961), Bangladesh (1971), and Zaire (1991).
 - Caught in rebel fighting (Zaire 1964).
 - Held up in an armed robbery (Holmes, Brazil, 1992).
 - Kidnapped at gunpoint (Grote, El Salvador 1994).
- Some actually go over the edge. In 1967 in the aftermath of the rebel unrest in Zaire, when the situation was considered relatively safe, David Claxton was murdered by armed robbers.
- "Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God." (Psalm 31:5) ●

Talking with partners

in Mission

Over 100 years have elapsed since the first Baptist Missionaries arrived in Brazil to preach the Gospel, and over forty since the first BMS couple were sent to work alongside our Brazilian brothers and sisters in the task of winning Brazil for Christ. We asked Pr Abelardo Rodrigues de Almeida, Principal of the Baptist Seminary in the state of Goias to offer his reflections on the legacies and prospects of missionary activity in Brazil, with special reference to

Goias a region where the BMS have been involved in mission activity for only the last two years. Abelardo: As a nation we Brazilians and as a denomination we Baptists must thank the Lord for his vision given to our sister churches from abroad as to the

task of missions. Had the vision not been seen and the command to go not been heard and heeded then many in Brazil would still be under the influence of he who is the Prince of darkness.

As a denomination we are totally mission orientated, there is an urgency to go to all nations. At present we have about 200 missionaries working in partnership abroad, and more than 200 involved in home mission, besides the regular monthly tithe that goes to the missionary enterprise.

Another legacy from the influence of foreign mission in Brazil has been the vision to win the nation for Christ. The missionaries we received produced strong autonomous churches with a strong sense of cooperation. This has led to the Baptists of Brazil accepting the challenge of trying to plant a Baptist church in

every town by the year 2000.

This aim, however, produces a major challenge: preparing trained leadership for these new mission churches. We would need approximately 5000 such leaders to fill this need. The Lord is giving us the victory in establishing these churches. We therefore need the partnership, more than ever from our brothers and sisters from abroad.

The main areas of mission activities as I see it for missionaries from abroad would be:

- 1 Theological education. The exchange of theological ideas, the bringing of a wider view of the Baptist family, all strengthen our leadership in formation;
- 2 Social work. An area where we are still only just beginning to take our first steps and culturally we still encounter barriers to social involvement;
- 3 Church planting, nurturing and association work are all very much at the top of the Brazilian Baptist agenda;
- 4 Participation in special projects, friendship houses, drugs rehabilitation centres, and in our case here in Goias we will be looking to partners in mission to help man and run the Centennial Memorial Hospital.

As someone commented recently at mission conference here in Brazil when the 10/40 window came into discussion. "Let's keep our eyes and ears open to the needs and cries of the world. The lord commanded us to go to all nations, to the whole world and not to windows". I pray that in the coming years mission partnership amongst the nations may expand so that the whole Baptist family will embrace this call to mission. ●

We thank the Lord for his vision given to our sister churches from abroad as to the task of missions.

HOW A BIT OF GOSSIP IN A GIRLS' MAGAZINE OPENED THE WAY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO GET INVOLVED IN MISSION.
JAN KENDALL REPORTS

Never too young to start





Involved in world mission: You can't be too young

It all seemed pretty insignificant at the time. The telephone rang at BMS and Phil Marsden, the Youth and Children's Co-ordinator answered. It wasn't the usual church magazine distributor wanting to talk about *WOW* magazine, or the next road-show host discussing the PA system at their church.

The call was from MIZZ magazine wanting to talk about a future article they were calling *Globetrotting Girls*.

You've never heard of MIZZ magazine?

You'll find it on your newsagent's shelf alongside

all the other magazines for pubescent – and even pre-pubescent – girls, promoting features such as "Your sex nightmares", "I got pregnant the night I lost my virginity" and "My brother killed his baby but I told them I was guilty".

MIZZ had heard that BMS sent young people overseas and wanted to interview someone for their article. Phil gave them names of young women who had been overseas with BMS on 28:19 Action Team missions, and then left them to it.

In fact MIZZ got in contact with 19-year-old

Sarah Brown, one of the five-strong India/Sri Lanka 1995/96 Action Team and her globetrotting story appeared, apparently unedited in the September 11/24 issue.

There was no evading why she went. God and mission got a loud and clear mention and BMS was given as a contact address.

But it hasn't stopped there. As a result of that article Phil has received several enquiries from girls wanting to go overseas; some were from Christians, others probably not. Many are from girls too young to go on 28:19 Action Teams.

Phil says: "We've written to everyone who's contacted us, telling them that though they are too young to go overseas with BMS, there are lots of ways they can get involved with spreading the Good News to their friends and others in the community or being a mission contact in their church.

One 14-year-old has taken Phil at his word. She has written to her BMS Area Co-ordinator and asked for information about how she can become a mission secretary in her church. Phil is keen to encourage her and others

like her to take this up.

He quotes 1 Timothy 4:12. "Let no one despise your youth."

"I first preached at my school assembly when I was 13," he says. "Then I set up the CU there. I've taken 11 and 12-year-olds out witnessing and doing things like drama in the streets. None of them wanted to go home, they were having such a great time! There's loads of Biblical precedents of God using young people to do his work and spread his message.

"There's no reason why we should not continue in this way." ●

New medical officer

Dr Verna Houghton has been accepted to serve as BMS honorary medical officer following the resignation of David Wilson after three years in post. Verna (64), who is in general practice near Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire, has been seeking ways of serving God using her medical skills and knowledge and says the BMS post came as an answer to prayer. She will develop her knowledge of tropical medicine. Three of her children have served on short-term placements overseas, one with BMS at Bolobo Hospital.

Computer transfer

BMS has spent the past two months transferring its financial history and records to a new computer system. Although this should result in greater efficiency in the future, Finance Manager Jim Neilson apologised for the delay in sending out receipts and letters of thanks during the transfer period.

Interserve links

Exploratory meetings are to be held between BMS Board of Management members and representatives of Interserve following a suggestion that the two organisations look at the possibility of greater co-operation in mission work.

New Director

Managing Editor of *mh*. Richard Wells has been appointed Director for Constituency Support, following Andy Stockbridge's move to Scripture Union. Richard (45), appointed Publicity Manager in March 1995, took up his new post in November.

Fund change

Charity Commission forms are being completed by the BMS to change the designation of its Angola Hospital Fund. The aim is to make the fund's £440,000 available more widely for health care in Africa.

Prayer time

A period of prayer and fasting will be held by BMS General Committee delegates during their meeting in June. A room will be set aside for prayer.

News



BB members at their home church help Beryl and Peter mark their retirement with a special cake

Cake to mark retirement

Beryl and Peter Dignum cut the cake at a Boys' Brigade party to mark their retirement as organisers of the annual BB fund-raising appeal for BMS. Over the 25 years they have served the BMS in this role, Beryl and Peter, who live at Watford, Hertfordshire have enabled BB companies to raise more than £200,000. Lorna and David Hyson, members of Cheam Baptist Church, Surrey, have taken over as organisers.

NEW CANDIDATES FOR MISSION

Four new candidates have been accepted for service with BMS. They are Alexander and Irene Black, and Malcolm and Linda Drummond.



Alex and Irene, long-standing members of Cumbernauld

Baptist Church, are expected to leave for northern Thailand this month (January) to take up educational work in a school at Chiang Rai.

The couple, in their early 50s, are teachers who have taken early retirement and have extensive experience in teaching and educational management.

Irene retired as acting head teacher of Hillview and Mossknowe Schools, and Alex has been working with adults who have learning difficulties. They have three adult sons, David, Andrew and Douglas.

Their wide church involvement includes leadership roles and work with youngsters. They have been taking courses in cross-cultural awareness, Biblical basis for mission and in the Thai language.



Malcolm and Linda, members of Oakridge Baptist Church,

High Wycombe, Bucks, where Malcolm minister, will be leaving for Bangladesh next year to train leaders at the Christian College of Theology.

Malcolm, who is working part-time on a doctorate on the Religion of the Patriarchs in Genesis 12 to 50, also has a doctorate in Physics from London, a first-class honours degree in Physics from Cambridge and a first-class honours degree in Theology from Spurgeon's College.

Linda has worked with Operation Mobilisation summer campaigns in Asian and Jewish areas of the UK, and has worked with children and young people. She is a reception teacher in High Wycombe and has also taught English as a second language.

Malcolm (35) and Linda (43), who have a three-year-old daughter, Ambreen, are expected to take courses in the Biblical basis for mission and cross-cultural awareness.

Record budget – but it will draw on reserves

BMS will spend a record £4.9 million in its work of world mission in this financial year. But in approving the 1996/7 figure, the BMS General Committee has had to budget for a £436,000 drain on the society's reserves.

Treasurer Mervyn Hancock outlined the new figures to the committee at its autumn meet in Harrow, north London.

The budget for direct spending on overseas mission will rise by 5.75 per cent, totalling – with other costs added – nearly £3.5m. Support costs in Britain – mainly promotion, education, recruitment and administration – are being reduced slightly to £1,465,550.

Mervyn said: "The challenge for the society is to inspire giving to world mission through BMS."

He explained that continually drawing from reserves decreases income from interest as the reserves run down. "We would like to challenge everyone so that donations and gifts increase."



Chris Hutt, Director of Finance and Administration, told the committee: "Giving during the last financial year didn't keep pace with inflation, which is currently running at about two per cent. In fact, giving hasn't matched inflation for the past five years.

BMS free reserves currently stand at about £1.5m but could drop to only £1m by the end of this financial year.

