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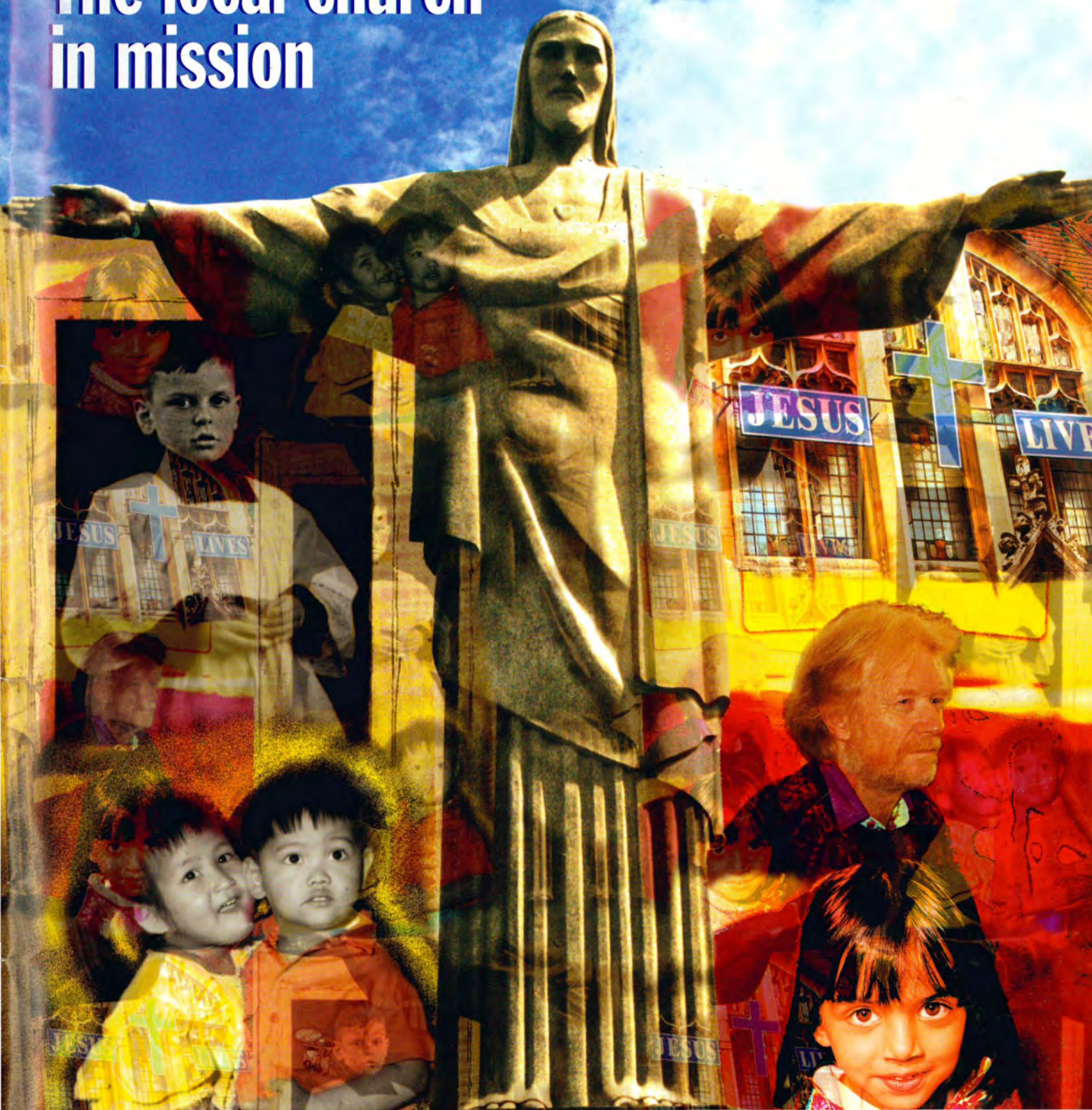
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The local church in mission



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THIS ISSUE
THE LOCAL CHURCH IN MISSION



Jan Kendall

What do you think of when you see a heading like "The local church in mission"?

Excitement and anticipation at seeing God at work?
A feeling of "Oh no, this might require me to do something!"?
Pleasure that someone somewhere else is doing something for the Kingdom?
Or a kind of smugness that all these enthusiasts are "Not in my back yard"?

Well, sorry to disappoint you if you went along with any of the last three thoughts, because this issue of *mb* shows that mission isn't just "over there"; it's here, in our "back yards" too, and it's being done by ordinary people like you and me.

That's why real-life Kingdom-building accounts of what mission-minded people are doing in London and Shetland have been included as part of our features section.

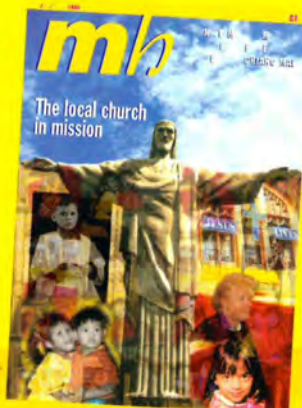
As *mb* columnist Mike Pilavachi said at the recent Baptist Assembly in Blackpool, mission is not blinking at people in Sainsbury's and seeing them instantly getting converted. It doesn't mean that we will have an easier life.

Being mission-minded could be back breaking, thirst making, time consuming, physically demanding, hand dirtying, emotionally devastating, faith challenging, socially draining, prayer stretching, feet aching, risk taking, heart searching and dangerous! It could well cut across your well-thought-out hopes and ambitions.

But mission is the essence of the heart of God. And I'm sure, like King David in the Old Testament, we are seeking to be people after God's own heart.

This issue also contains an eight-page pull-out section featuring the BMS/Operation Agri Harvest Appeal "A harvest of health". Although we've included a lot of information to help you plan your harvest later this year, there's also a wealth of goodies you can send for as part of your celebrations.

Jan



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NEXT ISSUE SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER
THE CHALLENGE OF OTHER FAITHS



Iraq

The Bible Society in Jordan has been given permission to distribute 200,000 New Testaments to christian students in Iraq, the first time that such a large distribution to schoolchildren has been allowed. Jamal Hashweh, the General Secretary of the Bible Society in Jordan said: "This is a wonderful opportunity in the biblical land of Babylon to provide copies of the New Testament so that christian students can study about Jesus for themselves." (Bib Soc)

Spain

Christians in Spain are mounting a protest against a recent government crackdown aimed at shutting down 17 evangelical radio stations known as "Radio Amistad" (Friendship Radio). The government maintains that the stations are operating without licences, but for years evangelical radio stations have applied for licences and been denied them. They claim the government is applying a dual standard. There are some 600 radio stations in Spain operating without licences, including many of the Roman Catholic Church. (EBPS)

Thailand

The Baptist World Alliance has appealed to the United Nations following the worsening of the political crisis between the Karen refugees in Thailand and the military government of Myanmar (Burma). In March, 1,600 huts in the Huay Kalok refugee camp were burned by the Democratic Buddhist Karen Army, supported by the Burma military government. More than 100,000 Baptist refugees live under constant attack on the Thai/Burmese border. (BWA)

Bulgaria

Leaders of the five denominations which make up the Evangelical Alliance in Bulgaria (Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Church of God, and Pentecostal) have met with Petar Stoyanov, the President of Bulgaria. It is reported that the President showed understanding and promised to help as much as he could for a change in attitude toward evangelical churches in that country. (BSG)

News

North Africa Annual Muslim migration gives opportunity for the gospel

The annual migration of thousands of Muslims has provided an opportunity to take the message of the gospel into North African countries traditionally closed to missionary activity.

Every year, around one million people cross the Mediterranean, mostly between June and September, when they take their annual leave and visit family and dependents in North Africa. The majority come from France, with others from Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, England and Germany.

