

mb

NO.1 MISSION MAGAZINE
FIRST FOR FEATURES
FOCUS ON COLOMBO
INTERNATIONAL

Hope in a
Brazilian favela

Church planting
in Bangkok

the challenge of
urban mission

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a piece of the ACTION

ZIMBABWE ACTION TEAM 1996/97

tour

BMS 1997/98 Action Teams newly returned from near and far - visiting a place near you! Young people excited with all that God has done, with stories to tell, songs to sing, prayers to pray. Give them a miss only if you really can't be bothered to know how God is working in people's lives today - all over the world.

North and Mid Wales

Delyth Wyn Davies 01766 512957
or Fiona Pimlott 01235 512077

Region	Action Team	Venue/Contact	Date
Mid Wales	France	☎ Sue and David Wilson 01544 267456	27 April - 4 May
Rhos Wrecsam	Italy	☎ Revd Owain Llyr Evans 01978 842504	27 April - 4 May
Rhyl	UK	Sussex Street Church ☎ Revd Ian Fulcher 01745 330893	4-11 May
Mid Wales	Zimbabwe	☎ Sue and David Wilson 01544 267456	11-18 May
Bangor	India	☎ Revd Olaf Davies 01248 364613	8-15 June

South Wales

Gareth Hutchinson 01792 360909

Region	Action Team	Venue/Contact	Date
Cardiff	Thailand	☎ Miss Beryl Davies 01222 756426	4 - 11 May
TBA	UK		11 - 18 May
Pembrokeshire	Zimbabwe	☎ Mrs Betty Smith 01437 751226	18 - 25 May
Magor	Brazil	☎ Revd Richard Nias 01633 880450	25 May - 1 June
Cardiff	France	☎ Revd Geraint Morse 01269 842103	8 - 15 June
Abercynon	India	☎ Mrs Terry Hubbard 01443 740651	15 - 22 June

London and South East

Fiona Pimlott 01235 512077

Region	Action Team	Venue/Contact	Date
Kent	India	☎ Revd Graham Thomson 01303 252916	27 April - 3 May
London	India	N. Region & New Beavan BC, Barnet ☎ Mrs Dee Lacey 01895 632848	4 - 10 May
London	Italy	Western Region & Hillingdon Park BC ☎ Mrs Dee Lacey 01895 632848	11 - 17 May
West Sussex	Thailand	Broadwater BC, Worthing ☎ Revd David Hill 01903 210438	18 - 24 May
London	Zimbabwe	Southborough Lane BC, Bromley ☎ Mr Jonathan Coles 01689 89017	25 May - 1 June
London	UK	N.E Region & Goodmayes BC ☎ Revd Neil Harding 0181 590 2468	25 May - 1 June
Kent	France	☎ Revd Graham Thomson 01303 252916	1 - 7 June
East Sussex	Zimbabwe	Downs Free Church, Woodingdean ☎ Revd Graham Horsnell 01273 691802	1 - 7 June
London	Portugal	N.W Region & Ruislip BC ☎ Miss Margaret Hoare 01895 634385	8 - 14 June

South and West

Phil Hindle 01823 698977

Region	Action Team	Venue/Contact	Date
Wokingham	Thailand	☎ Mr Tim Jinkerson 0118 932 8418	27 April - 4 May
Kidlington	Italy	☎ Mrs Jill Davies 01865 373633	4-11 May
Chalk Group	Thailand	☎ Revd Laurie Burn 01297 33385	11 - 18 May
Chalford	Brazil	☎ Mrs Yvonne Hobbs 01453 884778	11 - 18 May
Bournemouth	UK	☎ Mr Eddie Foster 01202 659059	18 - 25 May
Taunton	Brazil	☎ Revd Edwin Penman 01823 326353	18 - 25 May
Barnstaple	Portugal	☎ Revd C K Sykes 01271 321668	25 May - 1 June
Torquay	Portugal	☎ Miss Mary Metherall 01803 521133	1 - 8 June
Taunton	Italy	☎ Revd Edwin Penman 01823 326353	15 - 22 June
Torrington	France	Torrington BC ☎ Mrs Loraine Eade 01805 626260	15 - 16 June
Torrington	France	Immanuel BC ☎ Mrs Sue Godfrey 01326 315249	17 - 22 June

North

Cath Mawson 01274 487341

Region	Action Team	Venue/Contact	Date
Hull	UK	☎ Mike Mooney	27 April - 4 May
Sheffield	Zimbabwe	☎ Revd Alan Cooper	4 - 11 May
Middlesbrough	France	☎ Mr G Thomas	11 - 18 May
Durham	India	☎ Revd John Claydon	18 - 25 May
TBA	Portugal		18 - 25th May
TBA	India		25 May - 1 June
Middlesbrough	India	☎ Revd Graham Brownlee	1 - 8 June
Bishop Auckland	Italy	☎ John Smallwood	8 - 15 June
Lumb	Thailand	☎ Ian Rimmer	15 - 22 June

Central and Eastern

Jim Clarke 01353 778984

Region	Action Team	Venue/Contact	Date
Frinton	Brazil	☎ Miss Margaret Smith 01255 815103	27 April - 4 May
Hoddesdon	Brazil	☎ Mrs Christine Molyneux 01920 870103	8-15 June
Southend	India	☎ Revd Roger Martin 01702 471010	11 - 18 May
Norwich	Italy	☎ Revd Jim Clarke 01353 778984	18 - 25 May
Saffron Walden	Thailand	Mrs Esme Moon 01799 522629	25 May - 1 June
High Wycombe	France	☎ Mrs Carolyn Leonard 01628 526512	25 May - 1 June
Northampton	UK	☎ Miss Margaret Smith 01604 710727	1 - 8 June
Northants	Zimbabwe	☎ Mr Hugh Munro 01933 358238	8 - 15 June
Chelmsford	Portugal	☎ Mr Hedley Missen 01245 257936	15 - 22 June

Midlands

Theo Lambourne 0116 271 3633

Region	Action Team	Venue/Contact	Date
TBA	Portugal		27 Apr - 4 May
TBA	Portugal		4-11 May
TBA	Brazil		4-11 May
Potteries	France	☎ Revd David Reast 01782 710770 (Sunday at Leamington Spa BC)	18-25 May
TBA	Italy		25 May - 1 June
Bilston	Thailand	☎ Derek Duke 01902 842428	1-8 Jun
TBA	UK		8-15 June
Leicester	Zimbabwe	☎ John & Shirley Russell 0116 241 6299	15-22 June

Scotland

Derek Clark 0141 775 1201

Region	Action Team	Venue/Contact	Date
Montrose	Zimbabwe		27 Apr - 4 May
Hamilton	France		4 - 11 May
TBA	Portugal		11 - 18 May
Aberdeen	Italy		1 - 8 June
Edinburgh	Thailand		8 - 15 June
Pittenweem	Brazil		15 - 22 June
TBA	UK		15 - 22 June



**THIS ISSUE
URBAN MISSION**



Jan Kendall

I am one of the 11 per cent of people in Britain today who live in the country. I have to admit that I love my village: the peace and quiet, the sense of neighbourliness, the open spaces and spectacular views, and the fact that it's comparatively crime-free.

The possibility of being able to live in an environment like that is on a global scale decreasing as more and more of the world's population is finding itself in an urban setting. Space, privacy, serenity are all luxuries that are becoming more and more elusive.

It's funny the things you remember from your childhood, isn't it? I have a very distinct memory of sitting in church one Sunday, when my minister interviewed one of our church members who was about to leave our nice, middle-class neighbourhood, because he believed God was calling him to live and work in the inner city. The church member read a poem that he had recently come across, which had enforced God's calling to him. The core line was (something like): I wanted to live in the country, but God said "Go to the town."

This issue is looking at the challenge of urban mission. If we've grown up with images of missionaries stalking the jungles with their pith helmets, it's easy to overlook the fact that most missionaries today are working in urban settings. They are still at the forefront of mission, still often in pioneering situations, but they, like those around them, are living in tower blocks, interacting with their multi-cultural neighbours, and seeing life in all its seaminess.

On a different note, thank you to all who have written in to say how much you like *mb*. We enjoy reading your letters, so please keep them coming in,

Jan



COVER IMAGE: BMS LIBRARY

News

WORLD NEWS 4
WORLD MISSION LINK NEWS 7
BMS NEWS 8

Features

GOOD NEWS IN THE FAVELAS 10
 Stuart Christine tells of light in the darkness
LIFE IN A TWO STAR SHACK 12
 How a pre-school programme brings hope to many lives
SOWETO - A PLACE WITHOUT HOPE? 14
 Robert Burr reflects
DOWN AND OUT ON THE STREETS 16
 Working with homeless people in France
CENTRE SPREAD: MIKE DWIGHT 18
 Profile of a man with a church planting ministry in Bangkok

Regulars

OUR TOWN 22
 Featuring Colombo
OWEN CLARK'S DIARY 24
 Life in the Democratic Republic of Congo
PRAYER FOCUS 28
 Latest information for your prayers
TAKE TWO 31
 Mission file of facts, figures and background
PHILIP CLEMENTS-JEWERY 33
 Getting to grips with a topical issue
GERRY MYHILL 35
 Takes a humorous look at Christian life

**NEXT ISSUE MAY - JUNE
LOOKING AT LIFE AND DEATH**

Romania

Romanian President Emil Constantinescu and Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea were able to assure Baptist leaders of their commitment to religious freedom in Romania at a meeting in the capital Bucharest. They also apologised for the beating of Baptists in Ruginoasa last Easter.

(BWA News)

Norway

What is believed to be the most northerly Baptist church in the world has just been established in the North Cap (Nordkapp) area of the Arctic Circle. The North Cap Baptist Church has been founded with 20 members in Honningsveg, a fishing village with 3,000 residents in the north of Norway.

(EBPS)

United Arab Emirates

The recent 34th Annual Meeting of the European Baptist Convention voted to extend its boundaries by accepting the Emirates Baptist Church International, Dubai, United Arab Emirates into full membership in the Convention.

Interim pastor Gary Hawkins said: "Our church is not in Europe, but Europe is in the UAE." (EBPS)

Uzbekistan

A newspaper article in Uzbekistan has accused, without any substantiation, some religious movements and sects - with Baptists being specifically cited - of harmful activity against their homeland, including damage to the national ideology, violence, bribery and destruction of families.

This article has prompted believers in the former Soviet republic to challenge the misrepresentations and falsehoods.

(EBPS)

Mexico

Two Christian workers were attacked in the Baptist book shop in Mexico City during an armed robbery. This is the latest of several robberies of churches.

(Open Doors)

News in Brief

News

United States "Bucket Brigades" win friends



Tenderloin district, during a nine week urban missions programme.

Nicknamed "the bucket brigades", the young participants all aged between 13 and 21, drawn from churches in California, Washington and Oregon, tidied up pavements, washed shop windows and cleaned



Young Christians armed only with buckets and cleaning supplies made a lasting impression on San Francisco's notorious

shop premises for local traders and residents in this area renowned for drug dealing, prostitution and violence. They also took part in outreach to youngsters living on the streets, gave evangelistic dramas and

Belgium Official recognition for Baptists

The Union of Baptists in Belgium has received official recognition as a community of faith in its homeland after years of prayer, struggle, meetings, and letter-writing campaigns. In December 1997 the

Protestant Synod, the only Protestant group recognised by the Belgian government, voted

unanimously to bring Baptists into membership. The Union President, Samuel Verhaeghe, said: "We are recognised as a full Protestant Baptist Church now. The Attaché from the Minister of Justice was there for the vote and



Samuel Verhaeghe



congratulated us at the end. Thank you everybody who prayed, wrote letters and did anything to help us on this matter." (EBPS)

offered their services to other Christian agencies working in the area. "Many of them had never witnessed to someone in the street before and were a bit afraid of the city," said YWAM director Lori Matthias.