Degree for Angola veteran

Former BMS missionary Jim Grenfell has been awarded a Master of Philosophy degree from Leeds University for research on the history of the Baptist church in Angola and its influence on the life and culture of the local people.

Jim, who worked in Angola and Zaire, studied at Rawdon College and at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak, in preparation for mission work in Angola. He and his wife, Eileen, (Pep) spent a year in Lisbon learning Portuguese and in 1954 joined the BMS staff at Mbanza Kongo (San Salvador).

The war of independence forced them to leave Angola in 1961 and for the next 10 years they were based at Lukala in lower Zaire, working among refugees and supporting leaders of the Angolan church in exile.

After four years as minister of Thomas Helwys Baptist Church in Nottingham, Jim made two brief visits to Angola in 1975 and for 3½ years was based at Kimpese in lower Zaire, co-ordinating the work of the Zaire Protestant Relief Agency.

In 1980 he became a BMS staff member at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak. Leading up to



retirement in 1992, he was for five months the Personnel and Candidate Secretary for the BMS.

He visited Angola again during his retirement to research his thesis. Since receiving his degree, Jim has continued working on the church's history from 1940 to 1970 and is planning the translation of his work into Portuguese.



Tributes to retiring General Director

Retiring BMS General Director Reg Harvey was given a standing ovation by delegates of General Committee at their autumn meeting. There were gifts, too, for Reg and his wife, Maire.

It was one of a number of retirement events for Reg, who has been at the helm of BMS for more than 14 years. They started as long ago as April at the Baptist Assembly of the BMS and the Baptist Union of Great Britain in Blackpool.

Welsh Baptists have said their farewells and at the Assembly of the Baptist Union of Scotland in October, Reg's service was acknowledged with a presentation by Ian Mundy (pictured) of an engraved Caithness bowl. Maire was presented with a Celtic brooch.

At October's General Committee, Carol Murray, minister at Haddenham Baptist Church, Bucks, paid tribute to Reg's leadership and inspiration, recalling the valuable insight into world mission she had gained while she was a ministerial student at his church in Rugby.

Carolyn is new chairman

The current BMS President, Carolyn Green, is to be the society's next Chairman of the Board of Management.

Carolyn, who is touring the nation with her At The Cutting Edge programme, to inspire greater support for world mission, takes up the post in May, when she passes the presidential reins to Martin Pearse.

From this month (January), when current chairman Basil Amey steps down, Martin – who is vice-president – will act as chairman.

Carolyn (45), who has put legal studies on hold for her



presidential year, is on the leadership team of South Parade Baptist Church, Leeds, with her husband, Steve. They are

former BMS missionaries who worked in Zaire.

Basil was the society's first board chairman following a review in 1993 which divided the BMS into five directorates and introduced a board of management to support the society's decision-making process.

David Doonan and Carol Murray were renominated as representative directors – General Committee members who sit on the board.

News

INDIA

Five mission personnel were treated in hospital after they and three others were beaten up by an angry crowd which wrecked buildings being used by Youth With A Mission for discipleship training in the south of the country. The violence flared after the YWAM team refused demands by a rival religious group to leave. Talks aimed at a solution to the conflict reached a settlement after one of the injured told his attackers that he forgave them. (YWAM News)

IRAN

The Islamic regime is reported to have increased efforts to stop the spread of evangelical protestant churches. Sources said Muslim converts had been taken in for questioning and beaten. The news follows reports that a young Christian pastor, Mohammed Bagher Yusefi, had been found hanged in a forest near his home. Iranian Christians believe he was murdered because the authorities were reluctant to give up the body. (ODNB)

CHINA

Veteran Christian leader Alan Yuan closed his Beijing housechurch after being pressured to register with the government by Religious Affairs Bureau officials who offered a merger with the local Three Self church. It came days after he had baptised 200 new believers. Alan (82) has refused since the 1950s to join the Three Self church because "politics and religion should not mix". He spent 22 years in jail for refusing to compromise. (ODNB)

SCOTLAND

An appeal for £7,000 to buy books for pastoral students with limited access to theological works, has been launched by the Scottish Baptist Book Project. Requests have been received from BMS partner bodies in Zaire, Angola and Nicaragua, and there are outstanding requests from India and Bangladesh. The project is operated by the Scottish Baptist Men's Movement from 17 Queen's Terrace, Ayr.

RUSSIA

European Baptists and the Baptist World Alliance are co-ordinating a £138,000 fund-raising effort to save the historic Moscow Central Baptist Church building which is suffering from deteriorating foundations and crumbling walls. (EBPS)



Tornado victims in Bangladesh: BMS Relief Fund helped families recover from the devastation

Spiritual fire in cold places

Reports of a spiritual awakening among Russian Eskimos have followed a whistlestop evangelistic campaign by Canadian evangelist Bill Prankard (from *Spread the Fire* magazine).

Prankard, involved in a revival in Arctic Canada among the Inuits, discovered there were similar Eskimo people in Arctic Russia who had never been reached with the gospel.

Two years ago, with a team of nine Inuits, he flew in by helicopter, shared the gospel, prayed with people who responded, left the Bible in their own language and flew on to the next remote village.

Nine months later, the team returned to find Christians living in the same

fashion as the first century church.

In one village, they reported, more than 1,000 had accepted the gospel but with no teaching, they had simply accepted the New Testament scriptures at face value.

They had followed the Acts of the Apostles by meeting daily and praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

There were deliverances, healings and manifestations of spiritual gifts. In fact, reports said, they had even sent messengers to villages which had not been visited with the gospel.

And it is reported that they were not surprised when they faced opposition.

That's what it said in their New Testament...

News in Brief

Compassion in action

The beginning of the year sees the fourth direct appeal to churches and individuals to support the BMS Relief Fund. And this year, the challenge is to make up for lost cash.

In 1996, gifts to the relief fund fell by 15%.

Since the relief fund was set up in 1968, as a response to great human need in countries where BMS is working, more than £780,000 has helped innocent, suffering people caught in disaster, flood, famine, war, or drought.

In the past year almost £65,000 has been sent to Jamaica to help with cyclone damage; Zaire both for assistance after the Kinshasa air crash, and also provision of drugs for Bolobo and Yakusu during a cholera epidemic; Sierra Leone for an ambulance and medical equipment; Bangladesh, two separate amounts to help with relief work following first a tornado and then a flood; Liberia for assistance with refugees; Rwanda for medical supplies and help with needs for Rwandan refugees now living in refugee camps in Tanzania.

BMS continues to receive heart-rending requests for relief fund help. Disasters are unpredictable and when they strike, victims need immediate help – there is no time to organise publicity and an appeal – so the relief fund needs constant topping up.

Many churches use their January communion offering as an opportunity to give to the relief fund; others prefer to give regular amounts over the year.

BMS Relief Fund promotion material for churches and gift envelopes for individuals are now available.

Baptist aid as refugees flood out of Zaire



Increased support for resettling Rwandan refugees from Zaire, following cross-border troubles during the past few months, has come from Baptist World Aid. Amid the turmoil, Rwandan Baptists have launched a programme to provide returnees with seeds, tools, basic household equipment and emergency food.

The initiative is intended to ease the burden on international agencies which had made plans for a gradual return by refugees. But the flood of Rwandans has stretched their resources and original reception plans had to be abandoned in favour of more labour-intensive feeding at commune level.

However, Claver Buzizi, the Baptist Union of Rwanda's (UEBR) projects officer, is convinced feeding in camps is not the best way to help returning refugees. "We must rather equip them with the appropriate basic materials which would enable them to

struggle for their own lives or survival within their lands," he says.

He estimates that about £125 would provide a family with the basic survival pack which they are now distributing. To boost the BWA support, the BMS Relief Fund has made a £20,000 grant which is expected to help more than 160 families, as well as a £5,000 grant to help Rwandan refugees in Tanzania.

BWA Director Paul Montacute (pictured below) has been working with Baptist aid groups globally to co-ordinate a response.

But even though returnees will have the survival pack in their hands, there is still concern at what families will find when they arrive in their home villages – their homes may have been looted or, worse, occupied by another family. And even if families can resettle, emergency food will be needed while they clear their land and reseed or plant for



Alistair Brown



Giving kids the best

I love this photo. The young lad's face is wrinkled with pleasure, the sheer joy of playing with an old bicycle tyre. Simple, innocent fun.

Kids. You long for the best for them as they grow up. But this little fellow is one of millions of children in an Asian country where they won't hear of Jesus. There are few Christians, and they're given a hard time. Most of the population are unevangelised.

BMS is committed to work in places like that. Our new strategy specifically targets the unevangelised countries of the world. That's where we'll concentrate our resources. Why? Because we long for the best for kids like this, and the best includes the gospel of Jesus. ●

the next harvest.

Paul Montacute fears that with images of returning refugees in the media, people in Britain will assume that the crisis is over and he is urging continued awareness.

He says: "The majority of Rwandan refugees are still in Zaire; Kivu in Zaire is being governed by a rebel force in opposition to the Zairian government; hundreds of thousands of returnees are stretching the infrastructure of Rwanda; and Burundi is still in turmoil.

"We'll need to be responsive to massive human need for many months to come."

Under the hammer

Going, going, gone! Sold to the Revd Ken Stewart – a home security assistant. Now, what am I bid for Pam's offer to do a basket of ironing?"

This was the scene at Horfield Baptist Church, Bristol, when they held a promises auction for BMS. More than 60 promises went under the hammer, ranging from a few hours baby-sitting or gardening, to creating a caricature and a

two-night break in a holiday cottage.

As a result, more than £800 was raised for a BMS Bangladesh Partners in Projects (PIPs) scheme – a primary health care programme started by BMS colleague and Horfield member Sue Headlam.