Volunteers from several mission organisations have joined forces to create Operation Transit, a "multi-partner initiative" which hands out booklets, tapes and videos to travellers as they walk or drive onto the ships.

Operation Transit began in the Spanish port of Algeciras in 1993. The idea has now spread to other ports and ferry terminals in Spain, France, Malta and Sicily.

Around 700 volunteers are expected to take part this year handing out Arabic Scripture portions, and versions of the Jesus film. Each item includes special inserts detailing gospel satellite and radio broadcasts, and opportunities for correspondence with Christian ministries in Europe. Among the letters received from people who have become Christians after reading or listening to the evangelistic material was one from a man who found a New Testament on a beach, and a teenager who was given a copy by his uncle who worked at a North African port.

There are accounts that bus drivers have shown the Jesus video to their passengers. After some complaints on one occasion, the bus driver concluded that if the video was about Jesus or Mohammed, then it was good.

One of the participants, YWAM's North Africa director, Garry Tissingh said "We see this as an excellent strategy for reaching people with whom we might otherwise not have contact, and have them take materials into the region. God is really using this effort." Other groups taking part include the Bible Society of Spain, Campus Crusade for Christ, Operation Mobilisation,

Southern Baptists and Assemblies of God. (YWAM News)



News in Brief

Peru Human rights award for prison reformers

Three church workers received the 1997 human rights award for their years of work in Peru's prisons. Sofia Macher, the director of the National Human Rights Co-ordinating Committee, said that Sr Ana Marzolo, Sr Ellen Conway and Sr Madeleine Wartelle were nominated by the inmates of Peru's Lurigancho prison, who asked that another award ceremony be held in the prison, so that they could applaud too.

The three women spend most of their days in the prison. Marzolo set up a substance-abuse rehabilitation programme called Anda (which means "walk" in Spanish) in Lurigancho prison; the programme is housed in what was once the solitary confinement cell, "Siberia". Today the Anda cell block does not have bars. Prisoners clean their cells, cook for themselves and have access to a plot of ground outdoors where they grow their own vegetables.

"These guys are like family," Marzolo said. "After so many years together, you get to know each other well. People think I'm crazy, but I would never want to do other pastoral work."

The sisters praised the

prisoners solidarity with one another, but also drew attention to the serious problems plaguing Peru's prison system.

The worst problem is overcrowding. Lurigancho was built in 1964 to house 1,500 inmates, but today holds more than 6,000 prisoners.

Prison riots have occurred in several South American



countries recently, including Brazil, Colombia, Panama and Paraguay, all for the same reason: inmates protesting against overcrowding and abuses. (LAP)

Life inside a Brazilian prison



FOLHA DO SAU PAULO

Alistair Brown



Change and stability

A crowded city centre street, with people dodging the traffic, or waiting to cross. That's not special until you know this is Skanderbeg Square in Tirana, capital of Albania, and that none of the traffic existed only a few years ago.



Until this decade the closed country of Albania had so few cars you could easily count them. Politicians and the military had a small number of vehicles, and that's all. Everyone else walked or used horse and cart.

Now it's changed. Albania has been through one of the fastest and greatest changes of modern times. Much of the change is good, but it's left an unstable country with an unpredictable future. As Albania stays uncomfortably near our headlines, pray for the nation, for the young church, and for those who work there in Christ's name to shape the future God's way. ●



Benjamin Netanyahu

Israel Restrictive religious bills introduced to Knesset

A bill introduced into the Israeli Knesset (parliament) last year that would have severely restricted how Christians shared the gospel has lost one of its two backers, Member of the Knesset (MK) Nissin Zvilli.

Zvilli has agreed to withdraw his sponsorship and oppose the passage of the bill, although it is still officially in process, having passed one of the three readings required to make it a law. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has announced his opposition to the bill.

The bill would fine those who possess, print, import, copy or distribute literature of any kind that contains "an inducement for religious conversion". Those found guilty would be punished by up to a year in prison, according to the bill.

In addition, another bill has been proposed by MK Rafael Pinchasi which would imprison for three years and fine 50,000 shekels "anyone who preaches with the



purpose of causing another person to change his religion".

It is expected to be introduced into the Knesset soon for a preliminary vote. (EBPS)

Bosnia



Innocent Victim
by Mauricio Palacio

Arts touch wounded hearts

Organisers of an ambitious musical production believe that the arts can help bring peace to the region torn apart

by civil war.

A 50-strong group of dancers, mime artists and musicians is due to stage a multi-media production urging reconciliation in seven cities across Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia.

The work, *A Song in the Night*, is allegorical, and tells the story of a farmer and his son whose workers fall out with each other, and is intended to subtly "encourage people to think about learning to live together, rather than getting caught up in bitterness over the past".

It has been co-ordinated by missionary painter and sculptor Mauricio Palacio, after he spent three months helping resettle people who fled their homes at the height of the

"ethnic cleansing".

"The programme could reach people better than a sermon", says Palacio, because "art can portray powerful messages in a non-threatening way. Because of all the horrors they have experienced, they may respond better to something that weeps and feels with them, rather than someone coming and telling them they are wrong and they have to change."

A song in the Night is scheduled to go on tour in August and September. (YWAM News)

Northern Ireland Prayer walk for peace unites communities

Protestant and catholic young people are to join forces in a marathon prayer walk around the Northern Irish borders, seeking peace, reconciliation and unity.

Teenagers and young adults from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and elsewhere will take part in this 600-mile journey, due to begin on Sunday 12 July. The walk will start in Belfast and passes through former trouble spots like Londonderry and Enniskillen.

The event leader, Mike Oman, hopes to see up to 1,500 young people taking part; some for one week, and others for the entire route. He said: "we feel that young people need to be given the opportunity to be pro-active in expressing their desire to move on from the past and embrace God's future for their country. We hope that by participating together they will gain new levels of understanding, respect and appreciation - and a sense of ownership."

The walk is one of several prayer initiatives in Northern Ireland that are uniting Christians in praying for their communities and their country. (YWAM News)



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

World Mission Link

Action Teams hit UK again

Returning Action Teams were let loose on UK churches during May and June and have now completed their eight-week tour of the UK. During this time they visited in excess of 145 churches, sharing their experiences with over one thousand people through drama, song, testimony, video, slide shows and in many other ways.

Many team members are now going on to University where they will continue to tell others what God is doing overseas and what he can do through individual believers.



Worldwide - so much more than a prayer tape

Prayer is essential for the work of mission. We know that with God's guidance prayer changes things.

Every month BMS AV Co-ordinator Andy Smith produces the Worldwide prayer tape. On this tape he talks to BMS personnel in the UK or overseas, so that you actually hear them speaking about their work, and in particular any aspects which they find moving or challenging.

"We find actually hearing the missionary's voice creates a better understanding" says Andy. "You can actually hear the excitement or disappointment coming across in their voices."

Even when time is limited, you can still listen to Worldwide in your car or sitting down with a cup of tea. Or you can listen in a group and pray together afterwards.

Subscription to Worldwide is free so long as tapes are returned the following month. All we ask is that you send a 31p stamp to cover postage.

Dates for your Diary

Events & Meetings

Lymm

4 and 5 July

Mission weekend, Lymm Baptist Church

More information: Cath Mawson 01274 487341

Arnesby

Sat 22 August

Leicester BMS Auxiliary FUN-DAY

More information: Theo Lambourne 0116 271 3633

Bridgend

1 to 8 August

National Eisteddfod Visit the BU of Wales and BMS tent, lots of resources

More information: Gareth Hutchinson 01792 360909

Cotswolds

5 and 6

September

Fosse Way Fellowship Mission Weekend

More information: Dennis Floodgate 01285 641840

Norwich

1 to 8 August

Leading Edge. Speakers include Alistair Brown and Carolyn Green; also BMS stall and exhibition. Thorpe St Andrew School.