Not everyone accepted the offer of free help. "Some people were suspicious, because they couldn't believe someone would want to do something for nothing, but others were really touched," said Matthias. "One young man washed the feet of the homeless men waiting in a nearby food line."

A drug dealer was so impressed by the way a small group cleaned up the street

corner from where he operated that he bought each member a soft drink as a thank-you.

The clean-up crews handed out leaflets explaining their free services were being offered to demonstrate God's love.

This short-term youth programme was intended to introduce young Christians to urban ministry, and "take away some of the fear many people have about the city," said

Matthias. "It's exciting to see them go back and put into practice in their own communities some of the things they have learned." (YWAM News)

"The clean-up crews handed out leaflets explaining their free services were being offered to demonstrate God's love."

Germany New Baptist seminary on Soviet Army site

A new Baptist educational complex comprising a seminary for 65 students, a Bible school, counselling and youth work centre, and 150 flats for the elderly, has been dedicated as the first part of this building project reached completion.

The complex is located in Elstal, 30 km west of Berlin in the former East Germany. The German seminary had previously been in Hamburg, but the need for increased space prompted the move to

this 12 hectare site. The campus is a prime example of military conversion, with "swords being turned into ploughshares." The site was begun by the Nazi Air Force,

"The site was used by athletes during the 1936 Olympics"

used by athletes during the 1936 Olympics and belonged to the Soviet Army from 1945 to 1991.

The rebuilding of 19 houses and construction of four new educational buildings occurred in record time: initial contracts were signed only three years



Alistair Brown

Jesus, Light to the World

A burned out car lies at the side of an Albanian road. Lots of wrecked cars scar the Albanian countryside, but this one's different. It's bedecked with flowers, and a candle burns in the hole which once held the headlight. Three people died in that car last March during the riots when the ammunition they were carrying exploded. These weren't guiltless people, but they were husbands,

brothers and fathers loved by people who so miss them that they light a candle in that abandoned car every day.

Never let us forget that war, famine, flood, earthquake, poverty and the rest of the world's troubles hurt real people. They're flesh and blood, wanted and needed, just like those for whom we care. God grant us compassion to help and courage to act to ease pain and bring hope to this broken world. ●

ago. Roughly 450 volunteers from Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan, and 300 from the USA have worked at the site since



March 1995.

Revd Eckhard Schaefer, General Secretary of the German Baptists hopes that Elstal will become a major "exporter" of German-language theological education. Negotiations are underway with Baptist institutions in Britain for their degrees to be accredited, thus allowing the seminary to be internationally recognised.

Nagaland, India 12,000 turn to Christ



Seven hundred and forty thousand



people attended six celebration services for the 125th anniversary of Baptist work in Nagaland - a state of

north east India. More than 12,000 people responded to the appeal of Baptist World Alliance President Nilson Fanini to give their lives to Christ in a special evangelistic meeting. Tony Cupitt, BWA

conducted evangelistic rallies where about 600 people made professions of faith.

In Vijayawada and Narasaraopet the team saw - and on some occasions were able to speak at - ministries to

“...thirty committed themselves to full-time missionary service.”

Evangelism director spoke at a rally attended by 75,000 young people, in which thirty committed themselves to full-time missionary service.

Prior to the Naga events, Cupitt led a ten-person team to Andhra Pradesh, and

prisoners, orphans, handicapped young people and people with leprosy. They also held medical clinics and saw a new CIM x-ray unit, given to the Baptist hospital at Nellore by Baptist World Aid. (BWA News)

SAT-7 increase broadcast time

SAT-7, the satellite television service for the Middle East and North Africa has nearly quadrupled its number of broadcast hours per week in just 18 months of broadcasting.

The service began in May 1996 broadcasting for just two hours a week on a Friday, in Arabic, using the satellite Eutelsat 2F3, which covers Europe, the Central Middle East and North Africa. At the end of April

1997 the same programmes were being broadcast at the same times on another satellite system, PanAmSat 4, whose ‘footprint’ covers Southern Asia, the Arabian peninsula and much of Europe. Now the normal Friday

“During 1997 thousands responded very positively to the broadcasts.”

broadcasts are complemented by a 2½ hour transmission on Sundays, the weekend holiday in Europe and some Arabic-speaking countries. This brings the total broadcasting time to 7½ hours per week.

During 1997 thousands responded very positively to the broadcasts. But “the one complaint we still get from everyone is that we do not yet broadcast a daily service,” reported Makram Barsoum, SAT-7’s Church and Audience Relations Director. (SAT-7)

SOON - Internet outreach hits half million

SOON Gospel Literature, the Derby-based literature ministry report that since they launched their evangelistic on-line Web magazine a year ago (<http://www.soon.org.uk>), their pages have been accessed half a million times. Often 1,500 people visit this Web site each day from a range of countries.

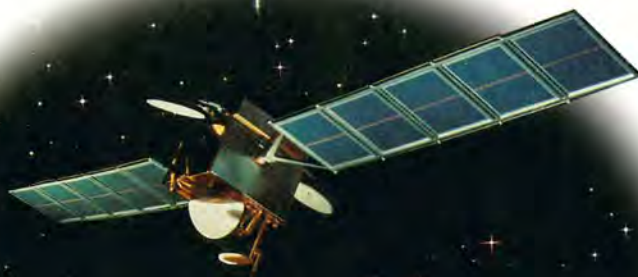
Convinced that the Internet represents an opportunity which Christians are not yet fully exploiting for the gospel, SOON have

“Often 1,500 people visit this Web site each day...”

produced a “how-to” guide on using the Web for evangelism at: [http://www.brigada.org/today/articles/web evangelism.html](http://www.brigada.org/today/articles/web%20evangelism.html)

The guide covers: learning more about the Internet, how Internet evangelism differs from the printed page, how to exploit “search engines” to bring visitors to your site, using “newsgroups” to witness, and many links to other web resources.

SOON say, “If only someone had given us such a guide a year ago! We don’t want others to spend a year reinventing the wheel.” They believe that Internet outreach is a vital tool for the church, and can be used by anyone, not just evangelistic organisations. (SOON)



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

World Mission Link



Paul, Eleanor, Nathan, Robert and Ruth
collecting coins for BMS work in Brazil

Ena and George
from Bridgwater
Baptist Church,
serving lunch at
the BMS fayre ▼



Well Done, Bridgwater!

Members of Bridgwater

Baptist Church raised
£1,508 for their BMS
PIPS project,
supporting a well-baby
clinic in Sao Paulo,
Brazil in a fayre they

held in December. They
served coffee and lunches, and
had stalls run by different
organisations. The young
people also joined in with
their own endeavour – seeing
if they could fill a map of
Brazil with coins.

TAKE THE RISK UK TOUR

A challenging and fast moving multi-media evening presentation which aims to portray the world that God created, and bring to life the real world that we live in today. It will show how Christians can make a difference and issue the challenge to 'take more risks for Christ'.

Take the Risk is for people in their 20s, 30s and early 40s, although those outside this age



range will enjoy it. It will consist of live music from ex-Eden Burning musicians, drama directed by Rob Lacey, speaking from Martin Pearse (BMS President 1997 - 98), large screen video and live links with different parts of the world.

It will be happening in 16 venues throughout the UK in the autumn of 1998.

For more details contact your BMS Co-ordinator, or ring Katrina Dando at BMS on 01235 512077.

Risk it and ring!

Coming your way in
September and October
(revised dates)

Birmingham
Cardiff
Cheltenham
Colchester
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Kent
Leeds
Liverpool
London SW
Manchester
Newcastle
Nottingham
Plymouth
Southampton
Watford

Church Walks for Blind Girls

Children in the Sunday School at Astley Bridge Baptist Church, near Bolton were really impressed when former BMS missionary Valerie Hamilton and her sister Eleanor visited them. Valerie and Eleanor spoke about Bangladesh where Valerie had worked, and in particular, the School for Blind Girls in Dhaka. They were so impressed that they knew they could not forget about the blind girls, and so immediately they decided to hold a sponsored walk to raise money for the School.

The event took place a few weeks later, raising £135.

Dates for your Diary

Events & Meetings

Glasgow

Mon 9 March

Women's Missionary

Fellowship

Adelaide Place Baptist

Church, Glasgow

More information - Jan

Watson 0141 882 1201

Airdrie

Tues 10 March

Lanarkshire BMS Women's

Rally

Airdrie Baptist Church

More information - Betty

Brown 01236 429450

Cardiff

Sat 14 and Sun

15 March

Cardiff Auxiliary BMS

Weekend

Saturday venue: Bethany

Rhiwbina

More information - Beryl

Davies 01222 756426

St Andrews

Fri 27 - Sun 29

March

Scottish BMM Conference

More information - Tom

Barrie 01292 261215

St Andrews

Fri 27 - Mon 30

March

Scottish Women's Auxiliary

Annual Conference

More information -

Margaret Brown - 01294

465886

Glasgow

Mon 20 April

Women's Missionary

Fellowship

Adelaide Place Baptist

Church, Glasgow

More information - Jan

Watson 0141 882 1201

Some of Astley Bridge
Sunday School members and
friends taking a well-earned
rest along the way ▼



Simon & Karen Collins

Simon and Karen did not depart for Angola in June 1997 as had been hoped - and publicised - because their visas did not arrive.

Seven months later they were still in the UK.

How have they coped with the waiting?

Simon says: "As you can imagine, the past few months have been frustrating. On several occasions we became increasingly excited as the date for our flight to Angola approached, only to realise as yet another deadline passed with still no sign of the visas, that we would not be leaving again. Three fortnights in a row we spent the weekend with Karen's parents, saying our emotional goodbyes for the last time for two years - only to be still here the following week!"

While they continue to wait Simon, a doctor, is doing locum work in the Birmingham area and Karen, a teacher, is studying at St Andrews Hall.



Towlsons Return to Albania

BMS missionaries are gradually returning to Albania. Last year Paul Towlson returned to Durres, the main port, where he is teaching in the Albanian Bible Institute. In early January the rest of his family: Elisabeth, his wife, and children Jessica, Michael, Evelyn and Philip were able to join him there.



Simon & Karen Collins (top);
Paul & Elisabeth Towlson (below)

Glyn & Gill Jones: Retired but not Tired Out

Glyn & Gill have left Albania for the last time as they start a new phase of their lives in retirement in the UK. They came to serve with BMS in 1993 with Gill working in the European Baptist Federation Albania Office in Tirana. Glyn, an agricultural scientist, helped the Albanian people grow new products such as peanuts and sweetcorn, and assisted with seed distribution. Sadly a lot of his research work was destroyed in the civil war a year ago.

After a short break they plan to visit their Link churches, and after that, who knows what God has in store for them?

News in Brief

News

Electrifying Experience for Dave Palmer

Satellite engineer and BMS volunteer consultant Dave Palmer has recently returned to the UK after the first of four trips undertaken to the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), in which he has started much needed repair work on the country's dilapidated communications network.

All infrastructure and

internal communications within DRC have gradually disintegrated in the 30 or so years since the country gained its independence from Belgium. Last year's war which ousted Mobutu and put Kabila in charge of the country's affairs destroyed any vestige of communication links within the country. All that is left is e-mail for the fortunate few (power supplies permitting) and short wave radio.

Dave hopes he will make a difference to thousands of peoples' lives by maintaining and improving existing equipment and building relationships with BMS's partner body, CBFC. Dave made his first trip accompanied by veteran communications engineer John Corbett, for whom the journey to DRC will probably

BMS at the Baptist Assembly

Make a note of these events NOW and plan to be at them!

**Sat 2 May
Stand by Me**
2.00 - 3.15 pm

A seminar led by Fiona Pimlott, BMS Youth and Children's Co-ordinator.

How much support do you give your young people in their day to day Christian lives?

Or in their crises?

Their ups and downs?

Their stepping out in faith for God, and holding back in fear?

How much do you encourage them to "go for God"?

A sizzling, invigorating seminar which will help you motivate your young people and in the process, will send exciting shivers down your spine!