Horfield's world mission group leader Katie Wilkinson said: "It was a great opportunity to offer service to one another as well as to support the work of a friend and fellow member overseas."

Enthusiasm for WOW Club

To the youngsters of Union Church, Heathfield, in East Sussex, WOW is much more than a magazine – it's a fully-fledged, twice-monthly Friday evening club.

With the help of BMS resources – the WOW

Action Pack and bi-monthly magazines – club leaders give dozens of children aged seven to 11 an insight into mission around the world, glimpsing at the variety of cultures in the countries they look at each meeting.

"It's 1½ hours of fun and fellowship," says WOW leader Sue Fletcher. "We try to give the children an insight and some measure of Christian teaching in an exciting, stimulating manner which is relevant to their lives today.

"The aim is that the children will develop into caring Christian young people who are sympathetic to the needs of those around them and are receptive to the ideas of world mission."

Each meeting is packed with activities – games, drama, competitions, singing, and sometimes sampling food from other countries.

Minister Ray Avent is enthusiastic about the



venture: "Some of the children already have church links, some belong to uniformed groups based at the church, while others have no church background at all but twice a month this cocktail of mission potential is stirred into vibrating action!"

It's a hit with the youngsters. Nine-year-old Alison likes the way the club is crammed with fun and loves the leaders. "Because we have quite fun leaders, we



Above: Bid to raise cash: Horfield promise auctioneer with his assistant, Jiminy Bunny

Right: Crossing a "shark infested river" at a Union, Heathfield, WOW Club evening

Dates for your Diary

At The Cutting Edge Presidential tour

In the first three months of the year BMS President Carolyn Green will be visiting various parts of the country meeting church leaders and sharing in celebration.

Celebration meetings with speakers

- January 10, South Parade, Leeds – Alistair Brown
- January 12, South Bank, Middlesbrough – Alan Pain
- January 17, Histon, Cambridge – Michael Quicke
- January 18, Union, High Wycombe – Steve Gaukroger
- February 7, Watnall Road, Nottingham – David Coffey
- February 8, Central, Leicester – John Lewis
- March 7, South Street, Exeter – Ian Coffey
- March 13, Newtown, Powys – Andrew Green
- March 14, Sutton Coldfield – Andrew Green

Other Events and meetings

Saturday 4 January

Leicester BMS Auxiliary New Year Prayer Meeting, Friar Lane and Braunston Baptist Church.

Details: Theo Lambourne 0116 271 3633

Friday 10 January

Get Real roadshow for teens and 20s with the BMS UK Action Team. Harrogate Baptist Church, Yorkshire, 7.30-9.30pm.

Details: Freda Jagger 01423 560700

Saturday 11 January

WOW Action Day for sixes to 13s with the BMS UK Action Team. Harrogate Baptist Church, Yorkshire, 10am-4pm.

Details: Freda Jagger 01423 560700

Monday 13 January

Women's Missionary Fellowship meeting, St Stephen's Church Centre, Glasgow. Theme: BMS

Details: Ann Durning 0141 6416248

Wednesday 5 February

West of Scotland Women's Missionary Meeting, Adelaide Place BC, Glasgow. Theme: 10-40 Window.

Details: Freda Kennedy 0141 632 0883

Friday 7 February

Get Real roadshow for teens and 20s with the BMS UK Action Team. Andover Baptist Church, Hampshire, 7.30-9.30pm.

Details: Brian Percy 01264 392032

Saturday 8 February

WOW Action Day for sixes to 13s with the BMS UK Action Team. Shirley Baptist Church, Southampton, 10am-4pm.

Details: Elaine Mason 01703 773685

Monday 10 February

Women's Missionary Fellowship meeting, St Stephen's Church Centre, Glasgow. Theme: MAF

Details: Ann Durning 0141 6416248

Wednesday 5 March

West of Scotland Women's Missionary Meeting, Adelaide Place BC, Glasgow. Theme: Zaire

Details: Freda Kennedy 0141 632 0883

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

ission Link

can do quite fun things," she says. "It's good to meet other people, play games, learn about God and other countries who are less fortunate than us.

"I enjoy the WOW map because you can stick on the stickers and it looks really good."

And it's a hit with the parents as well. Mother Wendy Schlieder says her daughter, Emma, can't wait to go to club evenings. "She's learning a lot about the world and doing it with great fun."

Club members are supporting the BMS WOW project By His Stripes, which is raising money for hospitals in India. Mothers have been asked to help their children make rice puddings to sell in portions to raise money.

The children are not the only ones to benefit. Sue says she values being a WOW club leader: It has enabled me to learn about BMS and it's made me realise that the mission field is not only in under-developed countries but also here in the modern affluent West.

"Holding our club nights on Fridays, we are available to children who can't attend Sunday school for one reason or another and this gives us an opportunity for outreach to those children and their families."

Focus on Thailand

Thailand has been the focus of attention for Trinity Baptist Church, in Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Members are supporting work there through the BMS Partners in Projects (PIPs) scheme.

To highlight mission work in Thailand, where fewer than one per cent of the population are Christians, three young people set up an exhibition at the church to coincide with a mission focus week.

The table-top display, depicting the topography, along with artwork, factsheets and detailed research, was organised by Louise Bayliss, Louise King and Darren Lacey (below).



Cycling for 'Stripes'

Adventurers at Bishop Auckland Baptist Church (above) oiled their wheels, checked their brakes and pedalled their way around 10 miles of the Durham countryside in aid of the By His Stripes project.

The group of sevens to 11s planned their sponsored cycle ride hoping for fine weather in September and weren't disappointed. Neither were they disappointed with their efforts, which raised £185.40 for the project appeal, which will help hospitals in India

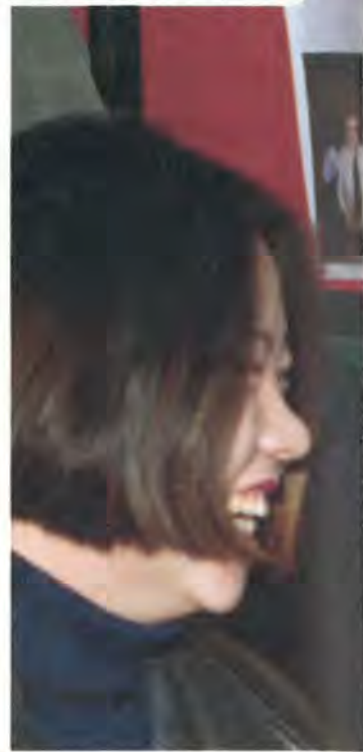
It's simple, said the man on Saturday night. As you come into the town turn left at the first lot of traffic lights and then you just keep going. In a mile you go up a hill and the church is on the right. Simple... except that having taken the turn at the traffic lights the road then divided – a bifocation. Following instincts, it's the left fork. Several miles later, there's the church – down the hill and on the left. "Ah", said the anxious man on the door, "I told them you'd have problems." Of course, the BMS speaker should have known that you take the right fork, all the local people did! And all those people the speaker asked should have known the way to the church, it was nearly 200 years old!

And next time that BMS speaker took a service they used maps as a visual aid!

Burglary at farm

A PAIR of Mission speakers, worth £1,000, and two handbags containing cash, cheque cards and cheque books, were stolen in a burglary on a farm at Dishon, Newport, sometime between 12.30am and 5am on July 23.





SANDRA CARTER MEETS FORMER BMS MISSIONARY BOYD WILLIAMS WHOSE VISION FOR EQUIPPING PEOPLE FOR MISSION IS BEING REALISED IN A WEST LONDON BAPTIST CHURCH

Church

that touches the world

Lucia, a Brazilian Christian working among street children, moved to Southall to learn English for easier communication with English-speaking supporters. Lucinea plans to work for Christ in North Africa as an English teacher and came to improve her English.

Finnish teacher Timo stopped at Southall on his way to a Bible school post in Ethiopia as he needs to learn Amharic through English.

A group of Brazilians about to work with YWAM in China need English to communicate with colleagues.

These are some of the 1,000-plus students who have benefited from a unique programme run by Southall Baptist Church in Britain's most culturally diverse area.

Southall, in west London, is the country's biggest centre of Asian culture, full of Muslim mosques, Sikh gurdwaras, Hindu temples, and ethnic shops displaying exotic goods from around the world.

Boyd Williams moved there as pastor 18 years ago, after four years as a missionary in Brazil. He says: "Southall Baptist Church was a white church in an Asian town. The church had to

find its particular ministry and role here.

"We became convinced this church is ideally placed to be a training centre for world mission. Increasing numbers of people in developing countries are involved in mission, and we see ourselves as a door that people can go through and out to touch the nations."

Eight years ago the church set up the Southall School of Languages and Missionary Orientation, and many former students are now missionaries in places as different as China and Eastern Europe, Africa and Brazil. It has two main courses.

First, its missionary orientation course draws overseas students mainly from Brazil and Korea. Most are already qualified in theology and working as pastors, and they come to learn more about mission. The course is led by Southall Baptist elder Fred Nuckley and local church leaders.

The school's second course, TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), draws Christian students from many countries who want to improve their English, usually to facilitate their mission work. English is increasingly the common language in any international venture.

Students come to Southall for one or two years. As well as



formal study they are expected to become fully involved in the church and its witness.

Sometimes non-Christians join the language school, drawn by the school's reputation for professional and supportive tuition alongside much-lower-than-average fees at £275 a term. Many become Christians before returning home.

This international school operates in a site that's no bigger than the average church. Lecture rooms are packed into the old schoolroom buildings. Some students live on site, others in houses which the church rents or has bought, some with church members – Boyd and his wife, Tricia, usually have a few living with them.