More information: Leading Edge hotline: 01328 864801

Aberystwyth

8 to 11

September

Wales Annual Bi-lingual WMA Conference

More information: Delyth Wyn Davies 01766 512957

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Frank Gouthwaite

Frank Gouthwaite, BMS missionary in Salvador, Brazil is seriously ill with a brain tumour. He has come back from Brazil and is now with his wife Peggy in Birmingham. In a recent letter to head office Frank and Peggy wrote:

"We do continue to hope and pray, trying to be within God's will for the moment and not worrying about the future.

At home we remain cheerful. The girls are happy and adjusting to school very well here in Birmingham. The two in Sevenoaks find it more difficult.

We thank all of you who are concerned and remembering us in prayer.

God bless you all."

David Kerrigan

David Kerrigan, BMS Regional Representative for Asia has recently been appointed as President of the United Mission to Nepal. This means he has the responsibility of chairing meetings of the Executive of the Board - which take place twice a year - and between these meetings, liaising with the UMN Director. His appointment comes at the time when a new Director, Michael Askwith, takes up his responsibilities.



David & Janet Kerrigan



Tim & Caroline Trimble

Tim and Caroline Trimble

Tim and Caroline Trimble who work in Kathmandu, Nepal are adopting twin girls. They were born in February. Karuna Naomi is the elder one, and Samjhana Ruth the younger of the two. Samjhana is a Nepali name meaning remembrance and Karuna means mercy.

SAT 7

SAT 7, the TV broadcasting service for Christians of the Middle East has increased its broadcast time on both its satellites. This has increased to three hours on both Friday and Sunday on EUTELSAT 2F3, and is now also broadcasting to most of the Gulf region on a new frequency on PANAMSAT-4. BMS is a member of the SAT 7 Partnership Council.

News

New President: John Barclay



John Barclay has taken over the Presidency of the BMS from the

AGM held at the Blackpool Assembly.

John is a former President of the Baptist Union of Scotland, and has had a long association with BMS and world mission.

John says he plans to use his presidential year "meeting people in formal and informal opportunities, mid-week and Sundays, to encourage them in mission at home and abroad so that God's kingdom will grow."

Andrew Green is a man with mission in his genes. His grandfather, Joseph, had four children, all of whom went into some sort of christian ministry.

But none of his Christianity is second-hand; he was converted while at university, and realised during his last year of studies that God was calling him into ministry too.

Having studied for a PGCE at Regent's College, Oxford, he worked as a travelling secretary with IVF (now UCCF, a student christian organisation). Andrew then found himself as a full-time pastor of Poynton Baptist Church - without any proper training! After four years of this life he left Poynton to study at Spurgeon's College, and at this time he also pastored a church at Islington. After graduating he went to Bookham Baptist Church in Surrey. The church grew, so much so that the building needed extending. He was there six years.

Now he is Senior Pastor at Upton Vale Baptist Church, Torquay. His initial reaction to being asked to stand for BMS President was "No", but on being asked a second time, he thought maybe God was speaking to him.

Over the last three years Andrew has led missionary retreats and says he felt "strangely at home". He has visited Cameroon, Brazil and Nepal.

Andrew is concerned that mission has for too long been regarded as an arena for specialists instead of being at the centre of normal christian life. He plans to encourage us all to make links in our lives, especially the link between loving our God and loving others too.



New Vice-President: Andrew Green

News in Brief

Planned Withdrawal For Brazil

General Committee voted to withdraw gradually the presence of long-term BMS missionaries in Brazil over the next twelve years, handing over the work to Brazilian Partner Bodies, and also increasing opportunities for service for volunteers and Action Teams.

David Martin, BMS Director of Operations presented the thinking of a Working Group and results of consultations.

Brazil, as a country, has four times as many Baptists as the UK. There are 5,629 churches in the Brazilian Baptist Convention, with nearly one million members. Thousands are in theological training, and national targets aim to increase the number of churches to 7,500 with two million members by the year 2000. It is estimated that "evangelical Christians" make up about 15 per cent of the population (that is, 25 million people).

BMS strategy is seeking to focus on less evangelised regions of the world. So work in Brazil will be phased out, beginning with a handing over to Brazilian colleagues at the end of 1999. BMS personnel will be redeployed, so that BMS can respond to new openings quickly - much more quickly than by recruiting new workers.

It is hoped that active partnership will continue and that work will be concentrated particularly in areas where Brazilian Baptist Conventions have fewer resources. Longer term missionaries will be

supported for strategic work up to the end of the next decade. Increased opportunities for short-term help, visits of volunteers, and Action Teams would all be encouraged. It is also hoped that there will be further co-operation with the World Missions Board, (whose office is in Rio), within Latin America, and with the Fellowship of British Baptists in the UK.

Chandraghona Hospital gets Half a Million Grant

Chandraghona Hospital, Bangladesh, where BMS nurse Sue Headlam works, has been given a grant of half a million pounds by a German christian support agency, Evangelische Zentralstelle Für Entwicklungshilfe (EZE).

This money will be used to renovate the general hospital buildings. Extensive construction work, resulting in new wards, operating theatre suite, laboratory, X-ray and administrative block, will start later this year. The old buildings will be partially demolished.

Scottish Baptist Book Project

Last year grants totalling nearly £6,000 were channelled through BMS by Scottish Baptists to provide much-needed theological books for pastors overseas. These pastors are students

and are training to work with churches with which the BMS is associated. Annually student needs are identified by BMS, and the Book Project aims to supply at least a Bible Dictionary and Bible Commentary to each of these pastoral students, and where possible to provide a mini library as well. Most of these students cannot afford to buy study books in their own languages.

In 1997 the following grants were made: £1,200 to Bangladesh (21 students); £950 to Yakusu, Congo (19 students); £473 to Bolobo, Congo (7 students); £202 to Kimpese, Congo (3 students); £300 to Kinshasa, Congo (6 students); £720 to Angola (9 students); £800 to Nicaragua (10 students); and £1,043 to India (36 students).

The Bangladeshi students in their letter of thanks list their areas of expertise and service as follows: James Das, evangelist with

Baptist House News

Welcome to

Gruffydd Rhys Davies

Gruffydd Rhys Davies born to Delyth Wyn Davies, BMS Co-ordinator for North Wales on 8 May 1998. Gruffydd Rhys weighed 8lb 8oz; and both mum and baby are doing well.

Delyth is currently taking maternity leave, but will be back in her post in September. ●

the Baptist Church; Andrew Biswas, new church project worker; Robert Baroi, evangelist with a Korean Church; Samuel Bala, TEE (Theological Education by Extension) Co-ordinator; Milton Karmokar, World Vision worker; Bimol Roy, pastors a rural Baptist church; Profullo Roy, school teacher; Monika Roy, will head up the Lutheran Church's Women's work; Nimai Das, evangelist for the Santal Lutheran Church; Shoban Kisku, teacher and evangelist for the Santal Lutheran Church; Ashim Baroi, Pastoral Superintendent; John Sorkar, evangelist for the Bapt Church; Samuel Mardi, pastoral leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bangladesh Bibhash Biswas, evangelist and development worker; Hans Hasdak, evangelist with the Santal Lutheran Church; David Sorkar, translator for the Christian Literature Centre; Paul Das, Christian Recording Ministry; Michael Memon, pastor of Baptist church; Ranjit Biswas, pastor and Sunday school Co-ordinator; Sunil Roy, TEE tutor for World Vision; Paul Baroi, pastor of a Baptist church.



Bangladeshi Bachelor of Theology students 1997, with books presented to them from the Scottish Baptist Book Project.



Mission on the streets of London

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FOR YOU

JAN KENDALL REPORTS HOW ONE CHURCH IS FACING UP TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE WORLD ON ITS DOORSTEP.