**Sat 2 May
Ten ways to make World Mission a higher priority in your church**

3.45 - 5.00 pm

A seminar led by Cath Mawson and Theo Lambourne, BMS Co-ordinators for the North of England and Midlands.

Back by popular demand this seminar will help you to promote world mission, generating interesting ideas and generally making mission go with a bang in your church.

**Sat 2 May
World Mission Celebration**

7.15 - 9.15 pm

Don't miss this special evening with the Bishop of Maidstone, Rt Revd Gavin Reid!

**1 - 4 May 1998
Baptist Assembly 1998
In Step with the Spirit**
Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool

For further information on registering please contact the Assembly Office, Baptist House, PO Box 49, Didcot, OX11 8XA. Tel 01235 512077



be his last.

They arrived in Kinshasa to a bombardment of rockets and shells - it being the day after war had been declared on Brazzaville, across the River Congo in the People's Republic of Congo.

The objectives of this trip were to install some new aerials, return and install repaired radios, repair solar electric battery chargers and general maintenance.

Radios are used daily by the CBFC as they are the only means of communication along the 1,200 mile long river. The radio at Yakambo Koi was repaired after surviving falling into the river whilst being carried on the head of the pastor's daughter, and then buried in the forest before the arrival of retreating Zairean troops.

Having repaired the satellite e-mail system, massive and unexpected lightening wrecked computers

and other electronic equipment, and also took out the e-mail. All communications with the outside world were temporarily suspended! This was the same satellite e-mail system that had been shipped out to Kinshasa during the 1995 Ebola virus outbreak.

All in all, the trip achieved most of its objectives, with extra excitement thrown in!

At one point Dave was held at gun-point by soldiers who demanded all his money! John reckoned that the six weeks were a good introduction to life in the Congo for him.

Dave is a member of Redhill Baptist Church.

Over the next two years he will make another three trips to DRC, returning home to his wife and children to undertake project development. He has already had plenty of ideas, and hopes to get university funding to develop a complete satellite system that will fit into a briefcase.



"All communications with the outside world were temporarily suspended!"

Baptist House News

Welcome to

Simon Jones

Simon is the latest addition to the team of BMS Co-ordinators. He joins BMS on 2 March as the new Co-ordinator for London and the South East, having worked as Editor of Christianity magazine, and before that as pastor of Peckham Park Road Baptist Church.



Simon is raring to go in his new job. "I'm really looking forward to starting work" he said; "it's a very exciting role!"

Update



Andy Smith

Andy returned to his job as Audio-Visual and Projects Co-ordinator at BMS full-time in January 1998, having been seriously ill with cancer and a stroke over much of 1997. He still needs monthly hospital check-ups and occasional brain scans, and movement has not come back fully to his right hand side yet. But to everyone who visited him while he was so ill in hospital, he is a walking miracle. "It's marvellous to be back!" he said, and it's marvellous to have him back. Please continue to remember Andy and his family in your prayers.

Life in Retirement

News from Derek Rumbol



Derek Rumbol, formerly BMS Regional Representative for Africa, is now living in Nottinghamshire, and seeing more of his grandchildren. "I'm enjoying not having to get to the office for 8.30 am!" he said, "And it's nice to have a break, because life was quite hectic before. Actually for the first two or three weeks I thought I was on holiday. I knew in my mind that I wasn't going back to work. But then it suddenly hit me. It's very strange being cut off from direct involvement with Africa."

Derek was Regional Rep for Africa for twelve years, retiring last autumn. Before that he and his wife Brenda were BMS missionaries in what was then Zaire (1962-76) and then he was minister of Stantonbury Church, Milton Keynes (1976-85). ●

Christmas Songs of Praise at Finsbury Park featuring the BMS 28:19 India Action Team

Songs of Praise



BMS NEWS



Focusing the good news on the dark background of

favelas

STUART CHRISTINE TELLS OF HIS WORK IN SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

During the night rain came through the roof and rats came through the wooden walls of the two-room shack you live in. Your partner is out of work and out of the house since yesterday evening. God, have you any idea what life can be like in a favela?

It's February and you're expecting your fourth baby in the next few weeks and two year old Andrea is still so small and sickly.

Your seven year old, Ricardo, is due to start primary school next week and he's frightened that the children from the proper houses round about will laugh at him and you can't afford the uniform for him and he's worried about that too.

School has always been a bad word in your life because no-one has done well. You can't read or write and Joao, your new partner's eldest child dropped out when he was twelve. He's never been able to get a regular job and when

he comes back as he did the other day wearing a new pair of Reebok trainers you didn't dare ask where he'd got them.

Starting a new life, starting school, starting a job; they're all such big changes, but when, like twenty five year old Ana Silvia, you've only money for today's food and live in a Sao Paulo favela like Bueru, they can be just too big.



It's transition times like these that we are focusing on in developing programmes for the Urban Impact Project here in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The aim of the Urban Impact Project is to encourage and facilitate the involvement of our churches in effective social-evangelistic mission in these city slum communities that are home to almost one in five of the eighteen million or so inhabitants of this monstrous city.

Programmes focus on crucial times of change and challenge and bring contact with credibility into the local church's life in the community.

Marlene, a retired nursing assistant, heads up this programme that caters for up to 100 new mothers offering pre- and post-natal guidance and nutritional support. One mum with her child in hospital recently knelt in the corridor and called upon the 'God whom she'd discovered at the Clube das Maes,' (mothers' club) to help her. He did!

Under Georgie Christine's direction there are now twelve favela pre-school units bringing introductory school preparation for over 500 five to seven year olds. Georgie has developed a curriculum that works well in favela conditions and is responsible for training the growing number of teachers required as new churches contact us wanting to start a pre-school as part of their favela outreach. The BMS together with Operation Agri have recently undertaken to help fund a full-time Brazilian Pre-schools' Co-ordinator to allow the work to grow further with the aim to have 1000 children in twenty five favela units by the end of 1998.

Computing, English language and

aerobics classes are three activities typically pursued by Brazilian middle classes that favela young people are normally excluded from. These activities have proved very attractive and confidence building for kids that have been ground down by years of failure and rejection. Specific job training co-operatives that offer income as well as skills in areas like welding, carpentry and bakery are aimed at helping kids break out of the poverty cycle. Partnerships with

industry are most helpful here, and a recent link with the Brazilian petroleum company, Petrobras, has enabled us to expand the computer skills training.

Mobilising Christian young people - strategic and necessary!

In conjunction with the ministerial training colleges here and the Oasis Trust we have been working hard to put in place programmes that will catch the imagination and harness the energy and open-mindedness of the youth of our Brazilian churches to make an impact in this whole area of mission amongst the poor. In recent years youth

"a recent link with the Brazilian petroleum company, Petrobras, has enabled us to expand the computer skills training."

activities have become increasingly church-centred, focusing on worship and recreation for those already 'on board'. There is a great need for attractive and challenging mission programmes that they can get involved in. We also see this as crucial to prepare future leaders with the vision and experience to bring this area of mission into the mainstream of denominational life tomorrow. Through the experience they can gain with our mission teams in the favelas of Sao Paulo, possibilities are

opening up for Brazilian churches to make a contribution to facing the mission challenge of slum communities in other urban centres around the world. In facilitating the involvement of the

dynamic and committed Brazilian Christian young in this way, the BMS will be making yet another significant

expression of its ongoing commitment to global mission. ●

Stuart Christine is a BMS missionary based in Sao Paulo where he is involved in a church planting ministry.





Life in a TWO STAR shack



GEORGIE CHRISTINE TELLS HOW A PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMME BRINGS HOPE IN THE FAVELAS OF SAO PAULO

Brazil is a beautiful country with rich houses, and varied architecture to the extent that you think you might be in Hollywood visiting some famous film stars. But in the shadow of the luxury there is another and more oppressive reality. Brazil is top of the list of the ten countries in the world that have the greatest difference between rich and poor.

The reality for one in five of the 18 million or so people living in the vast city of Sao Paulo is very different. Living in shanty towns that are called favelas, lives are dominated by poverty, poor housing, lack of medical attention and good schooling.

Favelas come in different shapes and sizes. There are almost 1,000 in Sao Paulo (twice that number in greater Sao Paulo), some of what you might call one star, some three, four, five star. It is true to say that there has been an improvement in the quality of the homes in favelas over the last three years. A lot of the wooden shacks are being replaced by brick built homes, put up at weekends by families and friends. But the growing unemployment in the city, (already over one million are out of work), has meant that the brick-built exteriors often hide

poverty just as oppressive as that which used to characterise the life in the wooden shacks.

We visited recently a 'two star' favela: there are boards all around the top of the area - like a walled city. At last we find an entrance and before us is a path that winds down; a slippery and steep path. We get in behind the more reasonable shacks that face the asphalt road and descend to homes that get progressively more precarious.

The smell begins to rise of rubbish and bits of food, or chicken bones and washing is hanging out everywhere.

Among all this are the dogs, the hens

and the children. The children are everywhere. They often play in the dirt with no shoes. In the bottom of the little valley, two or three hundred shacks are gathered together. The mud and sewage mixes together in what was once a little stream that ran through the bottom of the valley.

We bend over to go through the door into Sonia's home. It is made of bits of wood, left over building materials. It's very damp and Sonia, the young woman who has recently begun to come to church, is lying on a simple bed, breathing with

difficulty. Her two young daughters are playing around the inside of the house.

Sonia says how she actually managed to get a job to clean a house today, but she is going to be unable to go because of her bronchitis. There will be no money for food once again.

God has seen Sonia imprisoned in her home by ill health and poverty but often God's people don't see and opportunities to express the love of Jesus go un-met. The pre-schools have opened a doorway into over 500 homes now in twelve different favelas.

Cimar, a pre-school teacher, was visiting the homes of some of the children in the favela Vila Andrade. As she went from shack to shack a lady called her over and asked her to come in. She lived right in front of the rubbish dump. She began to plead with Cimar to accept her daughter into the pre-school. The little girl gets up in the morning, puts on her clothes and runs straight to the rubbish dump and plays there all day. There is nothing she can do to get her out of this habit. There is nowhere else for her to go, because her shack is so small there is barely room to stand and sleep. Cimar talked to the little girl and persuaded her

“...rubbish and bits of food, chicken bones and washing hanging out everywhere.”





“...a new
world for the
children and
for the
families of the
children that
attend.”

to come and see the pre-school one afternoon. After a couple of days of settling in there was no keeping her away; a new world was opened up for her.

Clavel is a six year old who was not able to go on the school outing that had been arranged. The teacher went to find out why he had not gone, and discovered that it was

because he had no shoes, and his father would not let him go without. With a resigned expression on his

face, Clavel said it doesn't matter, God stays here with me as well; next year my dad will have given me some shoes.

Sofia is a five year old and her mother had to shave off all her hair recently because she had such a bad infestation of head lice. Sofia was crying and said 'When I grow up I am going to buy lots and lots of medicine against head lice so no one ever needs to be bald again.'

At two of our pre-schools we have been able to set up dental surgeries with the help of 15 volunteer dentists. One of them was giving a new pupil, Christina, a six year old a check up when she suddenly paused and looked up at

Georgie in a critical way making the comment that this child has never brushed her teeth. I suggested that she asked the girl if she had ever had a tooth brush. Christina's answer was no, but she knew that she was going to get one in the pre-school.

Josianna is a seven year old who often comes to the school crying and irritable. That is because she has had nothing to eat since the day before. At home her father and mother are under the influence of drugs again. The little money there was has been spent on drugs and food has been forgotten. She is hungry and she just wants to sit on your knee and have a cuddle.



The teachers at our schools could tell stories like these all day long, but they are also able to tell the happier stories of just how effective these little schools of forty to fifty children, often running in converted shacks, are in opening a new world for the children and for the families of the children that attend.