More than 100 students are currently packing the classrooms, but Boyd rejects any suggestion that his church has found the ultimate formula for mission: "We don't yet have it all right, but I'm sure there's a place for a centre like this which, in a simple

Students come to Southall for one or two years. As well as formal study they are expected to become fully involved in the church and its witness.

setting and at a very low cost, can help equip Christians to work in mission around the world.

"We're simply responding to the needs and the opportunities around us. This multi-ethnic community is the ideal place for people to explore mission, putting it into practice in the supportive environment of a living church."

The students benefit, the church benefits, and the community benefits.

At the moment the numbers wanting to learn English far exceed those studying mission, and the team hope the balance will improve.

Southall Baptist Church has 20 to 30 nationalities represented among the 180 in its congregation, a quarter of them whites. So after 18 years grappling with the issue of preaching Christ in a multi-cultural setting, what has Boyd learned?

He says: "Ethnic groups are best reached by ethnic groups." The church has a Punjabi service on Sunday afternoon, led

Mission training students at Southall Baptist Church play hard as well as work hard

continues on page 20



Continued from page 19

by an Indian member of the church staff.

A Korean missionary was sent here from a Korean church which supports her. She visits, disciples, runs Bible studies and reaches out to Muslims.

Two Brazilian staff members – sent and supported by a church in Brazil – and a Jamaican colleague run a colourful Jamboree on Friday evenings which attracts Afro-Caribbeans. The church recently paid bail for a Nigerian political refugee who they hope will work among local Africans.

And they brought over an Egyptian Christian leader to help plant an Arab Christian fellowship at nearby Sipson, a stone's throw from Heathrow Airport.

A culturally diverse church, Boyd suggests, should include in its church life something that unites and something that separates. Have times when everyone meets together for worship. But have also events where groups can express themselves freely.

Not that Southall has it all sewn up.

He adds: "We are working to move further into multi-cultural mixed leadership in the church and real commitment to cross-cultural mission. We still have a long way to go in willingness to love and understand people of various cultures and to step out as a church and do something different."

But they've made a start. ●

Sandra Carter is a Christian journalist who lives in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

Ti

The first in a new series edited by **Jan Kendall** which focuses on six towns or cities around the world in which BMS personnel are operating. Tirana, in Albania, is still finding its feet after emerging from 40 years under communist dictator Enver Hoxha.

Rapid growth after the Great War

The capital city's history in brief
by Glyn Jones

TIRANA IS A NEW CITY; most of it has been built since 1922 when the people of what was left of Albania after World War I decided it should be their new capital – about half of Albania was given to Yugoslavia and Greece at the end of the war. Before then Tirana was an unremarkable market town with a population of about 10,000. Today it has a population of nearly half a million and is growing fast.

Tirana developed rapidly in the 1930s under Italian fascist influence. Many of the government buildings were erected in Mussolini's time. During the communist period (1945 to 1991) Tirana became the

Continues on page 22

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Continued from page 21

bureaucratic heart of the country and many unattractive apartment blocks were built to house, in minimal conditions, the consequent increase in population.

Since the collapse of communism the city has expanded even more rapidly as countless thousands have come down from the poverty-ridden northern mountains to seek their fortune in the apparently prosperous capital city. These migrants live in the new shanty towns which have sprung up on the western margin of Tirana.

Today Tirana struggles with an excess of motor vehicles and pedestrians. Five years ago there were very few vehicles and half as many people; now Tirana's council has difficulty in meeting even the most basic needs of its population.●

A city of disappearing drain covers

First impressions by Ruth Kelso, volunteer with BMS working at the School for Missionary Children in Tirana

AFTER A LONG overnight journey, I stepped off the plane into the chaos of the customs section at Tirana Airport. I was whisked off in a taxi still dazed from lack of sleep.

Not surprisingly, my first impression was of noise and confusion. Everybody seems to be busy wandering about and there is constantly a stream of traffic not obeying any traffic control! The first couple of times I crossed the road with members of the BMS team, I was left standing on the kerb while they called from the other side of the street. Now I've learned just to take a deep breath and go. Cars in Albania stop for nothing!

Tirana far exceeded my expectations as a city. It has shops, cafes, cultural places, buildings of worship and a park just like any other capital city. However, in other countries, you wouldn't need to paddle through mud to get to them. It's treacherous to walk the streets because of pot holes and disappearing drain covers!

The people in the city always look very serious when they walk about, yet anyone I have met has been very friendly and interested in me. ●

Our town

T i r a n a

BMS joined the first wave of mission

The Christian scene

IMMEDIATELY AFTER democracy came to Albania in 1991 missionaries working with Albanians in Kosova (formerly Yugoslavia) came over the border to work in Tirana.

After an evangelistic crusade in the main Qemal Stafa Football Stadium the first modern protestant churches in Tirana were the Nxenesit e Jezusit, Emanuel Church, and the First International Protestant Assembly. Another church, Rruga e Paqes, based on the radio ministry that the European Christian Mission broadcast during the communist era, was formalised.

In 1992, under the European Baptist Federation, BMS doctors Chris and Mairi Burnett arrived in Tirana to head up a holistic mission work. A BMS Summer Team arrived in June 1993 to renovate a school in the suburbs and to hold a children's mission. Their work was consolidated by BMS colleague Saverio

Guarna who brought converts into the centre of Tirana to meet at the recently purchased Qendra Baptiste.

Some of the original converts returned to their village of Bregu-i-Lumit to start a church in summer 1994 with the help of BMS workers Ryder and Heather Rogers. Gale Hartley of the American Southern Baptist Convention, who worked with the Tirana church left to plant churches in south Albania.

A further church, called Freedom Fellowship, began in Tirana at the end of 1995,

started by a Co-operative Baptist Fellowship missionary, Mary-Ida Buzhard, and Gill and Glyn Jones and Geoff Timms of BMS. Now every Sunday at least 30 fellowships planted by different missionary organisations meet in Tirana, besides the many Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. Most evangelical churches work closely under the Evangelical Alliance of Albania. ●



A new role for the TV

What they do in their spare time, by Gill Jones

Leisure is not something that people think about. The television is always on in most homes. In the past it was to prevent the neighbours eavesdropping; now it has become the norm.

It has always been the tradition to visit family regularly. A woman I know well told me her family cannot understand why she does not have time to visit them. I know she has two jobs in order to support her children; this was unknown four years ago. Her reason for refusing my invitation to come to Church was that she has to clean, wash, but mostly, be at home for the family to visit if they wish.

In the summer many families go to the beach on Sundays. This is new. Those who can afford it will go to live in their family village or to Durres (the seaside) for a month each summer. The cinema is almost dead but live theatre is very much alive. I'm told that it is difficult to get a seat.

Tirana - life on the streets

Roger Cady tastes the atmosphere of the capital

AS I WALKED out one Albanian evening I heard gunshots. Stopping at the stall on the corner of the street I asked its owner – a questioning look and a certain amount of mime was my only mode of communication – what was going on?

His response, as he smiled and pointed, might well have been in answer to an "Excuse me, would you be kind enough to direct me to the gunfire?" request for directions.

"Certainly Sir. Straight down the road, first left and you'll find the gunfire on the right, opposite the butchers!"

A walk down a Tirana street presents many hazards apart from "hot and shell". A thunder storm illuminates the pathway just long enough to reveal potholes fast filling with water, but not in sufficient detail to locate them accurately. Missing man-hole covers leave chasms in the middle of the pavement.

Where to cross the road needs careful judgment. Lakes two metres wide bordering the kerb stones are just too wide to leap. With the rain comes a yellow mud which coats the path and causes an army of shop keepers to attack their small frontages with buckets and

brushes. The trick is to wait until the first bucketful has been fired across your bows, and then to scurry on before they can reload.

Beware the building site! Here danger lurks above and below. As you pick your way across the piles of sand or rubble spread across the path and spilling on to the highway, hacked off rendering or showers of dust will descend without warning.

One-way-streets in Tirana are that in name only. All traffic ignores not only one-way signs but also traffic lights. Crossing Skenderbeg Square involves you in matador-style movements. You weave, sway and dodge through six lines of vehicles and many counter-circulatory bikes. It almost seems appropriate to flick your cape and expect a pair of wing mirrors from the cheering crowd when you reach the other side unscathed. ●



Z

A

climb ... A fair

A new series from the diary of **Owen Clark**

There's nothing like a bit of church planting on the plateau to brighten up a dull life, I thought, as I peered through the rain and deepening gloom.

The windscreen wipers swished and the headlights picked out the large muddy pools in the sandy road ahead. Good job it was a Land Rover.

An occasional groan from the rear emphasised my dilemma. Go faster and get there more quickly, or go more slowly for minimum discomfort to the poor woman in the back.

We had arrived about midday, as arranged, at Nguene, a village on the Bateke plateau some 60 miles east of Kinshasa, and 1,000ft higher, beyond a deep valley carrying the swift-flowing Mai Ndombe river.

We had been welcomed hospitably by Iwa, only 33, who had become chief after his uncle's death, and had also inherited his uncle's wife; a bit unfortunate, as he had a perfectly good one of his own, but such is the custom of the Bateke people. They each had their own mud hut.

Some of the villagers were Christians but having recently moved the village about six miles, near to its original site, and there being no church, school or dispensary, Iwa had invited the CBFZ (Baptist Church of the River Zaire) to start work there.

Menacing rain clouds and rumbling thunder had delayed the start of the planned teaching and evangelistic sessions and, while sheltering and talking, a man had hurried up and whispered in the chief's ear.

There was an emergency.

A young woman, seven months

pregnant, had just returned from Kinshasa on the back of a lorry and was going into labour. "Will you take her to the nearest dispensary?"