Take 50,000 people from a wealth of different ethnic backgrounds living within a mile of your church and try to tell them that the message and person of Jesus Christ is relevant to them in their everyday lives - that's what Barry Cheesman and his team are seeking to do at Ilford High Road Baptist Church.

Barry only arrived as minister at Ilford High Road four years ago, but he came with a burning desire to see the city of London with what he calls "relevant and significant ministry". Three months after he arrived his church formulated a mission

statement which begins by stating: "We are committed to ensuring that mission (incorporating both evangelism and social action) is at the forefront of church life."

Ilford High Road Baptist Church is the only one of four big churches in Ilford still functioning in its size and purpose. The old neon sign reading "Have faith in God" was taken down and replaced with "Jesus lives". It's a multicultural neighbourhood, with people from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. God could have meant Allah or Shiva. The sign needed to be Christ-focused to differentiate this building from the Hindu temple, the gurdwara or the mosque down the road.

With a membership of just 92 as well as Barry, the church employs four other staff members, all of whom work in the community. "We're only small, but we've embraced the challenge of mission," says Barry. "We've committed ourselves to serve the community. You can do a lot with a little when you've got committed people. In my opinion churches make a mistake in getting other pastoral staff instead of getting guys out there on the street. You need mission not just in word, but also in deed."

Two of the four staff members are a married couple, Simon and Ursula Standen, who have come to the church from Interserve. They run an English language school on the church premises, to which an average of 15 ladies attend each



Left: Barry Cheesman and Jan Kendall Right column: People participating in the church workshops

week. It's an ongoing programme, which is aimed at the level the women are at. The fee is a modest 50p a lesson, which makes it affordable for the women, many of whom are paying for the course themselves. Some of the women have been in the UK 25 to 30 years and never learned English; others have just arrived. They all need help with knowing what to say in shops, and telling the doctor what is wrong with their sick child. Simon (who is the only man allowed to teach in the classes) and Ursula visit the ladies in their homes systematically, and also prayerwalk the area every year.

These classes have now been running for three years. Early on a Chinese lady came to faith, and there are now two other ladies regularly attending Sunday worship. Barry comments: "I see it as a long-term operation. We need to infiltrate the community with love and prayer. I envisage seeing something cross over once we've been going five years."

Across the road from the church is The Pegasus Centre, a building also owned by the church and at the moment leased out by them. It's one of the locations used for the Barnabas Workshops which is a scheme funded by several of the local churches together to provide training to help people find work. The manager is Peter Lickfold, who took early retirement from his personnel and training job at Haringey Council and now works three days a week there. People are notified about the Barnabas Workshops by personal visit at their home from Peter and his team; they are given a reply card to fill in, which has a freepost address. The success rate is good; 40 per cent go on to find a job; 30 per cent go in to vocational training.

"In Barnabas Workshops we believe we're sharing the love and heart of Christ" says Barry. "We're concentrating on South Ilford because we want to do something about the area. People consistently say that although the material is similar to that given by job centres they are treated differently and made to feel they are individuals. We give them individual help with their CVs and job applications."

The list of other projects that Ilford High Road Baptist Church is involved in in the community is mind-boggling. On the church premises itself there's Young Inspirations, an after school child care

programme for 29 children. There's a Lunch Club that also takes place on church premises once a month; a Night Shelter one night a week in winter offering meals for 30 and sleeping accommodation for 18 people; Sunnyside Contact Centre acting as an access centre for families experiencing breakdown and needing a neutral place to meet; and PlayGroup, which has now been running for 25 years. "They're all run by committed Christians," says Barry, "though we'll use other helpers. The fees aren't high. It's a ministry."

Many give their time and energies to these projects for free. The LBA gave to Barnabas as did the BU initiative "Against the Stream" which gave £1,000. But everything is done on a shoe string. Young Inspirations received a £30,000 grant for its work.

Barry admits he's not the archetypal Baptist minister. "I spend a lot of my time managing staff, and networking with

"We've committed ourselves to serve the community"

people on the Council" he says. "So I don't do the traditional roles associated with being a Pastor." He does in fact have a team of people in the church who undertake the pastoral work.

In fact he's just been invited by a major funding consortium from the local area to be part of a local unemployment initiative. "I think this must mean our programmes have a lot of credibility," he says. "It'll be very time-consuming, but winning credibility is very important, because largely the Church is seen as irrelevant."

There's so much happening that the church is considering taking the Pegasus Centre back. They have hired a Christian consultant who is looking objectively at where they go from here. They're likely to undertake a new five year development plan.

All of their publicity carries the words from Mark 11:17 "My house will be called a house of prayer for the people of all nations." Certainly the members of Ilford High Road Baptist Church are investing both love and prayer in making this a reality. ●





CHRIS BELL SPENT A SABBATICAL IN NORTHERN THAILAND. THERE HE VISITED A CHRISTIAN PROGRAMME FOR DRUG DETOXIFICATION AND REHABILITATION.

I stayed in the hills of northern Thailand, which together with the hills of neighbouring Myanmar (formerly Burma) and Laos, form the "Golden Triangle" area, known for its large scale opium harvests. Today, opium production in Thailand has reduced significantly through government enterprises and missionaries helping villagers to substitute agricultural cash crops in place of their opium fields. Unfortunately this has not happened over the borders, and so recently narcotics – mainly heroin – have seeped back into the hill tribes. One government survey revealed that there were 426 narcotic addicts (almost all heroin) in nine small villages in this

district; amounting to 12 per cent of the combined villages' population.

While I was in Thailand, the Bangkok Post reported that the production of opium in the country had been reduced from 140 tonnes to around 18 tonnes. But Laos still produces 200 plus tonnes and Myanmar 2,500 tonnes, and as general agricultural techniques have developed worldwide, so opium production has "improved". Opium plants can now be harvested three times a year instead of once a year, and opium poppies can be grown with three flowers (and hence three pods) on the same stem, instead of one. This means the potential yield from the same amount of land may be multiplied by an alarming factor of nine.

One man told me that he had been taking opium for 35 years, another for ten years, and one young person for three years. Some men told me that they considered they were addicts because opium was part of their lifestyle from when they were babies. Mothers gave it as the traditional medicine, and smoked it in a pipe as they carried their infants around on their backs. As a social custom, men would gather for an evening of socialising, during which they smoked

opium together.

The Thai government has attempted to provide some remedial programmes for addicts within the hill communities, including localised community treatment and detoxification facilities. But it is very disturbing to learn that around 95 per cent of their clients return to their addictions after completing the programme, sometimes within a few days.

Could a Christian response be formulated with any greater lasting effect?

To assume a detoxified person has been cured is a myth. Detoxification satisfies the bio-chemical changes a person's system must endure, but it has little to do with their remaining drug-free. People must learn to cope psychologically without drugs. The Christian approach is very holistic. Teaching, training and programmes of positive action begin their slow work of transforming goals, aims, ambitions in life as well as removing guilt complexes. Addicts must learn to turn to other forces, powers or influences to achieve a consistent drug-free life. The real hope of these programmes is not only that the participants leave their drug taking habit

behind, but that they actually commit themselves to Christ. I was told by many people that relying on willpower was not enough; the factor which brought success was their relying on the power of Christ.

A christian three year project for detoxification and rehabilitation for hill tribe addicts began in 1992 at Baw Gauw "House of New Hope", and in 1993 at Ban Cham Luang. Later, as more money came in, the Thai Tribal Narcotics Detoxification and Rehabilitation Project began in 1996, continuing the work already started and creating new centres at Ban Huey Pha and Ban Heuy Kia Pa. This new project is partly administered by the Karen Baptist Convention.

The main features of the programme include:

- a detoxification and treatment period using medicinal herbal techniques
- a disciplined and timetabled schedule of rehabilitation activities, which include a distinct Christian emphasis

"One man told me that he had been taking opium for 35 years. . ."