One teacher writes: "In only three months of work we are able to see positive results. Especially in the way the children get on with one another. In the beginning the children were very aggressive, as time has passed however, there has been a terrific change in the way they have behaved together, they no longer cling to the teacher and they play and help one another. They have especially enjoyed the recently introduced recorder classes.

The pre-school work continues to grow. Our aim is to have 1,000 children in 25 of these schools, spread throughout the favelas in Sao Paulo by the end of 1998.

Thanks to a grant from Operation Agri we are hoping to be able to employ a full time co-ordinator for the Pre-school Programme. This should allow the schools network to expand even beyond Sao Paulo to other cities.

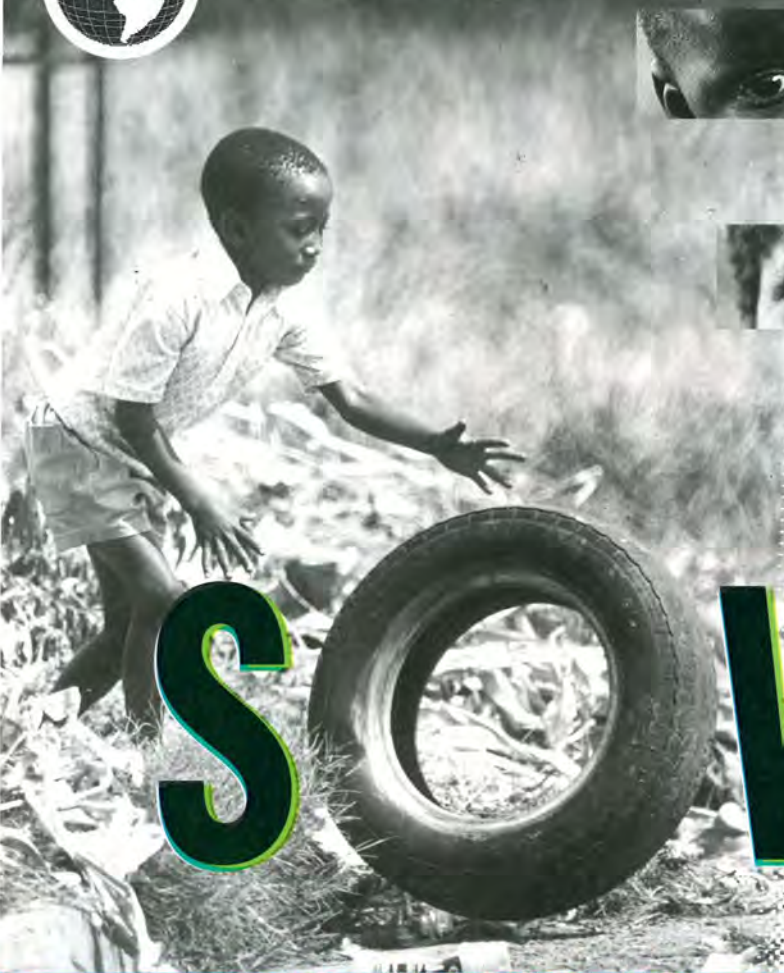
All this goes on day by day and hand in hand with evangelistic work to begin at churches and provide communities of God's people in each of these communities of poverty. ●

Georgie Christine is a BMS missionary working in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

If having read about the work amongst children in the favelas of Sao Paulo, you would personally like to pray for a child there, please contact Department for Constituency Support, BMS, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA, enclosing a stamped self-addressed envelope.

We will then mail you out a photo of a child known to BMS missionary Georgie Christine along with their personal details.





ROBERT BURR
REFLECTS

SOWETO

a place without hope?

I love Soweto. It's a bumper sticker and you will see it quite often on vehicles driving in and out of the most famous township in the world. It could also double up as a pertinent reminder to the Church of its 'Great Commission' to the **SO**uth **WE**stern **TO**wnship where an estimated four million people live. To understand the problems of evangelism in Soweto you have to take an African view, almost to get beneath the skin of your African brother, and see it through his eyes - only then do you appreciate the miracle of his salvation and begin to realise why some of his neighbours might not whole heartedly embrace the gospel...

It's a white man's religion some will say, even to the extent of arguing - wrongly of course - that Jesus was white, but then it is hardly surprising... In the same way that a Jew will reject your evangelism because his history has seen many persecutions

perpetrated in the name of Christ, your South African black friend, having been the victim of erroneous biblical teaching which condemned him to a life of separation and servanthood and labelled a 'kaffir' (Arabic word for infidel) by the Afrikaner, may throw the



himself, a pool of tolerance in the people which soaked up suffering and injustice

and even in a 'New South Africa' carries on a sort of subservient respect, perhaps more prevalent in the thirty plus age group, but reinforced in many cases by a culture which does show respect when a modern world so readily discards such values. Coupled with the historical position that the white was always seen as the provider, you can find

yourself in ministry at a soup kitchen where the assembled 'congregation' will maintain an unspoken attitude: 'we are pleased to see you, glad of your interest and are willing to please' - so willing, the sinners prayer can be recited in eager

“Only long term commitment with sound and wisely ministered biblical teaching will result in genuine conversion...”

Christian message straight back at you. This line comes from those are still bitter.

Conversely, there is an amazing degree of forgiveness in this country - from the humblest shack to the President



anticipation that something of more immediate physical value will be rendered; so two hundred meals ladled, two hundred souls added - or were they? Only long term commitment with sound and wisely ministered biblical teaching will result in genuine conversion with roots in God's word, but beyond the day a shack dweller gives his life to Christ there is another problem...

Significance, security and self worth... The lack of these is forcing many young Sowetans to resort to the assault rifle in pursuit of that coveted BMW car or to go on risky day or night excursions into the wealthier suburbs of Johannesburg to bring back electrical goods from what has become the crime capital of the world. On a less violent note, these same feelings of hopelessness still affect the Christian and

“Johannesburg... has become the crime capital of the world.”

perhaps the biggest reason for backsliding amongst young Christians in Soweto's largest church is the hopelessness of an uncertain future with no job. Throw this into the equation and you will understand why the two million membership of a part-Christian, part-ancestral worship sect-cum-church has been so successful with its emphasis on encouraging

involvement in full or part-time business ventures for its one hundred per cent African membership. However, it has a dark side for any who wish to renounce its membership and become born again, quite a few have become mentally ill in the process.

Any improvement since the new

Government? Yes, in the townships, in housing and infrastructure. The road signs are slowly going back up, but there needs to be a greater response from the Church towards the crushing hardships that still exist. Almost in the same spirit of Acts 2:44 there really needs to be restitution that creates empowerment; otherwise the Good News may be good in word but not in deed. ●

Robert Burr runs a ministry training young South Africans in fine furniture making.



Down & Out

on the streets
of France



Robert Atkins: Is there anything in your background to explain why you work with street people?



Pierre Thebault: I lived on the fringes of society from the age of fifteen. I became an alcoholic, helped found the famous punk group Berurier Noir, lived on the streets and spent time in prison. I think I understand the rebellion and emptiness in the lives of the people who come to the Chapelle.

PIERRE AND MARIE THEBAULT WORK WITH HOMELESS PEOPLE IN TOULOUSE. ROBERT ATKINS QUESTIONED THEM ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THEIR ACTIVITIES



Marie Thebault: I had a difficult adolescence: drugs, alcohol, depression. I even planned a career in social work when I observed the people who tried to help me but I was in deep trouble myself. I spent some time sleeping rough. That's where I met Pierre.

depths.' When we began to go to church we thought the doors should be open for people like ourselves. We were eager to

the pastor was you!



Pierre Thebault: The first guys who came in terrified me in spite of my background - perhaps because of it. I thought they'd drag me down. I'd never bothered with people as rough as these but they're our friends now. Some of them are downstairs as we speak.

Robert Atkins: We provide breakfast three days a week for about fifteen people but that's not all, is it?

"I became an alcoholic, helped found the famous punk group Berurier Noir, lived on the streets and spent time in prison."

Pierre Thebault: No. We aim to listen and to show them a respect they rarely receive outside.

Robert Atkins:

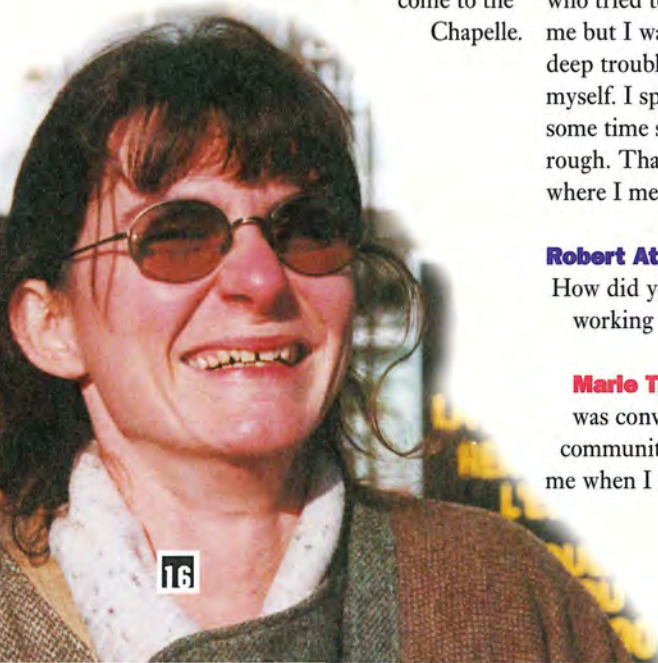
How did you find yourselves working at the Chapelle?

help. We found a church in a strange place - in a shopping centre where the doors were already open. There was a strange pastor who was prepared for it to happen. The church was the Chapelle and

Robert Atkins: What sort of people come?



Marie Thebault: It's hard to generalise but I think of Fabrice



and Annie who are what we call enfant de la DDASS - people from broken homes. They've never known much else. On the other hand, there's André who's had a house, a car, a job and a family but who now sleeps on the steps of the Chapelle and begs in the street. He lost everything when his marriage broke up. Humanly speaking, none of them has much of a future but then again, neither did we!

Robert Atkins: Do drugs play a part in their lives?

Pierre Thebault: Practically all of them are either heavy users of alcohol or on drugs but whether these are a cause or an effect of their predicament is a hard question.

Robert Atkins: What sort of encouragements have there been? Is it simplistic to ask whether there have been spiritual encouragements?

Marie Thebault: Not at all. We have had some of our friends from the street at Bible studies and at a recent baptismal service. We do a daily Bible reading and prayer mid-morning and some of them have come to that. But it's important to remember that many already have an interest in spiritual things. Speedy always has the Bible in his guitar case. Mick carries one in his rucksack. The Bible

in cartoons is always popular. There are often questions but you must be prepared to wait. One of our best friends,

Jacques, waited months before he dared set foot in the Chapelle. He needed to be sure we'd respect him and not see him as a captive audience for the gospel.

"In the medium term we'd like to be able to have a better equipped centre with a shower."

Pierre Thebault: Jacques has been a big encouragement. He's helped us put in a sink for the work we do and is helping us put up some polystyrene tiles - building is his

background. There's a fierce loyalty towards the Chapelle, too. This is their place and they won't hear a word said against it.

Robert Atkins: What about your hopes and fears for the future?

Pierre Thebault: There is sometimes violence but for people with our background the violence we meet all too often finds an echo within us. That frightens me.

Marie Thebault: Our hopes? Short-term we want to have a fund to help people with the deposit for a flat - this is the first obstacle for someone who wants to find a way out. We've already been able to help a couple of people to find something. In the medium term we'd like to be able to have a better equipped centre



Mike Pilavachi

Reclaiming our cities for Christ

We have been holding our Soul Survivor youth festival in rural Somerset for five years now. In the summer of 1997 over 10,000 young people came from all over the UK and places as far away as South Africa, California and Australia. There were many wonderful moments. We touched his glory as we worshipped, sensed his power as we prayed and were made aware of his love as we took communion.