Now, with chief Iwa beside me, the pastor and two of the men in the middle, and a number of women with the patient in the back, we were heading through the rain, on a rough road, to . . . I knew not where.

Suddenly, hitting a hole in the depths of a large puddle, there was a loud cry and vociferous pandemonium broke out among the women.

I instinctively slowed but the chief urged: "Go on, go on!" The odd words that floated through – "cloth . . ." "placenta . . ." "plastic bag . . ." – did little to help me concentrate on navigating the bumps and holes.

Through a village, across an abandoned maize project, down a seemingly endless track, we eventually came to a few houses in the middle of nowhere. People came and peered at us.

"Where's the nurse!" shouted the chief. An old fellow in a grubby smock appeared and Iwa hastily explained that we had a premature birth on board.

He pointed to the dispensary. We drove to a low tin-roofed building, lit by our headlights until I stopped.

No torch. Someone produced a flickering oil lamp and the women followed the old nurse inside, one of them carrying a cloth bundle.

At length the women came out.

"A boy."

"Is he breathing?"

"Yes."

"How much does he weigh?"

"One kilo, two hundred grams."



"He'll never survive," prognosticated the chief under his breath. I wasn't sure which of the women had given birth – certainly not the one delightedly carrying the bundle. She opened the cloth to reveal a tiny pale-coloured mite sucking his thumb.

Back at Nguene there was a collective sigh of relief. We ate the meal that was waiting and retired, somewhat shattered, to bed. Chief Iwa had vacated his hut for Deanna and myself, with its tin roof, smooth plastered mud walls, large battery clock on the wall and a hen sitting on her eggs in the corner.

o l d R E



two small fish reappeared in a sauce for supper. Animated singing to the rhythm of a drum attracted people to the chief's compound where Mputu used pictures depicting the "heart of man" to appeal for faith in Jesus as the way to banish the evils that lurk in the human heart.

Two young men responded and were prayed for and counselled. Pastor Kiyedi conducted communion and welcomed the newly-baptised into the fellowship of the fledgling church. It no doubt had a long way to go but a new church had been planted.

After a final meal, chief Iwa offered 10 hectares (25 acres) to the church for future development, for which he would require only the customary gifts of cloth, salt, sugar and drink.

Our side gave a tray for communion cups and four wooden boxes for making bricks. A Bible study on Mark's gospel was left with Pablo who had been chosen by the new church as their teacher.

When we left the young mother was still nursing her premature babe. We prayed for a miracle but knew that his life hung in the balance; miscarriages, it seemed, were not uncommon in the village and we were haunted by the thought of pregnant women collecting water daily from the river. Our own legs were still feeling the effects of that climb.

Yes, you had to admit that it was, indeed, a fair old climb. ●

At morning prayers we followed Luke's account of the birth of John the Baptist and the hopes which it inspired. Pastor Kiyedi had interviewed candidates for baptism and found seven ready.

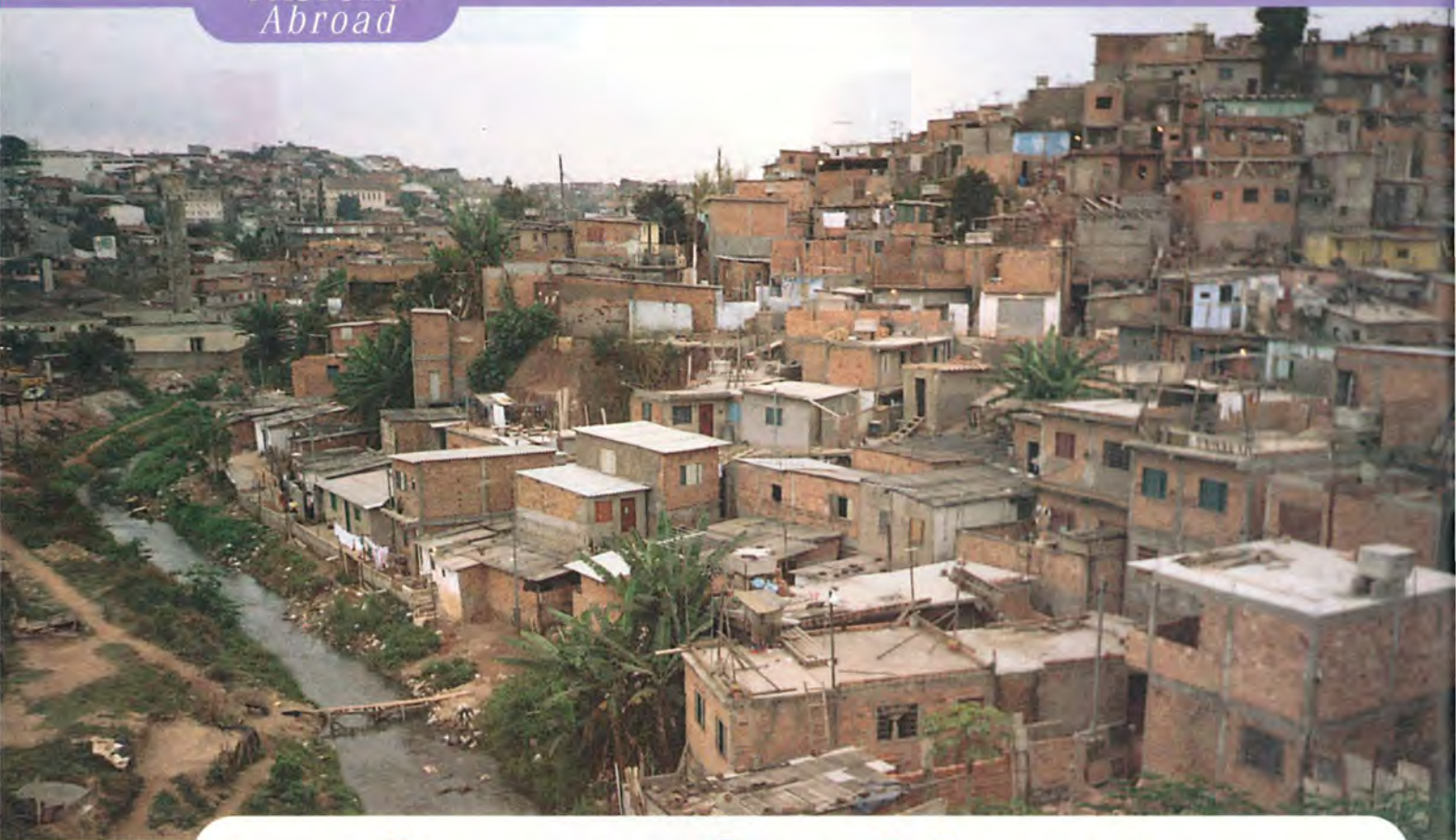
Descending a path through the forested valley and winding down among the trees ever more steeply, we came to a small sandy indent in the bank of the Mai Ndombe river. Pastor Kiyedi conducted a brief service and baptised four men and three women, one of whom was hugely pregnant, on confession of their faith.

The benediction pronounced, the men moved upstream to bathe, discreetly

leaving that spot for the women, who had also brought water containers to fill; this was their regular supply.

It just so happened that I had taken my fishing gear and, giving a rod to the pastor, and hooks and line to two of the young men, one of whom dug some worms, we soon had four lines out into the river. By early afternoon, the score being one fish to Kinshasa and one to Nguene, a draw was agreed and we began the 45 minute climb back to the village.

When darkness began to close in rapidly, around six o'clock, evangelist Mputu got the Tilley lamp going and our



Large-scale poverty:
Brazil's favelas

Right:
David Morris visits a
favela family

A cup of cold water

WHAT DRIVES A CHURCH LEADER TO LEAVE HIS FAMILY, TRAVEL HALF WAY ROUND THE WORLD AND TASTE LIFE IN A STRANGE CULTURE FOR EIGHT WEEKS? **DAVID MORRIS** EXPLAINS

I stood in one of the 1,600 favelas in São Paulo. Earlier in the week part of it had been destroyed by fire and although the burned area was only the size of a football pitch, 2,000 people had been made homeless.

It was no more than a narrow muddy passage surrounded by rubbish and small wooden huts. Rats and sewage make it an unpleasant place to live – not to mention the crime and drug problem.

There I was with David Meikle. And I thought: “How can the gospel be made relevant here? How do you make Jesus Christ known in word and action? Whatever you do is going to be so small as to be almost worthless.”

Let the little children come to me.

It is not uncommon in Brazil to feel a small hand touch the side of your leg, to look down and see two large pleading

brown eyes looking at you. It’s a distressing experience, not least because you wonder what is the right thing to do.

Is this child really in need or just trying to kid a gullible tourist?

In the city of Fortaleza, a work started in 1982 by a Baptist church caters for about 150 children up to the age of 13, all poor, malnourished and local. Some have physical, mental and emotional problems and they receive medical care, nutritious food, education and love.

It has been estimated that there are 25 million deprived children in Brazil and that eight million of them live on the streets. What good is it providing for 150? It’s less than a drop in a bucket.

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.

I had visited the favela with my camera hidden under my shirt in case it was

noticed and stolen. “David! Take the camera out of there! People think the bulge is a gun!”

Many Christians in Brazil are frightened to go into the favelas where there are many things that I wouldn’t want to touch. BMS colleague David Meikle is willing to get his hands dirty putting in sewers and covering open drains, as well as entering people’s homes for Bible study.

In Fortaleza, the churches run a rehabilitation centre for drug abusers. I met a young man who had been an addict for 15 years, had attempted to take his own life four times and had been involved in violent gang fights. The love and help he received had led to his conversion and he was hoping to begin a new life.