- a welfare programme directed towards families of programme members. A total of 52 sacks of rice have been distributed to 33 families over four years

- a rehabilitation loan fund. Once a participant has graduated from the programme, there is the possibility that they are eligible for a loan to get them started with making a living. Loans have been made for fertilisers, plants and establishing pig and chicken production.

Once recovered addicts have graduated there is on-going concern for their welfare. They are visited at home, and they themselves visit the Centres. They attend an annual Renewal and Recommitment seminar which lasts two days. Six recovered addicts have undertaken Bible School studies at the Karen Baptist Centre, two of whom have completed their three year course, and two are now on the staff of the Centres.

Compared to the results of the

government programme, the results of the christian programme are pretty impressive. Out of the 165 addicts who began the programme at Baw Gaow, 102 completed it and 47 have remained drug-free. At Cham Luang 115 out of 126 completed the programme, and 85 remain drug-free. At Heuy Pha all 25 completed the programme and 16 are drug-free and at Heuy Kia Pha 18 out of 39 completed the programme and 16 remain drug-free. That means 63 per cent remain drug-free.

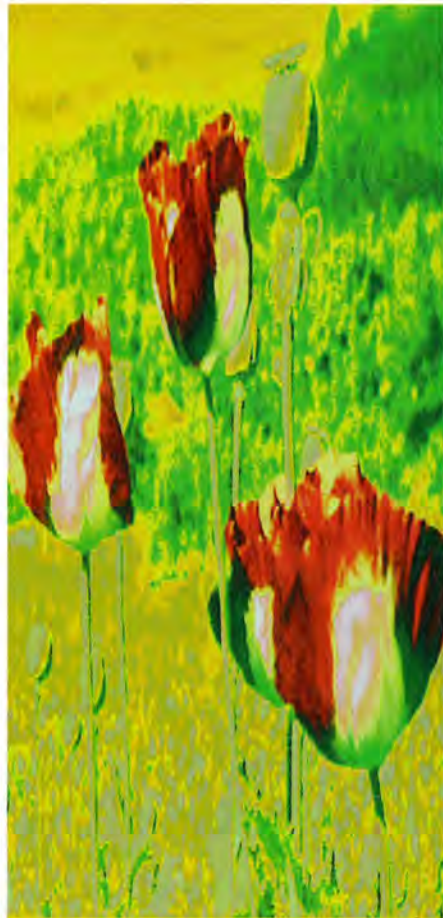
Of the 191 who didn't make it, five died of AIDS, two committed suicide, one was murdered, one overdosed and 21 were arrested and imprisoned.

A few years ago the churches did not have a very hospitable attitude to addicts. Responses seem to have been one of judgement or denial ("It doesn't happen in our village.") But as pastors and churches saw members of their own village communities or even their own congregations involved in addiction they agreed they must help in the work. The Church began to develop new attitudes and to see that it needed to "rediscover its role to be a healing and caring community". Perhaps through new attitudes expressed, the churches in Thailand are trying to live out their responsibilities in new and meaningful ways in the nitty-gritty of life. ●

Chris Bell is minister of Atherton Baptist Church, Manchester.

Daily Rehabilitation Schedule

- 7.00 - 7.45 Breakfast (Programme members preparing, serving, washing up etc)
- 8.00 - 10.00 Spiritual Emphasis Unit - Bible Teaching, Christian morals, values, ethics
- 10.00 - 12.00 Practical agricultural teaching relating to soils, crop production, conservation farming, livestock and poultry rearing
- 12.00 - 1.00 Lunch (again prepared by programme members)
- 1.00 - 4.00 Further agricultural demonstrations and production field work
- 4.00 - 6.00 Rest and recreation
- 6.00 - 7.00 Dinner
- 7.00 - 8.00 Spiritual Emphasis Unit, including worship
- 8.00 - 10.00 Free time/lights out



Chiang Mai International Church



Cham Luang Detoxification Unit



Chris Bell and retired pastor



REJOICING IN HEAVEN

BAPTISTS IN RIO DE JANEIRO ARE THINKING "MISSION" IN A BIG WAY. JAN KENDALL REPORTS.

Think evangelism in Brazil, and you could well think "street children". Whilst a lot of Brazilian Conventions and churches are focusing their attention on the plight of these children, others are exploring new ways to bring the gospel to ordinary people. Rio is one such city.

The Carioca Convention in Rio de Janeiro has an amazing programme of

outreach in all directions. One of their special projects is evangelism at the Rio Carnival. Traditionally Baptist churches have run away - literally - from having anything to do with Carnival. They have taken their members away on spiritual retreats. Because what started life as part of the Roman Catholic calendar, the beginning of Lent, has given rise to one big orgy. It is reckoned that more adultery is

committed in the four days of Carnival than in the rest of the year put together. But under the leadership of the Executive Secretary Revd Belardim

Pimentel, the Carioca Convention has begun to think that it should be not be

hiding away, but should be using the Rio Carnival, the largest Carnival held in any city, as an opportunity for evangelism.

The Carioca Convention has what are called "urban missionaries" on its staff. One of these is Jorge Luiz Rodrigues Pinheiro. Jorge takes a leading role in the Rio Carnival outreach. Together with a team of 150 specially chosen (mostly) young people, who have to be baptised

members of Baptist churches and bring with them a letter of recommendation from their pastor, Jorge co-ordinates three different areas of evangelism.

The first group dress up as clowns, and in this way hope to reach the many children that gather on

"The first group dress up as clowns, and in this way hope to reach the many children that gather on the streets."

the streets. The second group make for the place where the parades are forming; here they engage in direct evangelism. A third group are available to give medical assistance. In such a crowded event a lot of people feel unwell, get dehydrated, drink too much alcohol or don't eat. But even the fainting don't escape being evangelised!

Special literature is prepared for the Carnival. At what is a very false time for people one tract is called "Behind the mask"; another "Ripping up your fancy dress". One such tract was given out to a woman who took it home, read it, and turned up in a Baptist church the following Sunday with her whole family. They were all subsequently converted.

Erivaldo is a 16-year-old boy whose

“... took it home, read it, and turned up in a Baptist church the following Sunday with her whole family.”



The Carnival Team on the streets

too; many are young Christians, and to do what they do takes a lot of courage. At the end of the time of Carnival they are strengthened and renewed in their faith; they come to see if they can testify in such an immoral situation, they can testify anywhere.

At other times of the year Jorge, a former professional footballer, spends his time as a missionary teaching football to young lads who, otherwise, would not have anything to do, and therefore would probably be involved in drugs.

The Carioca Convention is also involved in outreach in hospitals, prisons,

ports and docks, social action, church planting, working amongst people who work on ships and international aircraft, tourists, the bereaved, the deaf and dumb, students, and people looking for lost relatives. They have also opened up churches as chapels of rest for the poor to bring their dead relatives, so that family members can have a place to visit them.

It's all stirring stuff. But says Revd Pimentel "We are trying to return what we were able to receive 115 years ago when the first missionaries came, and the gospel came to our country." ●



Revd Belardim Pimentel

father had recently died. He missed his father a lot, and was unhappy at home. On Carnival night he left home and walked out amongst the thousands of people, hoping to forget his problems. He met the Special Projects team who listened to him and introduced him to Jesus. Today he is attending the First Baptist Church in Rio.