Yet at the end I felt strangely dissatisfied. It took me a while to work out the nature of my ambivalence. We were having a great time on an agricultural showground in Somerset, and the only invitations we could issue were to the sheep and cows.

In the summer of the year 2000 we are holding Soul Survivor in the city of Manchester. We are joining with many churches and groups who serve in inner city Manchester in order to proclaim Jesus where masses of young people are. We are hoping that 20,000 young people will join us in this mission.

As we begin the preparations for this it is dawning on me that it would have been much easier to have stayed in Somerset - rolling hills, the Cheddar Gorge, jet ski-ing...

Instead we will have the Manchester metro-link, Moss Side and possible danger. Who would want to go to inner city Manchester when they could be in tranquil Somerset? - Only those who have a passion to communicate the gospel of Jesus to a generation who have never heard of him.

We know this is only a small start when others have been doing this for years, but at least it is a start. Our world is rapidly becoming an urban jungle. Most people now live in cities and yet in our own nation the inner cities have the lowest proportion of Christians.

Of course there must be mission to the country and to suburbia; however the great challenge is to reclaim our cities for Christ. There are many ways of facing up to the challenge of urban mission and we each need to be listening to the Spirit for our own direction. ✪

Mike Pilavachi heads up the Soul Survivor team and pastors a congregation in Watford specially aimed at reaching young people.

with a shower. Long-term we'd like the town council to let us administer some flats so that we could always help someone really motivated to escape from the street.

Robert Atkins: Are these things possible?



Marie Thebault: I think so. What's more, God is always capable of surprising us!

Robert Atkins is a BMS missionary involved in church work in Toulouse, France.





Mike Dwight with Sanewian Duangkham pastor of Siam Bangkok church

Church planting



GEOFF BLAND SPOKE TO MIKE DWIGHT ABOUT HIS CHURCH PLANTING MINISTRY

Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, is a huge city of around ten million people. Throughout the city there are around 130 Christian churches – a tiny number amongst such a vast population. But a large proportion of these 130 churches have been planted in the last ten years.

Many different missions have recognized the challenge of church-planting in Bangkok and responded

positively. One of these church-planters is Mike Dwight, a British missionary who has been working in Thailand for over 20 years with Worldwide Evangelisation Crusade (WEC).

Until five years ago Mike lived and worked in the rural provinces of Sukhothai and Kamphaengphet. The response to the gospel in Thailand has always been limited and most missions in early days tended to go where the response was. Often this was amongst country people with special needs (eg leprosy) who were impressed by the love that Christians showed for them. “This has been good,” says Mike, “but we may have missed out on some strategic places to start churches.” So in recent years there has been a new emphasis on urban mission, and Mike sees Bangkok as a key strategic point for church-planting.

It is never easy to define urban

mission, and that is certainly true in a city like Bangkok with a vast cross-section of people. There are the powerful government and military officials, the highly educated professionals, an emerging middle-class, a huge number of students, many lower-class workers, and hordes of migrant workers who come from the countryside. In Bangkok they may well live in poor housing similar to their simple country homes. “But,” says Mike, “their outlook is often very different. People come hoping for a change in their standard of living. In particular there is a great exodus of young people from the villages. They want something new. They don’t want to be rice farmers like their fathers before them. So they come to colleges and factories, willing to do whatever it takes to improve their lives.”

“Inevitably this means that they get caught up in materialism and a secular way of living. In the countryside, the local temple has a dominant place in everyday life. But when people come to Bangkok that pillar of society is moved aside and replaced by the quest for material things – clothes, car, mobile phone, house etc. Once this gets into the system it’s a very tough nut to crack, just like in the West. The Buddhists feel the effects of it. The temples in Bangkok have to be staffed by monks from rural areas, because materialistic Thais in Bangkok don’t want to go into temple service. If you looked at any bookstall



g in Bangkok



ten years ago you would have seen a mass of Buddhist religious material. You'll still find a few religious books, about certain popular monks or magic amulets, but in the main such books have been replaced by titles like "How to make your first million".

The current economic crisis has exposed the emptiness of this philosophy, but even so, as in the West, it's very hard to interest materialists with spiritual truth. Nevertheless Mike sees a great opportunity to reach people who have moved to the city from the countryside. "There is a void there. They don't have a temple. They don't have religious connections. They are looking for something new and often they don't have any friends. So there is great potential for friendship evangelism."

This friendship evangelism is the main activity of the Siam Bangkok Church which was founded by Mike five years ago. The church began as a small cell-group meeting in a hotel. At that time Mike met "by divine appointment" a young Thai man, Sangwian, who was leading a small cell-group in his home. By joining forces the new church gained

a Thai pastor to head the work, with an experienced missionary to support him. The hotel provided a neutral venue which people could enter freely, and the church continues to meet there still.

Over the five years, more than 120 people have come to the Lord. These have been mainly students or young professionals. "We didn't set out to target students though we did aim to reach the middle class rather than the urban poor," says Mike, "because the middle class can move up or down. Most of our contacts were of this type in the 18 to 30 age range, because Sangwian himself had come through Ramkhamhaeng University and knew people of that age. Our church only has a couple of members who are older than 30 - I'm the venerable grandfather!"

Growing churches in Bangkok has proved to be more difficult than planting them, because Bangkok people are more educated and have a broader world view. But, says Mike, "It's much harder because it's so difficult to bring people together and to 'build church'. So friendship and the use of the home are vital."

That's why the cell structure is the key to the Bangkok Siam Church's evangelistic policy - the heart of the church's life rather than the Sunday service. Each Sunday morning there are



Bible study groups before the morning service. After lunch together, the members meet in various cell groups for practical training in such things as leading worship and witness. During the week there are cell groups whose purpose is evangelistic with the Christians bringing friends along to chat, share testimony and the gospel, and to pray for the needs of each other including those who are not yet Christians. Starting with four to five people the aim is that over a nine month period the group will grow to around 15 and then divide, having during that time trained up new leaders in one of the Sunday training cell groups. "That's the theory," says Mike. "We're still working it through and we're not there yet. What with Bangkok's horrific traffic, people working late, others moving away, it's a little bit chaotic. But I believe in my heart that it's something that can work in the urban, Bangkok setting." ●

Geoff Bland was formerly pastor of Frimley Baptist Church in Surrey. He has been working in Thailand with BMS since 1990, and for the past four years has been teaching New Testament at Bangkok Institute of Theology.



A SERIES EDITED BY **JAN KENDALL**
THAT LOOKS AT TOWNS AND CITIES
AROUND THE WORLD WHERE BMS
PERSONNEL ARE WORKING

BY JOSEPHINE PUGH, SARAH ANNE PARKER, DAVID & SUE JACKSON, MARGARET & PETER GOODALL, DAVID & JANET KERRIGAN



Colombo



Our Town

Introduction

The city has, over the centuries, seen first, Arab traders, then Portuguese and Dutch settlers. But it's the British colonial period which has left the most enduring mark and which you'd notice most easily. Some of the old street names, the architecture of course, the preponderance of English spoken....these are the clues, but now all this is changing. 1998 is Sri Lanka's 50th year since Independence and Colombo is ready for a new day! New tower blocks are as common (and as anonymous) as those in any modern city; street names and

billboards are now in Sinhalese and Tamil as well as English, the numbers of cars are growing at a huge rate, straining the infrastructure to the limit, and new companies are holding their own international markets. Even 'Kentucky Fried Chicken' has come to town!

History

A wide variety of colonial powers all had their influence on Colombo's development; the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British who made the area famous for its tea plantations. The island gained its independence in 1948.

The capital of Sri Lanka has witnessed some of the worst of the violence in the country's civil war, including the assassination of President Premadasa in 1993 by a suicide bomber and major terrorist bomb attacks in 1996. The war has been going on since 1983, and over 50,000 people have been killed, and 1.5 million displaced. A military end to the conflict between the majority

Sinhalese and the minority Tamils may be in sight, but the country is still very unstable.

First Impressions by David and Sue Jackson

On arrival in the country, the first thing that struck us was the traffic and the fact that there are so many people everywhere! Driving on the roads is rather like driving on a city-wide dodgem track - but, of course, the object of the exercise is to miss, and not to hit! The other 'traffic' is a mixture of dilapidated cars (that wouldn't go near an MOT test), sparkling limousines, vans full to overflowing, lorries in various states of repair, ancient buses "belching black smoke and driven by lunatics" that have people hanging precariously from all angles at the doors and on the steps (and packed like sardines inside), motorised trishaws, bicycles, motorbikes (all



Far left : Architecture old and new, York Street, Colombo. Cargills Ceylon Ltd is in the foreground, and the World Trade Centre twin towers in the background.

Left : Colombo lottery ticket seller

Below left : Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church, Colombo - at one of the city's busiest junctions

Below: Colombo Town Hall - based on the White House!

Creative Driving in Colombo's morning rush hour.

weaving in and out of the mayhem), bullock carts, pedestrians in the middle of the road with no apparent thought for life or limb and, of course, a selection of cows and other animals. Beginning to drive was really quite frightening for us both, but gradually we have got used to the hustle and bustle and the noise all around as everyone seems to be in competition as to who can sound his horn the loudest and longest.

A Walk Around the Town

Not as glitzy as Hong Kong, not as scenic as Rio, and nowhere near as romantic as Paris, but Colombo has a dash of just about everything!

It has a million people to start with, and although you wouldn't meet all of them, you'd feel you had! The old city is very crowded. You'd also look out to the Indian Ocean and see twenty or thirty huge container ships waiting to berth - this is one of the best and the busiest ports in Asia. You'd see the twin towers of the World Trade Centre, how they exude confidence in the country's ability to be prosperous, though the boarded, bomb-damaged windows bear testimony to the war that haunts this island nation.

Elsewhere there are narrow alleyways packed with traders selling their wares; the noise, the colours and the apparent disorder contrasting with one or two recently opened malls which may offer convenience and air-conditioning but

never the character or the prices of the alleyways!

Be prepared for the odd surprise too - a single 1940s red double decker still plies its route, alongside the ubiquitous trishaws, the Toyota vans, and even a Rolls Royce - yes, one has been seen!

Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church is at the heart of one of the busiest junctions in town. A couple of hundred yards away stands the impressive Town Hall glistening white against the



sky. Behind that is the Viharamahadevi Park. The park is like a lung in the middle of the city. Opposite the church, is the National Hospital which is one of the biggest in this part of Asia, and next to that is the Eye Hospital. Buses from all over the city and the more distant places roar by until they come to a crawl in the dense traffic build-up. Street vendors ply their goods to the passing crowds. The immediate neighbour to the church is a mosque whose Immam calls the faithful to prayer beginning at 4.45 am. The last call is about 8.00 pm. The mosque



Colombo



amplifier is more powerful than it's neighbour's. We are in a cacophany of sound. Prostitution and drug trafficking have long been part of the scene.

Culture

Colombo is culturally mixed. Official signs are in three languages: Sinhala, Tamil and English, and, as well as the two main races (Sinhalese and Tamils), there are descendants of the Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch and British. It is a tragedy that ethnic suspicions and jealousies are blighting a society which this year celebrates 50 years of independence from colonial rule, and which could, in theory, be a showcase of inter-racial tolerance.

Religious Life

If it's religion you want – the world is before you! There's plenty of churches (Catholic, Methodist and Dutch Reformed as well as Baptist), hundreds of Buddhist temples, and a few mosques. With Buddhism as the major state religion, the numbers of Christians



Colombo World Trade Centre - the foreground is the Galadari Hotel, scene of the last major bomb in October 1997. Boarded windows bear testimony to the damage



Colombo City Mosque – attached at the far end is the Community Centre building of Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church

Colombo's sole remaining London bus

declined in previous centuries but over the last ten years, despite some discrimination against Christians, and Christianity's portrayal as a foreign, colonial religion, church numbers are rising again.

The cultural mix is obvious in religion also. Buddhist shrines are found in almost every street, but there are also Hindu temples, Muslim mosques and Christian churches.