The favela in which David Meikle works houses 80,000 people. so what difference can a few sewers and a handful

"Today has been, without a doubt, the worst day so far. My stomach has finally succumbed and I have spent most of the day with nausea. On return to Kabonda, I just got to the hole in the ground in time to be sick. A touch of diarrhoea, too... It's not very nice being sick 4,000 miles from home, surrounded by people who speak Lingala and conscious that you can't, for the life of you, remember what 'I've been sick' is in French."

These words, written in 1989, formed part of the mixed but life-changing experience of my first sabbatical visiting missionaries and looking at the life of Baptist pastors in Zaire. So profound was that six-week experience that I decided seven years later to spend my next sabbatical in Brazil.

of converted drug addicts make?

Neither do I condemn you; go and leave your life of sin.

Most of the women who attend the clinic run by the BMS's Mary Parsons are unmarried. One pregnant girl was 12.

They come to have their blood pressure measured and to be taught about breast-feeding and general health care. After their babies are born the continue to come for six months.

Mary's clinic looks after between 60 and 70 women – a tiny part of the total need of the area.

I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.

The woman had had her baby but could not produce any milk to feed it. What should she do? Buy a milk and sugar supplement she could ill afford?

Fortunately for her, she spoke to Suzana Greenwood, who recommended the high protein food supplement she and her husband, Mark, are producing. She added it to her food and the next day the milk flowed freely.

Here is one example of the good effect of a co-operative run by the Greenwoods. Not only is the mix excellent but a very basic income is provided for four women though its production.

BMS personnel Mark and Suzanna would be the first to admit that their project is small. They have difficulties marketing the product and must be tempted to wonder if it's all worthwhile.



Anyone who gives you a cup of cold water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.

One pastor told me how his church members used to criticise his social outreach programme because it did not bring many people into the church. So what was the point of it?

This is an important question. Why is mission to the whole person important? What is the proper motive for such outreach? My experience in Brazil taught me that the only real motive is to reflect the way of Jesus.

Lesslie Newbigin wrote: "I think that the deepest motive for mission is simply the desire to be with Jesus where he is. We want his prayer to be answered: 'Where I am there shall my servant be'. We long that he shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. That, I deeply believe, is the true motive."

A cup of cold water may not appear to be much. I saw much more than that given in the name of Christ by church and mission society in Brazil. I recognise that those gifts, even if small in the light of the whole need, are deeply valued by Jesus and important to the mission of the whole church to the whole world. ●

Baptist minister **David Morris** is in leadership at South Parade, Leeds

Personal and corporate revolution

"How long will you be in Brazil?" the smiling Brazilian asked.

"Two tables." I replied.

In Portuguese, "month" and "table" are similar words. My mistake was one example of how foolish one can feel. For both my visits overseas, I had tried to prepare linguistically but I often stood smiling stupidly and unable to participate in the simplest conversation.

Suddenly missionary needs came alive and I understood the nurse, who leaves her home church with high hopes but feels spiritually dry and unfed because she understands so little of what is said. I began to enter into the feelings of isolation which people in a different culture feel, particularly when they are sick, tired, or discouraged.

While I was in Zaire, one of my children broke her finger and the gas cooker nearly blew up! I knew nothing about these events and returned feeling guilty that I had not been with my family at these times.

So I understood the pain of separation from loved ones, the concern over one's children and the great joy of some simple reminder that one is not forgotten by those at home.

My sabbaticals have given me a growing commitment to support those whom we send out.

One benefit of an overseas sabbatical is that it broadens one's own pastoral experience. I have had the enormous privilege of listening to mission personnel, national church leaders and other Christians as they have unburdened their hearts.

I have shared and prayed with people concerning such issues as spiritual dryness, cultural misunderstanding, family concerns, disappointment, and so on. Such experiences have greatly sharpened my own pastoral awareness.

On a personal level, the gains have been enormous:

- Missionaries, once just names, have become good friends.
- An appreciation of the world church.

On a corporate level, the church has received:

- A vision for the world and the desire to send people from the church into the world.
- A deeper commitment to those folk who are sent out and to the whole work of mission.
- A pastor whose life has been revolutionised.

There are difficulties involved in having a sabbatical overseas but my experiences have taught me that, if every minister was personally exposed to some area of BMS work, it would revolutionise our denomination and give BMS far more resources in money and personnel for our mission to the world.

TAKE 2

Take Two – a resource for church leaders and workers

THE MISSION SUPPORTER'S CHARTER

TEN THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER DO!



1 Never write to your Link missionary too often. After all you don't want to bore them, and if everybody wrote, there's no way they could reply to all the letters.

2 Never think that anything is too humble to give to a missionary. After all they are incredibly poor, having given up everything for the sake of the gospel, and they welcome cast-offs. Dried, once-used teabags are a particular favourite.



3 Never think that missionaries have down times. Since God has called them to their work, and he will equip them, nothing's going to go wrong for them – ever!

4 Never think that missionaries need spiritual and pastoral input. They walk so close to God they don't need other people to minister to them.

5 Never think that missionaries are just like you and me. They really are super-spiritual people, on a different level. They never have any difficulty finding time or motivation for prayer, and a Bible verse springs to mind in every situation.

6 Never picture a missionary and family living in a solidly

built house, with a lot of mod cons. They much prefer grass huts, and find electricity, water supply, and hygienic conditions a hindrance to their work.



7 Never think that missionaries worry about their children – their upbringing, education, health, spiritual development and general well-being. Why should they worry about their children? They're in God's hands and there's nothing they can do.

8 Never doubt that all missionaries get on wonderfully well with their colleagues and other missionary personnel. Being a missionary suddenly changes the way you relate to other people, and people no longer rub you up the wrong way.

9 Never think that missionaries get frightened, particularly those in war zones or dangerous places. Being a missionary gives you an extra ring of confidence.



10 Never ask yourself: Is God asking me to do something different with my life, maybe to serve him overseas? You know he knows you too well, and he'd never ask you to do that . . . would he?

Think on these things . . .

Challenge to the way we think – and act

Individually or in your house-group consider how these statements leave a lot to be desired! Each make a list of three things you can do to honour the missionary sent out from your church, or your Link missionary.

List all the commitments you have made, (or you could make) for:

- This week
- This month
- This year
- The next five years
- Longer

Can any of these commitments be reneged?

What would happen if you pulled out of them?

What, if any, are the advantages of long-term commitments, particularly in Christian service?

If you decide it's a good idea, how can you encourage your congregation, young and old, to consider long-term commitment – to anything?

In particular, how can you challenge new Christians who have come from a background of an "instant" society to appreciate the value of long-term commitments in Christian service?

Ask yourself:

How many missionaries has your church sent out in the past 10 years?

How many missionaries from other countries has your church received?

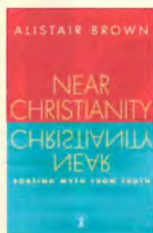
PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

Some ministers in a Baptist Association have got together and have fixed up a two week overseas visit in association with BMS to give them some mission inspiration. How about encouraging your minister or church leaders to do the same?

resources for leaders

Near Christianity

by Alistair Brown
Hodder & Stoughton £6.99



It's the first Christian book I've read for a long time that's driven me back to the Bible. Not that it's full of errors! Quite the opposite, in fact. It's written for evangelicals who, over the years, if not centuries, have added to the faith principles and practices that according to the author

do not have any basis in scripture. Hence the reason of referring back to the Bible to check this out and what an interesting investigation that has been.

Areas under fire include: guidance, prayer, sin, quiet times and daily Bible reading, the mid-week prayer meeting, trials and temptations, vision.

Evangelicals could be accused of being the Pharisees of the 20th century by adding to the basis of Christian faith and belief. I think, the author has a strong case.

Above all, he doesn't criticise for the sake of it but affirms the individual Christian's response and relationship with God as being of prime importance. The crunch comes when the church tries to impose some of these add-ons, which appear to be based on scripture but are, in fact, unbiblical.

If ever there was a book to shake the average Christian out of complacency, this one's it.

The author has, I think, overlooked some issues that still cause evangelicals some trouble: namely worship, preaching only a gospel message, church authority, the power and preaching of the Word as opposed to the power of the Spirit.

Perhaps that could be the next book.

Nevertheless, this is a book I need to read again and carry out some spring cleaning in my own evangelical cupboard.

Andy Smith

ACTION CARD



Water

Grey wet winter days may not fill us with as much joy as bright sunny summer ones but at least the rain usually ensures an adequate water supply.

Water covers three quarters of the earth's surface but only three per cent of the total mass is fresh water and a very small part of this is accessible. Much water is trapped deep underground or in polar ice caps. Getting adequate supplies of water that is fresh, clean and safe to use for drinking, cooking and washing, is one of the most pressing problems that faces humanity.

In many developing countries the provision of safe water is the greatest cause for concern in people's lives. Kemde Ouedraogo, a 50-year-old woman from Burkino Faso walks five hours a day to get water. She has lost five children in infancy to water-borne diseases.

As Kemde says: "We have to get up long before dawn. All

night my heart is heavy with the lack of water. It is the worst problem of our lives. While we are walking our necks hurt, our hearts beat fast all the way. Even when we are not walking our shoulders, the smalls of our backs, our breastbones, all hurt."

Her full water pot, carried on her head, weighs 30lbs.

The women on this month's Action Card are, doubtless, happy that they have access to clean water. But imagine carrying those huge buckets back and forth to your home whatever the distance, perhaps several times a day. Please send a card of support to Obert Zumbwa, c/o Jansson,

Midlands Farm, Box 350189, Chilanga, Zambia (43p stamp) for the villagers in Chipapa, Zambia, who have implemented an imaginative and sustainable agricultural programme using donkeys to carry water drawn from a water hole they dug in a nearby valley bottom, up the hillside to their homes and crops.