The team of helpers grow spiritually



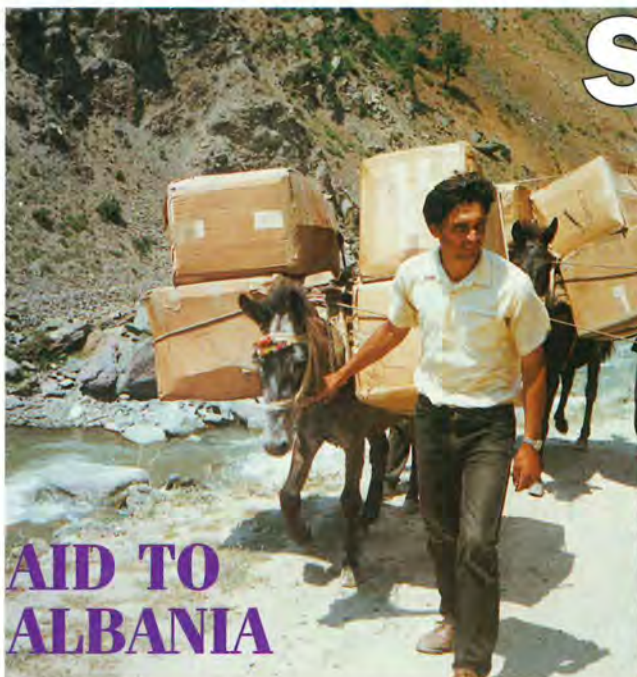
The Carnival Team



Jorge Pinheiro and BMS missionary David Brown



SHETLAND



AID TO ALBANIA



Photos: Albanians in Kukes receiving aid from Shetland

RUBY POTTINGER TELLS OF THIS INITIATIVE FROM HER NATIVE ISLE

An aid convoy was first sent out to Albania from Shetland in March 1992. Two of the drivers, on seeing the desperate conditions under which the Albanians were living, felt compelled to do more to help. So, the Shetland Aid Trust was established in April 1992 and registered as a Scottish charity in September of that year.

It's a 3,800 mile round trip from Shetland to Albania and since then, five convoys of aid have made it to the country. On the last three occasions they went to Kukes – a very poor mountainous area in the north east, consisting of the main town of Kukes with a population of about 23,000 and the surrounding district of about 70,000 people.

One 390 bed hospital serves this whole area and it

was the poor condition of this hospital that prompted us to make it our main project for further trips. To date we have delivered 122 new windows, 250 beds and mattresses, theatre operating trolleys, lighting, anaesthetic machines, various hospital equipment and furnishings, nurses uniforms, antiseptics, and medicines.

The extremely impoverished state of the schools has also been of concern to us and many excellent contacts have been made. We have distributed four tons of books, maps, desks, black boards, typewriters, teaching aids for Chemistry, Biology, Art and PE.

Our third objective of providing clothing and bedding to many of the people living up in the mountain villages in conditions of abject poverty, has been very rewarding. On each trip we have taken out approximately seven tons of clothing, foot wear and bedding for these families.

The trustees were also happy to be able to

“... Please pray for the Albanians”

provide food and clothing for the crew of the Darius – a large Lithuanian factory ship which had engine failure off the west coast of Shetland and had to be towed into Lerwick harbour. Shetland Aid Trust provided food and clothing for the 150 crew members for about six months and also had the joy of seeing many of them attending evangelical churches in Lerwick. We were able to hold a service on board ship which was attended by about 80 per cent of the crew.

During the latter part of 1996 we were called upon by Edinburgh Direct Aid and the International Red Cross to supply clothing for the people of Bosnia and Rwanda in their emergency situations.

The serious problem in

1997 within Albania caused us to look elsewhere and the Trust were glad to help out Edinburgh Direct Aid in their repatriation programme for the refugees returning to Bosnia.

As this article is being prepared, plans are underway to get another convoy out to Kukes in May 1998, providing we can get assurance of safe transit within Albania. An Albanian christian friend writes:

“It is so hard to see even Christians become desperate and lose their hope... I hope and pray you will be able to come to Albania as the need here is really great... please pray for the Albanians, that they may be able to see with their spiritual eyes the glorious hope offered to us in Christ”. ●

Ruby Pottinger is married to one of the aid convoy drivers.



MISSION

DRY BUT NOT THIRSTY!

THE CHRISTIAN YOUNG PEOPLE OF SHETLAND NEEDED A PLACE TO MEET IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT — BOTH ALCOHOL AND DRUG FREE

David McQueen TELLS HOW DA DRY DOCK WAS BORN.

In November 1997 a new kind of pub opened in Shetland – a dry one. A group which is now called Christian Action on Addiction (CAA) was set up four or five years previously to help people in the community with alcohol or drug problems or to help their partners or families.

This led on to a support group which now meets once a week in a separate room within the bar premises.

And finally last November Da Dry Dock, an alcohol-free bar was born. It serves a wide range of non-alcoholic drinks and cocktails on six nights a week (7.00pm to 11.00pm and 1.00 am on Fridays) to 17 year-olds and over.

Bar meals and snacks are on offer every evening, and there's also satellite TV, pool table, darts room, quiz nights, live bands, pool competitions as well as family and food theme nights.

The aim of Da Dry Dock is to provide a friendly environment where people can relax and socialise, where a safe alternative to alcohol is provided, alongside practical

christian love and caring in the local community. Each evening there is also a trained counsellor available.

The ultimate hope and aim of this venture is to introduce people to Christ and then to bring them to a fellowship within an established church.

Da Dry Dock is run completely by 50 volunteers from a wide variety of churches throughout Shetland. They all give up their time to staff the bar each evening.

Over the last few months it has been apparent that there was a big need for a place for the local young christians to meet, and it has proved popular with them. There's also been some interest from the non christian community but it takes some time to build up good relationships and trust with people.

It's been really encouraging to see people helped by the support group, and moving on to volunteer to work in the bar. We hope that little signs of hope like these will continue, and that Da Dry Dock will become an oasis in the community here in Shetland. ●

David McQueen is Manager of Da Dry Dock alcohol free bar.



Mike Pilavachi

What is Mission ?

In the Acts of the Apostles, we see two models of mission. On the one hand, there is Paul with his travelling evangelistic and church planting team and on the other, the mission of the local church within its local area, its 'Jerusalem'. The temptation is to see 'mission' as the travelling evangelist or special event and the work of the local church to pastor and nurture those who have been converted through the 'event'.

Thankfully we are moving to more holistic models of mission. We see mission as integrating proclamation evangelism and lifestyle evangelism. Mission consists of the words we speak and the lives we live. This is where the local church comes into its own.

There are many advantages to the evangelistic mission; one of the negatives is that it can be a hit-and-run event. It is in the context of the church, rooted in the local community, that our lives can be examined to confirm that they match up to our words. It is here that the world can judge whether we are really Jesus' disciples by the way that we love one another. In Acts 2, we see one of the most productive evangelistic rallies of all time. The pre-publicity was brief and punchy and at the end of the talk, 3,000 men responded and immediately the guy in charge of homegroups had a headache!