Most of the country's population are Buddhist, with only 7.5 per cent of people Christians. Only one per cent of the population are evangelical Christians.

Church Life

The churches in Colombo are very 'English' in everything from the buildings and pews, to the structure of the services and the hymns used. This is very different from churches in villages which are far smaller and have fewer people fluent in English.

People coming from other parts of the world where worship is exuberant, even flamboyant, can have difficulty adapting to the style of worship in the Baptist

churches. In everyday life, perhaps as part of the Buddhist way, many Sri Lankans seem to hide their emotions and feelings.

Outreach

The fellowship at Cinnamon Gardens has been engaged in the challenge of trying to practice what is preached through the ongoing ministry of God's Word. Some years ago a community project building was put up for the purpose of serving the area around the church. This is the Dev Piya Sevana building which is right next to the mosque. At present there is a sewing class, a basic computer skills course and a street children's education programme. Beyond this ongoing work, the Board envisages a food outlet, a handyman's course in house repairs, accommodation for people visiting the hospitals and a hostel for working girls whose work is nearby. All this will be costly to run, so the rest of the building will have offices on rent. At present a bank and an insurance company are using part of the building. ●



The Democratic Republic of CONGO



Though the clock said only 185 miles, you can take it from me that it was a very long way. Two days by Land Rover.

Destination? Mampu, an EEC agro-forestry project. Stay there and visit the church at Kinzono and a new group at Nsuni. Team? Evangelist Mputu, Belesi, Isabelle and Sylvie to work with the Kinzono women, and ourselves.

Complication? The little matter of the bridges over the Mai-Ndombe and Lufimi rivers being blown up. So, along with commercial lorries and the odd four-wheel drive, we'd have to take the dirt road leading to a ferry across the

Mai-Ndombe. Below their conflux, this would take us beyond both rivers. Then plough on from there.

In fact, a tractor might not have been a bad idea! Heavy rains had filled all the holes in the road, and driving conditions were atrocious. Water, water everywhere, and mud, mud, glorious mud!

Lorries digging themselves out on hills or broken down in the narrow road enforced frequent detours through the bush and scrub. At last, with a fine view of the Congo river to the left, we wormed our way down the winding, sandy hill past numerous stuck vehicles, whose sweaty, digging crews shouted that we'd never make it, to a village by the water's edge. Thirty miles in five hours!

At 5 o'clock rain had stopped the ferry. Two rooms in a grass-roofed, mud hut, each with just enough room to enter and put a bag beside the crude bed, allowed four of us to at least stretch out. Neither sleep nor privacy were enhanced by the blaring radio, loud chatter, a quarrel and heavy snoring. Mputu and Belesi, on a cold, moonlight-bright night, curled up in the vehicle, and fended off the mosquitoes till dawn.

First on the ferry, we paid the fee and gave five litres of fuel. Across by 8 o'clock, we were soon up the road and stuck in sand. A Toyota heading for

Tshikapa gave a hand. Lost them somewhere in the grass and scrub around 10 o'clock. On the road again we pressed on, stopping in a forest, at midday for a picnic.

About to set off again, lo and behold, the Toyota. We followed at our own pace. Out in the open, overlooking a broad valley, they were glimpsed descending to the forest where, no doubt, a stream ran. Sure enough, they climbed out as we reached the sandy ford, having tested its depth first. Up the other side, a mile along the ridge, we caught them again, at a fork in the road. Scratching their heads. No signpost and no-one around. Which way to go? No good asking us - we're new here too.

The right fork disappeared down towards the river again. Tracks could be seen climbing the hill the other side. The left fork was nondescript. The Toyota opted to go left, and the majority said, "Follow them!" Unfortunately we did.

Miles further on, a man said we were on the right road. He must have misunderstood. Only when we had climbed to the top of a ridge and had a clear view of the road descending a gentle valley and stretching straight ahead, eastwards, as far as the eye could see, were we sure that this wasn't it. A traveller on foot soon confirmed our

Deanna Clark on the road to Mampu



Nsuni village - evangelistic campaign

A very long way

Was it worth it?
Only at the end of the next
eight days would it be possible to
say unequivocally, "Yes!"



Evangelist Mputu and team, Nsuni village evangelistic campaign - the repentant kneel for prayer

diagnosis. Too late! Keep going, he said, and when you hit the Kikwit-Bandundu road turn right. Thus were 50 unnecessary miles added to the journey.

We reached Mampu after dark, about half-past six, battered by ten hours of travel, shattered and either travel-sick or sick of travel. Find the watchman, open the house, unload our stuff, scramble some supper and flop into bed. Was it worth it? Only at the end of the next eight days would it be possible to say unequivocally, "Yes!"

A service of thanksgiving for safekeeping during the recent troubles was held at Kinzono on the Sunday, followed by a three-day evangelistic campaign in the late afternoons. Commitments to Christ were made or renewed. On Thursday we left Izabelle and Sylvie to meet the Kinzono women, but only two turned up. Others were collecting caterpillars, it being the season for this item of diet. Survival comes first!

Another three-day campaign at Nsuni, where a group of Christians, from the village and from a nearby farm, but with

no specific affiliation, had asked for help, again produced a good response. During conversations we agreed with them how to organise their fellowship and activities, and what programme to follow. For days we had been praying that it wouldn't rain, while the local farmers had been praying that it would. As it happened we won, and the road had largely dried out. Leaving at 7 o'clock on Monday, on the right road, we were at the ferry by midday and, now covered with a film of dust, would you believe, at

the main, tarmac road by 4 o'clock. From there plain sailing all the way home.

Certainly the journey back had been a lot shorter, but the enduring impression left by that trip is that, if you want to get to Mampu by that road, it's a very long way. ●



A
28-19
ACTION
TEAMS

à mustard seed



The problems of life in Calcutta can totally overwhelm you - child labour, unbelievable poverty, living and dying on the streets, slum conditions which breed fatal diseases, an epidemic of drug addiction and widespread prostitution are a few of them. Can you imagine

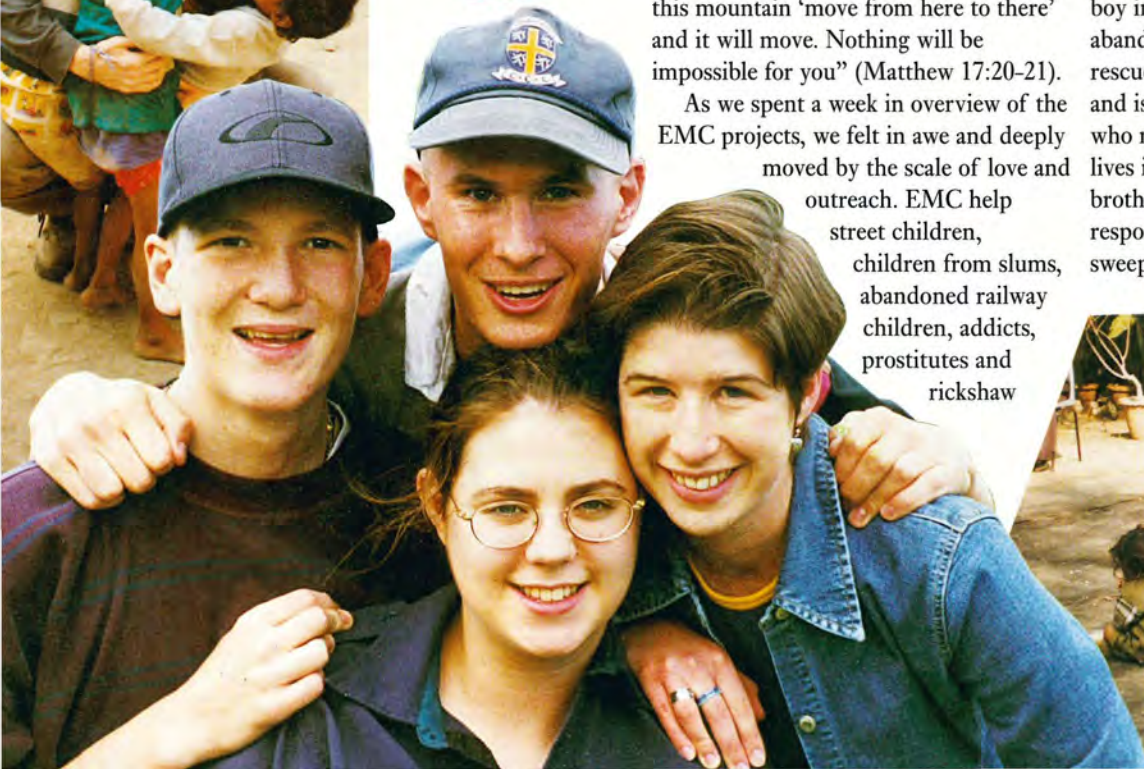
any magic solution to bring hope and justice to the millions who are enslaved to this way of life? Emmanuel Ministries Calcutta (EMC) are by no means magicians but their work epitomises Jesus' teaching: "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain 'move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20-21).

As we spent a week in overview of the EMC projects, we felt in awe and deeply moved by the scale of love and outreach. EMC help street children, children from slums, abandoned railway children, addicts, prostitutes and rickshaw

pullers. Organisation is rather manic and "Indian", but the priority which shines through is the time they lay aside for people. Children at the Pavement Club crave affection, desperately jumping on you until you are literally buried beneath them. The children who have experienced all that EMC offer for any length of time, despite all their problems, glow with a sparkle in their eye and a smile that is both challenging and reflects a restored potential for a future. Background and problems are irrelevant, as Mrs Pavamani says, their role is to remain "unshockable" and to love and accept in a totally non-judgmental way, grace which God has largely endowed them with. We have been humbled by the hospitality and simplicity of those living in the slum areas.

The individuality of those the mission reaches out to is tremendously powerful. Each has a story, such as the youngest boy in the Pauline Bhevan home for abandoned railway children. He was rescued from the railway at 18 months and is now four. He calls Victor, the man who runs the home "daddy". He now lives in a stable community with several brothers, is bright, happy and is learning responsibilities as he takes his turn in sweeping, cleaning, and attends the

1997/1998 India Action Team



in a city

Calcutta Emmanuel School. Mrs Pavamani says "those who society threw away, God picked up".

"Those society threw away, God picked up".

Emmanuel Ministries Calcutta was born when in true Abraham-like fashion, Vijayan Pavamani gave up the security of his job back in 1971 and with his wife opened their home for those in distress as a befriending, listening and counselling service (and 65 people appeared on the lawn the next day) The secular work of Calcutta Samaritans continued to grow, addressing addicts needs, initially by hosting them in the Pavamani's home and offering love and acceptance, growing to the development of the first rehabilitation homes in the area. The Pavamani's vision in this area is quite

extraordinary; they responded to a need unrecognised by agencies and the government until at least a decade later.

The ministry continued to grow in response to the situations that the Pavamani's encountered on a daily basis and felt burdened to change. For example the school for underprivileged children, who could not afford the standard fee in Calcutta schools, began with only ten children. Those teaching realised the intense hunger of the pupils, and built in free school meals. Today the school has expanded to over three hundred. The "Pavement Club" for street children literally began with Vijayan having tea and befriending children. Now a feeding, washing and informal educational and recreational project exists with plans to expand it to five hundred, pending a suitable building and in order to meet the growing need.

Calcutta as a whole is a warm and friendly city and the people's ingenuity and courage are truly an example to us all. It is unique in many ways, embracing its own characteristics. However, it also contains many typical aspects of city life, and so is universal. Can you respond to the needs you see around you, wherever you are in the world? It only requires faith as small as a mustard seed! ●

Louise, Sarah, Jon and David are the four members of the 1997/98 India Action Team



Where are they now?

...Rachel Stephenson

RACHEL STEPHENSON (Nepal and Thailand 93/94) was part of a team of four girls who divided their time between the Gandaki Boarding School in Pokhara, Nepal and the New Life Centre in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

She remembers with joy the honesty and affection she shared with other team members. "The time that I spent away has influenced me and my life in countless ways. It has given me an amazing focus for my life: to serve God wherever I am, however I can".