IN MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THE PROVISION OF SAFE WATER IS THE GREATEST CAUSE FOR CONCERN IN PEOPLE'S LIVES.

**TAKE
2**

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A whole new

cultural ball

THEY'RE HALF-WAY THROUGH THEIR ASSIGNMENTS AND, AS **SAM GIBSON** REPORTS, THEY'VE PLENTY TO TELL THE FOLK BACK HOME

Chickens, temperamental toilets, caterpillars and curried goat – all part of normal daily life for those on a BMS 28:19 Action Team.

This year's Action Teams are now half way through their assignments and are quickly building a library of anecdotes and stories to share with churches when they return to Britain for their tour later in the year.

The chicken comes courtesy of the Thailand team. Following orientation, the team were split into pairs to work on different assignments, swapping after five weeks. Sarah Teague and Jennie Gilmore started off in Ban Nong, a large Christian Karen hill tribe village 2,000ft in the mountains. They were quickly introduced to tribal life which for Jennie, involved preparing dinner – starting with a live chicken . . .

At Ban Nong, the girls taught English and sport at the local school which caters for 400 children. They also helped harvest rice and cut banana leaves!

The first Thailand

assignment for Leigh Cummings and Ellen Armstrong was at the New Life Centre, a refuge near Chiang Mai for young girls rescued from brothels or in danger of being sold into prostitution. They managed to communicate with the girls – all aged 14 to 21 – with a mixture of limited Thai, some English and a lot of charades, befriending them and teaching English.

They also spent some time

Wherever they go, a mass of excited black children follow them calling “khiwa” (white person)

in the House of Love, a hospice for girls dying of AIDS, and at Agape, an orphanage for babies with HIV or AIDS. The team often found it difficult to bear the injustice of these girls' situations, but they have also been greatly blessed to see many discover new life in Christ.

This month, the four girls are reunited as they move to the Bangkok area to work together with BMS colleagues

Geoff and Chris Bland.

The Nepal team thought they would be experiencing the trials of mission life even before their arrival when they discovered their airline was cancelling flights without warning.

Many passengers, who like the team, were travelling via Delhi, spent days trapped in the airport waiting for flights. With no visa to enter India they were not permitted to leave the confines of the

international airport.

However, after much prayer, the team's flight not only left as scheduled, but they arrived in the country two hours early – something unheard of in Nepal. The team, Chris Peacock, Ed Dix, Emma Ryan and Helen Schwier, have been leading children's work at a United Mission to Nepal conference, teaching English at a school in the village of Galyang and working in churches and

youth groups in Tansen and Butwal.

For temperamental toilets we feature the Zimbabwe team, although they are counting their blessings – they say they are lucky to even have a toilet! Emma Boswell, Fiona James, Alex Jones and David Cobby have been working in churches across the country. Wherever they go, a mass of excited black children follow them calling “khiwa” (white person). In some villages, they are the first white people to have visited in years.

The team are involved in most church ministries such as home visits, leading Bible studies, preaching and youth work. In the first home Alex and Emma visited, they sat through a long conversation in the Ndebele language, between a church leader and a woman. At the end, the leader turned to them and explained that the woman used to be heavily involved in Satan worship, had her husband poisoned, and “would they like to share some words”. They call it “in at the deep end”!

The Brazil team – Sarah-Jo Baldwin, Esther

game

Potts, Catherine Ley and Laura Williams – are based in Sao Bernardo in southern Brazil, working with 13 churches.

Soon after arrival they set off to Sao Caetano, a poor area, to help renovate an old house bought to convert into a permanent building for a new church which had been meeting in a home.

As all four girls are musical, everywhere they go they are asked to sing, often in Portuguese. They find this an excellent form of communication and the bonus is that it is not dependent on an accurate knowledge of the language.

In the UK, James Nhatarikwa from Zimbabwe has been trying to tempt his team mates – Kimia Cunningham from Jamaica, Polly Cordell from England and Dilshan Edirisinghe from Sri Lanka – to sample his baked caterpillars! They're not impressed and he hasn't managed to get them to eat any yet!

The team have been leading the Get Real roadshow around Britain for young people, and have been on assignment at churches

leading meetings, youth groups, Sunday schools and making presentations.

Based at a church in Portimao, Portugal, are Liz Tedbury, Charlotte Newson, James Gardiner and David Bullen. They have been involved in youth work, children's clubs, setting up a drop in centre, schools work, drama, mothers and toddlers group, Bible studies at a bird sanctuary, language study and church meetings.

They have also set up a youth ministry outside of the church building. Evangelical churches are regarded with suspicion, making it difficult for people to enter a church building, even for a social event.

To combat this, the team have set up A Ponte (The bridge) in a shop rented by the church. They hope this group will continue running once their time in Portugal is over.

In Malta, Darrell Eaton, Mhairi McKie, Catherine Crump and Simon Church have been trying to generate their own opportunities, including organising a roadshow, a drop-in youth centre, youth service and work

with the under-privileged in prisons and drug rehabilitation centres. There are very few protestant Christians in Malta, 95 per cent of the people claim to be Catholic although very few have an active faith.

The team will be mainly involved in forms of outreach and evangelism while in the country. Their focus is mainly on young people although they've already reached a much wider audience than this – the whole of Malta, in fact, speaking about their faith for an hour on a Catholic radio station!

According to the Jamaica team, curried goat is quite nice but Matt Swann misses cornflakes – green bananas for breakfast aren't quite the same. The team were divided into pairs shortly after arrival but come together again this month.

Matt and Ruth Bidnell

were based near Montego Bay, working for a small church and in local schools. Ruth taught a class of sevens and eights while Matt taught science to teenagers – a daunting task as he had no previous experience of this.

Meanwhile, Jo Chidgey and Steve Thomson worked in St Mary's, to the east of the island. Jo taught a remedial class in a school each morning whilst Steve did administrative work. They were also involved in the life of a large church and led Sunday services.

The overseas teams return to Britain in April, joining with the UK team to prepare for the national tour. Every team member will be armed with stories of radically changed lives, views and ambitions – and sometimes those stories may even be about other people! ●



prayerfocus



To complement the BMS Prayer Guide, **Sam Gibson** brings news from BMS colleagues around the world

Americas



Peter and Sheila Brewer

TRINIDAD

Peter and Sheila travel to Trinidad this month from Britain to carry out an in-depth and comprehensive investigation of a proposed new Institute for Pastoral Teaching, a trip postponed from October 1996.

Over a period of a couple of months, they aim to visit every church of the Baptist Union of Trinidad and Tobago (BUTT) to contact as many potential pastoral candidates as possible, to talk to every pastor and to discuss all related issues with the Baptist Union Executive Committee.

Together with a representative from BUTT, they seek to establish the level of support for the project which will be forthcoming from each church and to assure

themselves of the full support of the present pastors.

They also want to assess the number and quality of candidates for the Institute. The BUTT has only about 21 churches so it is necessary to be sure it can actually sustain the plans which it wants to put into effect.

Please pray:

- for wisdom for Peter and Sheila and for the BUTT as they seek the way forward for the future training of pastors in Trinidad
- for unity of purpose amongst the churches and leaders of BUTT
- that the plans for this project may come to fruition
- for safe travel for Peter and Sheila

Africa



Mark and Andrea Hotchkin

GUINEA

Mark and Andrea are seconded to the Leprosy Mission and work with the

Swiss Evangelical Missionary Alliance in Macenta.

Mark is involved in rehabilitation and reconstructive surgery, a difficult task because the referral system for the programme is not very effective – it aims to treat 50 patients per year but last year managed only eight.

The new National Director of the Leprosy Programme, Dr Cherij, a former colleague of the Hotchkins, hopes to overhaul the entire programme. This will involve

retraining all doctors in the programme at the hospital in Macenta over the next year.

Dr Cherij has also asked Mark to demonstrate the possibilities for reconstructive surgery so that people can be referred from all over Guinea.

Andrea works for three and a half days a week at the government hospital as well as taking care of

brazil



David and Sheila Brown

David has taken on the interim pastorate of one of the oldest churches in Rio, the Fourth Baptist Church of Rio de Janeiro. Previously the church had gone through a difficult period with no pastor remaining more than two years and it had been labeled as a difficult church to pastor.

Since David took over, he has been blessed to baptise several people and many members who were disheartened have returned to regular worship. There is a joyful spirit in the air.

Please pray:

- for growth at the Fourth Baptist Church of Rio de Janeiro and for a continued and growing spirit of unity and support among the members



their daughter, Ruth. She works with women requiring surgery to correct post birth problems.

Please pray:

- for Dr Cherij, for wisdom and good results as he seeks to overhaul the Leprosy Programme
- for the referral system to be made effective
- for the Hotchkins as they seek to integrate into local society in Macenta and learn the Malinke language

Asia



Helen Johnston

NEPAL

Helen has been undergoing language training and orientation (LOP) since her arrival in Nepal in July last year. She says her first impressions are of a country of contrasts.

She speaks of the contrasts between prosperity and suffering, beauty and pollution, old and new, a family struggling to survive in a shack close to a large modern house, a flower growing beside an open sewer ... the list goes on.

Despite the differences, Helen has been made to feel very much at

home by BMS and UMN (United Mission to Nepal) colleagues.

Until late December, she lived with a Nepali family in Kathmandu to help her to learn the language, then in December, Helen moved to Amp Pipal to begin working at the hospital there. Amp Pipal is a small village perched on a ridge in central Nepal.