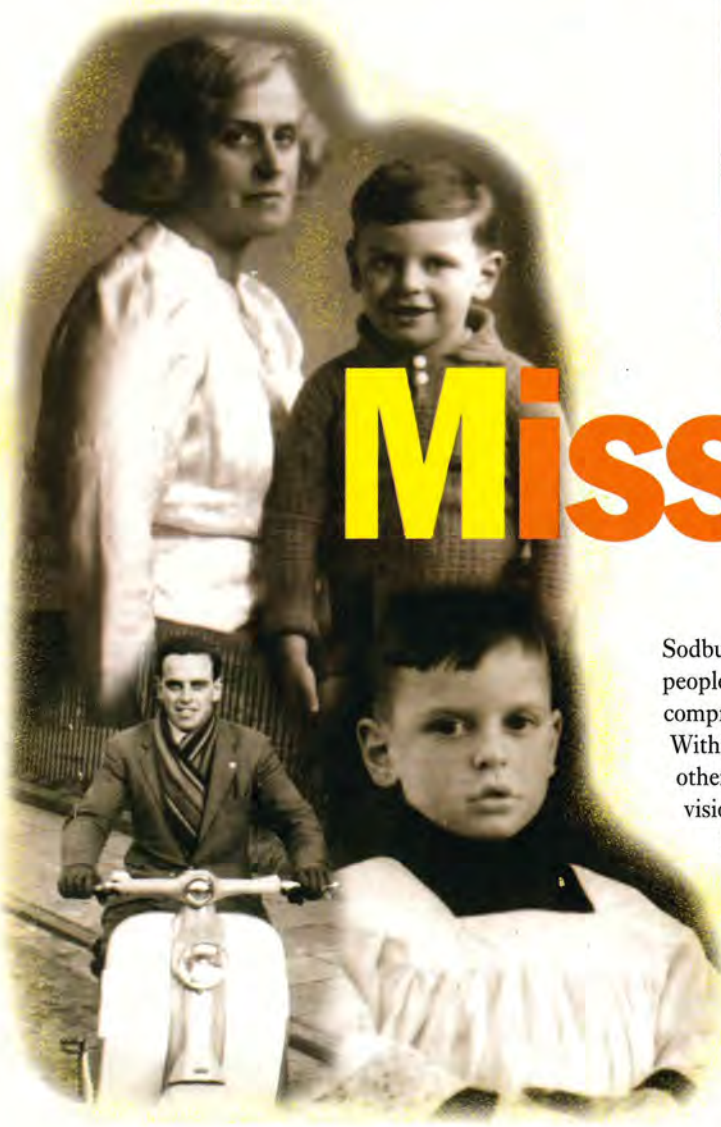
With such success you should have thought the disciples would have voted for a repeat performance the next day. Instead they "devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, the breaking of bread and to prayer. All the believers were together and had everything in common". 'Every day they continued to meet together'. What happened? They became Church. They became rooted. They lived out the gospel day by day. What was the result? "The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved".

In evangelism, it is not a case of either/or, but both/and. The work of the local church and the national and international evangelists must go hand in hand if we are to reach our nation in an authentic way with the good news. ●

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



Da Dry Dock Bar



Mission as a

Sodbury, with the other young people of these villages comprising his mission field. Within a few years, along with others of like passion and vision, Ray was helping to lead worship in local villages in addition to running regular youth outreach evenings.

Ray himself names several crucial factors in these early and formative years which enabled

“mission as a way of life” to truly be his way of life.

First, there was the mentoring role provided by Dr Arthur Casson, his local Bible class leader. It was ‘Doc’ who provided much of the faithful Bible teaching, encouragement and a living role model which helped Ray and others grow. Such was the impact of this that he cites the same things as essential within the area of providing opportunities for others. What three things can we most give people? (1) encouragement, even in the midst of failure; (2) time to be in touch - people are more important than meetings; and (3) living a life which is a continual reminder that by ‘embracing the trustworthy promises of the future, you enhance the here and now’.

Significant too was the attitude of the older generations. “The more mature

Christians obviously had the vision to let us do what we were doing,” exclaims Ray.

“They allowed us to share in worship which was very precious to them, and often the highlight of their week”. Reflecting appreciatively on the positive criticism and invaluable practical care which enabled him to live mission as a way of life he continues, “Whether we did get on the wrong side of some of the senior Christians I don’t know. But if we did, they never let us know and they certainly didn’t stop what we were doing!”. Finally, despite the work going from strength to strength, village to village, with firm links being built with monthly outreach meetings in Bristol held by the Torchbearers from Capenwray Hall, their emphasis remained firmly on Kingdom building - not building an empire! While there was always support for people who were new Christians, it was a common scenario for Ray and others to begin a work and to let the established version be taken over by a local minister or church. For Ray, it was

CHRIS POPE EXPLAINS HOW FOR RAY AVENT MISSION HAS BECOME A WAY OF LIFE.

Ray Avent’s had a change of heart. Physically he has just had a triple by-pass, yet spiritually he received a new one when committing his life to Jesus at 15. Travelling home after a challenging Bible class holiday, Ray remembers thinking, “If this is this good for me, I’ve got to make it a priority”. With a new heart came a new outlook on life - that mission should be seen as a way of life. And mission became a way of life on return to the villages around Chipping



Left: Ray Avent introducing Princess Diana to wedding guests at Taunton
 Far left: Ray, working with a group of children
 Right: Ray with Dorian Prior Sankey posing for local TV - fools for Christ?

way of LIFE

more important that people found Jesus, than which church they went to afterwards.

And such truths are still refreshingly present in Ray's current position of Pastor at Union Church, Heathfield, especially the latter. When referring to a planned 'Churches Together in Heathfield' mission this autumn, he states matter of factly, "If at the end no-one extra came to Union, but all the Anglican churches were packed out, I would have no problem with that!". Yet there is still plenty afoot at Union Church including amongst other things an intriguing planned outreach to non-church men entitled, 'Men Behaving Admirably!'. Another exciting aspect of church life already in place is the Window On the World (WOW) club, developed by the BMS. "It is a mission club", says Ray proudly, "with an aim of encouraging and interesting children and young people in the world wide church.... and the God at the heart of his church". Plans are already afoot to develop another layer for slightly younger children, such has been its success.

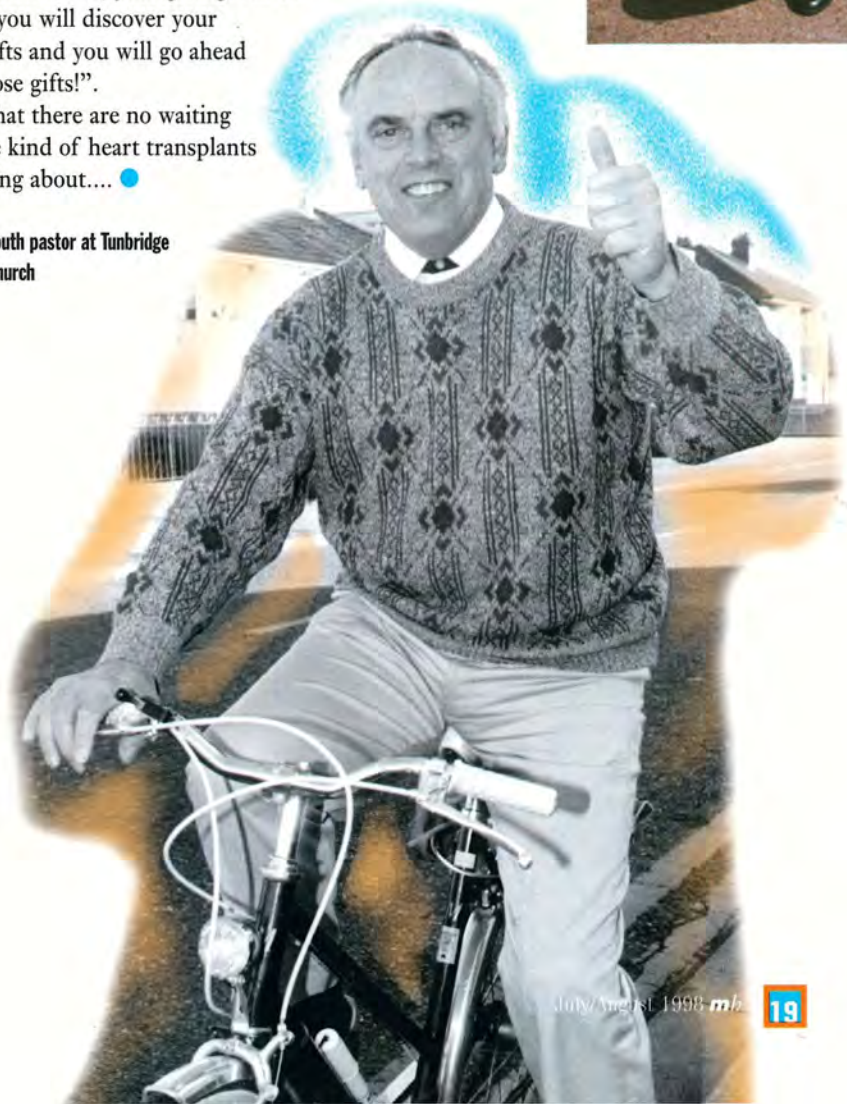
And what about the time in between? Yet more opportunities to live mission as a way of life, first in management training and then as a regional manager although this was far from obvious at first. "Suddenly my Christian work became evenings and weekends and I found it hard" he openly admits, "but over time I came to see that if mission is really to be a way of life, then mission had to be the place I was working". It became so and in the process a

productive learning ground where Ray learned much which would prepare him for his future calling as a Pastor.