After a year in university, a summer placement found Rachel back in Asia, leading bible studies, preaching and singing. On one occasion, she even tried to explain the principles of engineering to a class of girls who spoke about two sentences of English (and seven different Indian languages) between them!

For Rachel this was confirmation of her call to India: "I did not think for one minute that it would be easy to give up all that life offers me here but I knew that I had to trust my whole future to God including where I should be."

While she waits for the right opportunity to return to the subcontinent, Rachel is spearheading outreach into her university - starting with the Christian Union Freshers' Week programme, encouraging new students to hear God's call on their lives.



Prayer focus



ASIA



Ruth Bartlett
Surkhet Nepal

Please pray for Ruth who went out to Nepal in December 1997 as a BMS volunteer under the Barnabas Project following many months of prayer for a visa to come through. Ruth is working with the International Nepal Fellowship (INF) as a primary school teacher - something of a challenge as her previous experience has been with middle school aged children. There are eleven pupils in the school, all the children of English, American and Dutch INF or UMN (United Mission to Nepal) workers.

Please pray:

- for a quick adjustment to Nepali life and language and for complete dependence on God
- for good relationships with the children, colleagues and local Nepalis
- that Ruth would enjoy the experience and benefit from it herself

BRAZIL



Peggy and Frank Gouthwaite
Salvador, BRAZIL

The Gouthwaite's are involved in helping their local community in a number of ways. Peggy has been sharing Bible stories at a community centre primary school attached to their church. The children there have all failed several years of schooling and are rebellious, sceptical and feel hopeless.

Frank has been having discussions with local Baptist leaderships on new initiatives - often slow work, but they have agreed on two priorities for 1998. The first is to reactivate the N Betel community centre. The church named a committee to work with Frank and at the first meeting he found six of the seven members had never been to the centre.

The second project is to produce a book of songs and choruses to raise awareness of Christian social responsibility. This will be circulated amongst the ninety churches in the local Association

together with a planned tape featuring groups from the various churches.

Please pray:

- for support from others as Frank seeks to fulfil the Baptist leadership's decision to reactivate the community centre
- for guidance as to Peggy's future involvement with the school children
- that the song book could be used as a catalyst to deepen the theology and active faith of the Association's church members

encourage new people.

Stuart and Joyce's church used to meet in their house but has now outgrown this. After a long period of searching they have been granted permission to rent a building three Sundays per month but still need a home for the other Sunday and for midweek. At present, 40-50 adults plus children meet each Sunday and the church are praying this will double by the end of the year.

Of their work Stuart and Joyce say: "Reaching out to folk and loving them....is a slow and sometimes exhausting task. It is so easy to get disappointed because folks, including believers, seem so reluctant to go on with God - but there are some encouragements too! We are so thankful to the Lord for the privilege of working with these folks and seeing how their contagious love is reaching out to others."

EUROPE



Stuart and Joyce Filby
Ostende, BELGIUM

Church planting is difficult work in Belgium although some of the pressures have eased since the Baptist Union was finally accepted as an official denomination by the Belgian government in December 1997. Before that, Baptists were considered to be a cult, making it difficult to

Please pray:

- for health - Joyce has had several months of ill health and Stuart is very tired
- for a permanent solution to the problem of a meeting place
- that God would encourage new and not so new believers to grow in him continually



News from BMS colleagues and partners around the world to complement the BMS Prayer Guide



**28:19 Italian Action Team
Barletta, ITALY**

The Action Team scheme began in 1990 with just one team of six people. This year sees 31 young people based in Italy, France, Portugal, India, Zimbabwe, Brazil, UK and Thailand. The overseas teams return to the UK in April so they are now beginning the difficult task of preparing to leave behind the people who have become family over the past few months.

Jenny, Katrina, Dave and Andy are working in Italy and they speak of the incredible welcome they have been given by everyone at the Barletta church where they are based. The church is small, consisting of around 30 people, 20 of whom are members of the same family.

The team have been involved in every aspect of church life, particularly in the music and working with the youth group and have been able to build good friendships as well as being seen as 'leaders'. Many of the young people come to church with

their parents and it is often difficult to tell what their level of personal commitment is so it has been an important witness for our young people to speak about this year they have each chosen to dedicate to our Lord.

Please pray:

- that each team would see good fruit from their efforts in their final month overseas
- every team member will experience reverse culture shock, pray their families and friends would be able to deal with this sensitively and pray for wisdom for those who will be involved in the debriefing process
- pray the teams would have good, creative ideas for their tour
- pray for the UK churches making preparations for the teams to visit them in May and June

BRAZIL



**Andy and Linda Eaves
Fortaleza, BRAZIL**

The Eaves work with the people of the Railway Favela

(so named as it stretches alongside a railway track) through a social action project run by the first Baptist Church of Fortaleza. The project is becoming an active presence in the community, and will ultimately be part of a larger charity which the church is presently trying to set up.

Alongside this project, many other initiatives have sprung up, begun by the Eaves or by church members. A card-making business begun by Linda seems to have taken off. She invested in some craft tools whilst in the UK and has since been teaching some of the women from the favela to make cards which are then sold in both Brazil and the UK. Another initiative is soup distribution which was begun one day a week by two church members. Andy has since taken over the organisation and now 65 families in the favela receive hot soup three times a week. It is hard work but Andy finds it an excellent contact point with the people. As well as this, he is also compiling a list of the unemployed who participate in the church's project, trying to match them up with employers looking for workers.

Taken individually, these

projects may seem small scale but to the people receiving help, they can be valued beyond measure. In these circumstances, they are also the clearest way to show the love of God.

Please pray:

- for opportunities for church members to speak naturally of Jesus as they reach out physically
- that church members will be motivated to help wherever they can
- strength for Andy and Linda to carry out their work, they also have two young children - Lucy and Isabel
- more God-inspired initiatives to meet the physical needs of the people in the favelas

**Around
the world**

No 'Foreign' Mission

In "News" on page 8 of the January/February 1998 issue of *mb*, reporting the nomination of Revd Andrew Rigden Green as the next Vice-President of BMS, we read of his vision to make a connection "between evangelism and foreign mission". That word "foreign" leapt

out at me, because I recall so well the late Revd E G Rudman (Holland Road Baptist Church, Hove, 1947-1972), one of the wisest sages and spiritually-motivated ministers the Baptist Union has produced this century, declaring his abhorrence of this word in connection with Christian

mission. He, rightly in my view, held that this word was not in the vocabulary of God, and that our Lord Jesus Christ made it clear that "the field is the world" (Matt 13:38) and commanded his disciples to "go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15). It is note-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

abolishing the institution by
New Vice-President announced
Revd Andrew Rigden Green, Senior Pastor at Lipton Vale Baptist Church, Torquay has been nominated as the next Vice-President of BMS for the year 1998/99, which will result in him becoming BMS President leading up to the Millennium 1999/2000.
The voting for the new Vice-President is usually taken at the following March General Committee, but because of the strategic nature of this important year, and the need to plan ahead for the future...

The Church's Real Work

I do not know if Joao's letters (Jan/Feb 1998 *mb*) were real or just an editorial ploy to get correspondence flowing, but to my mind Joao had the best of the exchange. The Good News of the Gospel is that mankind has been saved from the consequence of its own spiritual and moral follies. Mankind's essential response (so often omitted in the current emphasis on the love of God) is repentance. This firmly anchors the transaction in the spiri-

tual realm, because the offer is salvation from sin, not from social ills. Good works, individual or collectively as Social Justice, are the outward and visible sign of the Holy Spirit, and are in no way to be despised or neglected, but they are a secondary manifestation of that Spirit. If the primacy of the spiritual condition of humanity is not acknowledged, then we become secular humanists with our concern centred not on

God, but on man. We become in fact identical with the world, focused upon 'Issues' and 'Rights'. The church, over-anxious to be popular, has gladly but mistakenly taken this view as its own. It has become a fellow-traveller with the secular, considering the journey as applied Christianity. But a vision restricted to human desires is not applied Christianity; it is applied materialism. Joao has recognised a danger of which Philip

Clements-Jewery seems unaware. It is certainly condescending of him to dismiss Joao's insight that the only real struggle is spiritual as shallow or an easy opt-out from the "real" work of the church. *Baptist Praise and Worship* may have been carefully cleansed of any hymns which have a militaristic theme, but nevertheless the spiritual battle is still paramount. Joao, in the front line, is well aware of that. ■
Yours faithfully
K W Anstey
Rugby, Warwickshire.

Dear Joao
The Bible teaches us that God wants justice and righteousness on earth as well as the salvation of our souls. I'm sorry if you think that sounds like Marxist teaching. As Creator, God gave us bodies and spirit as well as souls. It's for the BMS to put justice and peace alongside other concerns at the heart of its missionary strategy. A purely spiritual gospel can be too abstract, but what he said and did was also very disturbing for people who were too comfortable.
Yours in the service of the Gospel,
Philip

How are you doing with the Nestlé boycott?

This advertisement for Nestlé products was spotted and photographed in inner city Patan, Nepal by Jo Harding of Oldham.



The world's biggest cities:

Population millions, latest year

1	Seoul	10.80
2	Bombay	9.93
3	Sao Paulo	9.84
4	Rio de Janeiro	9.84
5	Shanghai	8.76
6	Moscow	8.75
7	Mexico	8.24
8	Jakarta	8.22
9	Tokyo	7.83
10	Istanbul	7.33

The world's highest urban population:

% of population living in urban areas, latest year

1	Bermuda	100
2	Singapore	100
3	Guadeloupe	99
4	Macau	99
5	Kuwait	97
6	Hong Kong	95
7	Martinique	93
8	Venezuela	93
9	Iceland	91
10	Qatar	91

The world's lowest urban population:

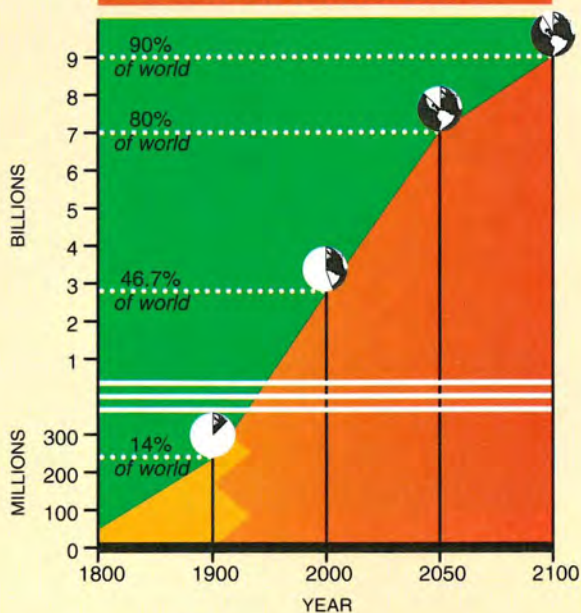
% of population living in urban areas, latest year

1	Bhutan	6
2	Rwanda	6
3	Burundi	8
4	Ethiopia	13
5	Oman	13
6	Uganda	13
7	Malawi	14
8	Nepal	14
9	Papua New Guinea	16
10	Niger	17

Urban Populations in Countries with BMS links

Albania	35%
Angola	28%
Bangladesh	16%
Belgium	97%
Brazil	75%
Central African Republic	47%
Democratic Republic of Congo	40%
El Salvador	44%
France	74%
India	27%
Indonesia	31%
Italy	69%
Nepal	14%
Nicaragua	60%
Portugal	34%
Sri Lanka	21%
Thailand	23%
UK	89%
Zimbabwe	28%

THE RISE OF URBAN POPULATION



The Bible and Cities

- Gen 4:17** The first mention of a city in the Bible - Cain built a city
- Gen 11:4** The city of Babel - the focus of human pride
- Num 35:6-15, Josh 20** Cities of refuge
- 2 Sam 5** Jerusalem - the city of David
- Luke 19:41** Jesus wept over Jerusalem
- Rev 21** History ends with a city, the new Jerusalem

“**T**hen I saw a new earth (with no oceans!) and a new sky, for the present earth and sky had disappeared. And I, John, saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. It was a glorious sight, beautiful as a bride at her wedding. I heard a loud shout from the throne saying, ‘Look, the home of God is now among men, and he will live with them and they will be his people; yes, God himself will be among them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. All of that has gone forever.’”