The journey from Kathmandu was an experience for Helen consisting of a four hour minibus journey followed by a seven and a half hour walk, with porters carrying the baggage, through torrential monsoon weather.

Helen is working as General Practitioner Surgeon for the Gorkha Project at Amp Pipal hospital. There she is picking up responsibility for providing care for both in and out patients, surgery and training other staff.

Please pray:

- for Helen as she settles into a new place and a new job
- for continued progress in language study
- for health and safety, especially while travelling
- for good relationships with new colleagues



Corinna Woods

NEPAL

Corinna has been in Dullu, western Nepal since June where she is seconded to the staff of a new sixth form. Corinna helps to prepare teenagers to become primary school teachers with the aim of improving the low standard of education in village schools and the status of primary teaching in particular.

Corinna lives at the school in a room partitioned to provide a kitchen and bedroom. During the rains however, the roof has been leaking leaving the mud floor soaking and the rest of the house mouldy; she has been growing mushrooms and beansprouts inside.

Teaching in the past consisted of dictating answers to possible examination questions, but Corinna has

changed this. Thus some students, who have never been actively taught before, have been quite mutinous, demanding dictation and making lessons difficult.

Corinna trains students in teaching English, health and physical education, takes them for teaching practice, visits primary schools to help and encourage the teachers and teaches a set English course to a class of children. This class is the biggest challenge with up to 100 children a day.

Corinna's latest initiative is to take student teachers on an educational visit to Butwal, Kathmandu and Pokhara – the first time the students will have seen their own capital – which will expose them to good schools so that they have a reference point to aim for.

Please pray:

- for speedy repairs to Corinna's home and for her health while living in a damp house
- for encouragement and energy for Corinna in her difficult yet extremely worthwhile role
- for inspiration to aim high for students on the educational visit

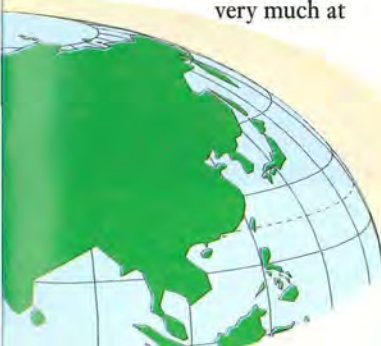
brazil

Colin and Marcia Pavitt

Colin and Marcia were joined recently by a multi-national building team to help the congregation at Eldorado to build houses as part of a social project. Although the buildings measure just 16ft by 12ft they are much better than current living conditions for many. Their church is growing steadily with baptisms, new members and a group of teenagers beginning to attend. This has led to plans for a new youth club. English lessons run by Colin and Marcia with 25 students each week have brought two more girls into the church.

Please pray:

- for God's blessing on the people who will be offered new homes
- for continued growth of the congregation, for God to touch those attending the church who are not yet Christians



Worldwide

prayer focus



Europe



Geoffrey and Marion Rushton

HUNGARY

Geoffrey and Marion arrived in Budapest in October 1996 via the BMS Barnabas Project, a scheme set up in 1996 to allow single people, couples and teams of all ages to volunteer their gifts and skills on short-term service.

Budapest is the first city centre in which the couple have ever lived so there are many adjustments to lifestyle to be made, although they are finding the Hungarian Christians eager and available to help in whatever way possible.

Geoffrey and Marion are volunteers teaching English at the Baptist Theological Academy which houses 200 eager students preparing to work as pastors, music specialists and lay workers in the churches.

They are keen to learn English in order to gain access to a wide range of books and talks.

It is proving tiring work settling into a new home, in a new environment, away from family and friends, on top of which they are preparing appropriate learning materials and methods. But Geoffrey

say they have been fortified by the love, practical support and prayers of many.

Please pray:

- that the Rushtons would settle quickly to their new work and environment
- for good friendships to be built up quickly among colleagues and students.



Roger and Nikki Pearce

ALBANIA

Roger and Nikki are hoping to move this month to the village of Kruje, 39km north of Tirana.

They are encouraged by the fact that their closest neighbours will be a British

couple. The Pearces have been in Albania for a year and during that time have been involved in language study. From January they will continue language study for part of their time.

They will also be working on a mountain village project which aims to improve the economic base of the eight villages of the Cudhi Commune. The project also focuses on the education of the Cudhi Commune children and the nutrition and health of its people, especially women and young children.

Roger plans to spend this next year building relationships in the villages, visiting the schools in the area, encouraging teachers, assessing needs, sharing and exchanging teaching methods and offering English as a foreign language.

Nikki plans to establish relationships with midwives and nurses working in the villages and to share their experiences of working in a rural setting.

This should allow her to

assess the local midwifery needs and to see how best to develop planned ante and post natal care.

Please pray:

- for a quick and easy move to a new home and that James, Roger and Nikki's young son will settle quickly
- for the development of good relationships with neighbours and colleagues
- for continued progress in language study
- for the new work they will be involved in

EFFECTIVE PRAYER SUPPORT

BMS colleagues around the world often testify to the power of prayer in their work. They appreciate the support of those who pray regularly. If you would like to pray specifically and personally for personnel, please ask about the BMS Prayer Letter service. Telephone Diane Hayward on 01235 512077.

checkout



Arrivals

Ian and Pauline Thomas from Carcassonne
Peter and Valerie Harwood from Kathmandu

Alex and Irene Black to Chiang Mai
Simon and Karen Collins to Lisbon

Departures

Tony and Judith Sykes to Vellore
Martin and Katrina Butterworth to Kathmandu
Margaret Gibbs to Surket
Keith and Barbara Hodges to Lisbon

Overseas Visits

Sian Williams to Albania
John Passmore to Albania
Derek Rumbol to South Africa
Phil Marsden to Romania
Martin Pearse to Brazil

Don't panic

or how are the mighty fallen!



The PA system, two tone "bing bonged", crackled to life and the stewardess' opening words in a rather high pitched voice were "Don't panic". My own reaction would be to add 'Captain Mainwaring' in true Jonesie (Corporal Jones) fashion but you can imagine the reaction from most of the passengers.

Sitting with any group in an airport departure lounge, someone is bound to start telling travel horror stories and I can usually add several of my own. Stories of plane tyres bursting on landing, funny smells in the cabin and doors which won't close properly come thick and fast.

It's not really funny though, when you lose a suitcase, as one Baptist pastor from Belgium can testify. For obvious reasons he wishes to remain

anonymous, as, when Sam arrived in a tropical country for a week long conference, his case did not. His clean clothes, his wash kit and papers, all in that case. I leave the scene to your imagination! He was pleased to return home to a change of clothes but he has still not been reunited with his case.

There is a story about a person travelling to Paris. At the airport check in they had two cases and asked for one case to be sent to Cairo and the other to New York. The puzzled and horrified airline employee said that was not possible as the ticket was to Paris. 'Why ever not' replied the passenger, 'You did it last week!'

Anyway, back to the announcement. As we checked in for our jet foil crossing from Ostend to Ramsgate we noticed two things. One, the wind was getting stronger, and, two, there seemed to be a lot of

loud, boisterous people on that flight. That's what they call a form of transport which is neither boat, hovercraft nor real plane. Passengers still have to fasten seat belts and stewardesses go through the safety procedure before the craft rises up on fins and 'flies' through the tops of the waves.

Once in our seats we seemed to be surrounded by people talking loudly about the clubs they had visited, the members of the opposite sex they had met and the amounts of alcohol they had consumed, right up until shortly before the departure. However, as the journey progressed and we left the shelter of the French coastline, the sea became less calm and in stead of flying over the tops of the waves, we hit a few. Faces turned green. Conversation ceased. Those little plastic lined bags were reached for and our loud neighbours were loud no longer. Then it happened. We ploughed into a very big wave, the spray from the encounter flew right over the entire vessel and the engine stopped. Instead of the roar of the jet pushing us along there was silence as we slowly sunk down from the foils to become a conventional craft, without power, bobbing in the middle of the channel. It was then that we were implored not to panic. Unlike Dad's Army, the stewardess had a second line to her announcement. Her full message was, 'Don't Panic, it's just that we have lost the engine.' To which my companion said, 'Well that was very careless, let's hope we find it again - soon!'

JOHN PASSMORE

John Passmore is the BMS Europe Representative and was a missionary in Bangladesh for ten years.



Compassion in Action

When a disaster strikes there's no time to arrange an appeal for funds to help the victims. It's too late. The money was needed there and then.

That's why the BMS have their own Relief Fund. Every year an appeal is put out to people like yourself to give to this fund, and that's all. We don't waste money on advertising and glitzy campaigns: every penny goes to help people who are in no position to help themselves.

Since the BMS Relief Fund was set up in 1968 over £775,000 has been given to help people suffering from drought, flood, war, hurricane, epidemic, crop failure and other calamities.

And it will carry on sharing the love of Jesus with these people provided the money is there to enable it to do so. We need your money now so that when disaster strikes, and that could be tomorrow, we can step in to relieve suffering straight away with no fuss and no additional appeals.



How to Give to BMS Relief Fund

- 1 You can give directly, by tearing off or copying the slip below and sending it to BMS together with your donation.
- 2 You may also give via a special offering in your church for the Relief Fund.
- 3 Alternatively your church treasurer will have special Relief Fund gift envelopes, which you can put in your church's offering at any time of the year.

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E-Mail: 100626.1577@compuserve.com

BMS Relief Fund

Photo supplied by Associated Press

I would like my money to be used to show the love of God in a practical way. I have enclosed
£10 £25 £50 £100 £250* Other for the BMS Relief Fund
You can also covenant your monthly gift. If you wish to do so please tick.

Name Address
 Postcode Church

*we can make this up to £333 reclaiming tax through Gift Aid