(Rev 21:1-4, Living Bible)

**TAKE
2**

Take 2
a resource for
church leaders
& workers

RESOURCES for leaders

CUT & DETATCH

7 REASONS WHY I DON'T SUPPORT WORLD MISSION

(And seven reasons why you should)

by Fred Stainthorpe

1

I'm not interested in it

God does not expect us to be interested in world mission. He expects our obedience. We choose our interests and hobbies, and we can indulge in them whenever we wish. Mission, however, is an obligation. Jesus told us to go into all the world. He has never withdrawn nor lessened this command. On the last day he will not ask what we thought about mission, but what we did about it.

2

I don't know much about it

Neither did the apostles until the day of Pentecost! Up to that point they were concerned entirely with their own nation, but the Holy Spirit inspired them to preach first to Jews, then to Gentiles, and gradually the Church spread. As communications and education have improved, so it is now much easier to gather information about overseas mission. BMS has a wealth of resources available for you to tap into, for a start! Nobody need remain ignorant.

3

There is enough Christian work for us to do in this country

This seems to be true at first sight, but the Church here only exists because Christians long ago took the opposite point of view. They heard of these islands and said, "Jesus has told us to go there also". Without their wider outlook, there would be no Christians here to do any work. Christian resources in terms of personnel, material goods and money are vastly greater here than in many other countries. Is it fair to keep it all to ourselves? Whoever makes this excuse is busy sawing off the branch on which they are sitting.

4

Our Church leaders aren't interested

You're not the only one to say this! Even pastors and elders can suffer from myopic glaucoma (or short-sighted tunnel vision). However they are just as responsible to

Jesus as we are, and probably more so. Start praying for them, and ask God to give them a wider vision. Then ask them to promote world mission more, and ask them how your church can become more involved in World Mission Link.

5

I thought that missionaries were not needed any more

It is true that in many countries the pioneer stage of missions is over. Others have hacked their way through the jungle and mapped the rivers. Now national leaders have emerged to shepherd the church, but they still need specialised help in areas like theological training, medical work, agricultural and social projects. Young churches themselves need to gain a missionary vision; some countries are hardly touched by the gospel and churches in other countries are crying out for help. There is little likelihood of missionaries having to haunt Job Centres.

6

I'm afraid of what I would let myself in for

At least you're being very honest! Often our reasons for not supporting missions are cover-ups. We feel that God may want us to get involved in mission and we fear the cost. How much will we lose out if we obey a missionary call? Yet missionary experience has shown that in giving out anything for him will get back far more. We actually lose out by refusing to obey the call if and when it comes.

7

We need missionaries in this country too

True, Britain has certainly stopped being a Christian country if ever it was one. Paganism and scepticism have grown (but whose fault is this?) We do need to be missionaries to our own people. Is this reason merely an excuse to get others to do what we are unwilling to do ourselves?

The WAY I SEE IT



ANOTHER EXTRACT FROM THE (WHOLLY IMAGINARY) PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE OF **PHILIP CLEMENTS-JEWERY**

DEAR MARGARET

How are things now where you are? I read in my newspaper the other day that economically the country is going from bad to worse with raging inflation and shortages of almost everything. I also gather that the recent change of Government hasn't really made all that much difference. What I wonder is, couldn't the churches have had more influence so that the country didn't get into the state it is? Christians make up quite a high proportion of the population, but that doesn't seem to have had much effect on the life of the nation as such. As a missionary, what is your perspective on the situation? Please write again soon.

Yours,

Philip

DEAR PHILIP

Thanks for your letter. It's good to know that you have us here in your thoughts and prayers. It's actually very difficult to persuade the leaders of the church in this country that they ought to seek to influence the Government. Partly that's because they want to make a complete separation between Christianity and politics; partly it's because they have freedom at present to proclaim the gospel and they don't want to endanger that; and partly it's because some of them have relatives in high positions in the civil service and they don't want them to lose their jobs. The situation doesn't seem as simple as it might from Britain.

Yours in Christ,

Margaret

DEAR MARGARET

I understand the sensitive position that the national Christians feel themselves to be in, but behind it might there not have been a failure of missionary policy? In the past (and still today) we've preached the gospel, given medical help to the sick, taught modern agricultural methods, provided schooling for the young and so on but the one thing we never thought of doing is educate the people for democracy. It does seem to me that this sort of thing ought to be a vital part of the church's contribution to the life of developing countries. I would have thought that participation in church meetings ought to have been an excellent preparation in citizenship, but maybe the connection was never pointed out. It may not, after all, be so surprising that corruption is endemic over there and that one dictatorship is followed by another. However, I believe that the new regime has yet to settle in fully and gain the support and trust of the people, so could the situation be turned around? Do let me know how things work out

Your fellow-worker in the gospel,

Philip

Action Card

Middle East focus

Some Christians may be puzzled as to why this, evidently Muslim building, features in the church-sponsored Action Card series. Apart from making a dramatic impact, the Dome of the Rock represents - one might say embodies - the claim of the Palestinian people to be treated as equals (not better) in the land which is genuinely home to both Israeli and Palestinian. Nor should we write 'Jew and Muslim' at that point. For not all Israeli citizens are Jews; paradoxically nearly one million are Arabs. Nor are all Palestinians Muslim. Around 2 percent of them, about half still living in Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories, are Christians.

The routine closing off of Jerusalem to Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza is a matter of economic injustice, moral dubiety and political desperation as well as being personally destructive of many lives and livelihoods. The city is simply out of bounds for trade, health care, family get-togethers and, of course, for prayers at this central mosque. To punish a whole people for the (undoubted) evil actions of a few is like imposing a curfew on the Bogside because some bombers live there or confining black South Africans to the townships for similar reasons. Hamas and the other terror organisations will not be defeated by counter-terror; security for Israel



depends on peace with justice for all.

It is understandable that even such equitable support for Palestinians, whether Christian or Muslim, draws so much antagonism from so many European and American Christians for whom Israel represents still the Jewish people who have suffered so much that we must not criticise them at all. If you would like to offer a word of hope to beleaguered fellow Christians, send your message (better in an envelope, not as an open postcard) to Nora Carmi, Administrator, Sabeel Christian Centre, PO Box 1248, Jerusalem, Israel. ●

BMS, Baptist Union, Christians Aware, Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, United Reformed Church.

Does your Church want a piece of the UK Action?

BMS is looking for ONE MONTH placements in churches beginning October 1998 until April 1999 for the next UK Action Team. The Team this year will consist of four young people, three from overseas and one from the UK, normally two females, and two males aged between 18 - 25. They are a creative and lively group of young people whose desire is to work with children and young people, and raise an exciting awareness of mission. The Team is trained and equipped with resources for them to work with your children and your youth groups, your assemblies and schools, your Sunday school classes

and your youth weekends. We ask that you host the Team and provide a programme for them for a month or longer, if possible.

in your church, or in a number of churches in your area. We only ask that their host home could be the same for the duration.

This year's UK Team, complete with guitar and conga drums, puppets and overheads, dramas and songs, have been working with schools and churches, and leading Sunday services. They have continually proved to have been a real blessing to everyone wherever they have gone, and BMS is very proud of them.

You've heard of the 28:19 Action Teams, and you probably know that BMS sent seven Action Teams overseas during 1997/1998, but did you know that there is an Action Team based in the UK ready and waiting for you to use?

Fiona Pimlott, Youth and Children's Co-ordinator is responsible for the UK Team placements, so please call her for more information on 01235 512077, or get in touch with your local BMS Co-ordinator.

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CHARITY COMMISSION

Charity ANGOLA AND DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF CONGO MEDICAL FUND

Scheme for the regulation of the Charity

Reference: AS/27959/CD(T)

The Charity Commissioners have made a Scheme for this charity. A copy can be seen for the next month at the Baptist Missionary Society, P O Box 49, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 8XA or a copy can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to The Charity Commission, Woodfield House, Tangier, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 4BL, quoting the reference above.

Checkout

Missionary Movements

MARCH

Arrivals

David & Janet Kerrigan from Colombo
Derek & Joanna Punched from
Curitiba

Departures

David & Janet Kerrigan to Colombo

APRIL

Arrivals

Jenny Dorman from Kathmandu
John & Lesley Moody from Curitiba

Departures

Derek & Joanna Punched to Curitiba
David & Catherine McLellan to
Kathmandu

Why is it that some people seem to have one set of rules for themselves and a different set for other people? This phenomenon often manifests itself and I have yet to experience an occasion when it has brought God's blessing and positive results.

The Last Word

While visiting one church I was criticised strongly by a certain lady who felt that I wasn't being spiritual enough in carrying myself and everyone else to a permanent mountain top experience. It was her opinion that I was being hampered by demons. Shortly afterwards this same lady led what we would call the "Ladies bright Hour" group on a ramble, to hold a prayer meeting in the shade of the town water tank. There the glory of the Lord would come down, and they were guaranteed a mountain-top experience. The water tank, whose shape puts one in mind of a flying saucer, was supported on concrete pillars about 60 feet high. Because of constantly dripping water, there was a lush growth of plants and bushes beneath it and lots of wildlife, including tree frogs. Tree frogs are fascinating little creatures, some of them brightly coloured, all of them olympic jumpers and possessing little suction cups on their feet.

Arriving at the vicinity of

the water tank, our good lady formed up her group in a circle around her, then, in order to prepare the ground for their spiritual experience, she demanded that if Satan were present, then he should manifest himself, presumably so that they could exorcise him. Almost immediately she began to jump up and down screeching loudly enough to threaten the very foundations of the water tower whilst her companions began to beat her with their Bibles to drive out what they felt to be a demonic presence.

It turned out that one of the bug-eyed, suction-footed, olympic jumpers had broken

"...her companions began to beat her with their Bibles to drive out what they felt to be a demonic presence."

all records and had hit the jackpot, diving straight down the front of her dress. Needless to say the meeting broke up without having reached the mountain top.

Later, when I innocently inquired how the meeting had gone, suggesting that it was dangerous to ask Satan to manifest himself, she replied, "Oh no Pastor, it was only a little tree frog!" Applying one

set of rules to ourselves and a different set for others can lead us into all sorts of situations where we justify ourselves and condemn others.

Recently, a lady from Potinga made us all laugh. It had been raining heavily in the mountains and within hours, the swollen rivers reaching the valley caused many homes and farmsteads to be flooded. This particular lady risked her life, entering the racing flood waters to rescue her fowls. She made it safely back to high ground only to have it pointed out to her that she had saved 16 ducks and left her chickens to the mercy of the waters! The ducks were protesting at having been rescued!

Perhaps instead of laughing we ought to consider what we would have done in a similar situation, under pressure. Aren't we perhaps applying a double set of rules? I wouldn't be fool enough to do what she did. If the truth be known, I would probably have managed to drown the ducks and myself as well, which is what I think we do when we thoughtlessly criticise others. ●



ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH PRENTICE

GERRY MYHILL

Gerry Myhill is a BMS missionary working in Antonina, Brazil



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Tickets and more information can be obtained from your local BMS Co-ordinator, or call head office on 01235 512077 and ask to speak to Ruth Berry. Tickets cost £4.00 each (concessions for the unemployed and students at £3.50 with ID). A group of eight coming to Take the Risk will receive the eighth ticket free. So this is a Risk you can afford to Take.

Take the RiSK, CS Dept, BMS, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA.