I asked Ray to sum up why he would want others to see mission as a way of life. His answer? That it is the best way of unlocking the full potential within every Christian. "If your whole life is a mission... your prayer will be based on the right things, your outreach/witness will be mission based, your giving will be sacrificial, you will discover your ministry gifts and you will go ahead and use those gifts!".

I hear that there are no waiting lists for the kind of heart transplants Ray is talking about.... ●

Chris Pope is Youth pastor at Tunbridge Wells Baptist Church



Chiang Mai

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



by Jacqui Wells

Our Town



THAILAND

INTRODUCTION

Chiang Mai literally means “new city”, and this in itself seems a bit strange because in 1996 the city celebrated its 700th anniversary.

Chiang Mai is Thailand’s second city and it is also known as the “rose of the north”. It’s a really beautiful city. Thais enjoy living there, and are very proud of it. Tourists come from all over the world to see its beauty.

accounts for Chiang Mai’s charm and beauty today.

Today as you wander around “old Chiang Mai” you can still see the remnants of the old city walls near the moat.

Chiang Mai is full of Buddhist temples, some of which date from the late 1200s and early 1300s.

Wat Doi Suthep is Chiang Mai’s most important and visible landmark, and overlooks the city from its forested mountain backdrop some 3,520 feet above sea level. The temple dates from 1383.

HISTORY

Chiang Mai was founded in 1296 by King Mengrai and became the capital of a loose alliance of northern city states known as Lanna Thai (kingdom of a million ricefields). Chiang Mai flourished as a major religious and trading centre until 1556 when a Burmese invasion reduced it to a vassal state. The Burmese were expelled in 1785, and Lanna Thai again became part of northern Thailand. Until the 1920s Chiang Mai remained isolated from Bangkok, and could be reached only by a difficult river trip or an elephant-back journey that took several weeks. Such isolation

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- the sunlight glistening on the golden pagodas in the Buddhist temples
- the colour and splendour of all the flowers which are everywhere
- the moat and wall over 700 years old
- the traffic - it actually moves. Quite a surprise after Bangkok!
- the sellers of delicious Thai food and Chinese noodles in competition with Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, and McDonalds
- the outstanding beauty of the northern Thai women and their wonderful smiles
- strawberries and peaches to be enjoyed



Bin and Da at The House of Love - their mothers have both died

Left and right : Night bazaars in Chiang Mai
Below: Children at the House of Love



in the winter months

- some of the best golf courses in the country - a golfer's delight!
- shopping malls which would give Oxford Street a run for its money
- artisans and craftsmen producing beautiful pieces of art and craft
- and so much more!

TOURISM

Hundreds of thousands of tourists come to Chiang Mai every year. They come to experience and appreciate the beauty of Chiang Mai, and to shop in the famous Night Bazaar. Chiang Mai is a shopper's paradise. You can buy virtually everything here: beautiful silk, carved wooden ornaments and screens, celadon pottery, silver jewellery, leather goods, hand-drawn pictures, paintings and water colours and oils, parasols, wooden toys, clothing.

However, you will need to learn the art of bargaining and enjoy the fun of bidding for the gift you want to buy!

FESTIVALS

Festivals are an important part of Thai life, and Chiang Mai celebrates one festival - or even two - every month. The festivals may have a religious, cultural,

agricultural or local significance. Perhaps the three festivals that are the most popular are:

1 THE CHIANG MAI FLOWER FESTIVAL

This usually takes place in the first week of February. I've stood for three hours on the Nawarat bridge watching the wonderful procession pass by: marching bands, dancers, vintage cars, northern Thai folk wearing the exquisite northern Thai costumes and dress, and of course, the magnificent floral floats with the beauty queens.

2 SONGKRAN

(Traditional Thai New Year)

Songkran is celebrated in April when the moon is full. The whole city becomes full of life and excitement. Songkran could be called the water festival: the religious part of the festival sees the Thai Buddhists making merit as they sprinkle water on revered Buddhist images and as they construct sand pagodas in the temple courtyards. Songkran is also important for family life as the younger members of the family pay their respects to their elders by pouring fragrant water

Working on handicrafts at the New Life Centre, Chiang Mai





Chiang Mai

over their hands and as they seek their blessings. This is a very beautiful ceremony. But Songkran can also be described as “Songkram” which means WAR. During the four day holiday there is a huge water fight on the streets of Chiang Mai. If you are brave enough you can walk about and enjoy the fun, joining in the water throwing. Or you can drive

around the city and see truck loads of young people or families throwing water, and if you forget to lock your car, you may find a bucket of water has been thrown into it!

LOI KRATHONG (Festival of Lights)

In November, again at the time of full

moon, the Thai people celebrate Loi Krathong. They float (loi) a candlelit floral offering (krathong) down the rivers or canals. In effect as they do this they believe they are showing their respect to the water spirits and they are also asking the spirits for forgiveness for their wrong doings. There are literally thousands of krathongs floating down the Ping River in Chiang Mai. It's really a beautiful sight. However, we know that forgiveness of sin does not come from water spirits but from Jesus alone.

RELIGION

Most Thais are Buddhists and Buddhism is very important to Thai society. To be Thai is to be Buddhist. The Thai people in Chiang Mai worship as Buddhists. In the early morning they have the opportunity to make merit by giving alms (and food) as the monks walk barefooted holding their bowls along all the streets

Students from the 'Centre for the Uplift of the Hilltribes' - The Karen Bible School



in Chiang Mai. On special holy days some of the people of Chiang Mai go to the temple bearing gifts for the monks. Again they are seeking to make merit. There is also a time of private worship/meditation in the temple in front of an image of Buddha, with burning of incense sticks, lighting of candles, the offering of lotus blossoms and prayer. The people of Chiang Mai, like all the people of Thailand, are outwardly very religious. For many, the teachings and example of Buddha shape their lives.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Christian Church in Chiang Mai is alive and well, and it is growing! However Christians would number less than one per cent of the overall population. But the Lord is using his Church to bring blessing and hope to the people of Chiang Mai.

CHRISTIAN WORK

1 NEW LIFE CENTRE

There's quite an infamous saying about people visiting Chiang Mai. It goes something like this: "If you ever visit Chiang Mai, you must go to Doi Suthep temple and make merit; eat khaw sooy, a wonderful chicken and noodle dish; and then visit a brothel!" Prostitution is a huge problem, and the Church is doing very definite and positive things to combat it.

The New Life Centres have been in operation now for 11 years - there are three in Chiang Mai and one in Chiang Rai. The NLCs are a "home" for hill tribe girls, many of whom are in great moral danger of being sold into prostitution. Most of the girls have had no opportunity to study, so at 15 or 16 they begin their education. According to their academic ability the girls will

complete primary or secondary education. Then they go on to study at Commercial College, Bible School, University or they will opt for some kind of vocational training. As they study in the evening, during the day they learn various kinds of handicrafts. The NLC helps over 180 young women. Some are definitely saved from being sold into prostitution, and some have been rescued from brothels and given the opportunity to start a new life.

2 THE HOUSE OF LOVE

The House of Love was started in 1995 by TBMF missionary Ms Kim Brown. It was established to help women and children suffering with HIV and AIDS. The incidence of HIV/AIDS in Chiang Mai and district is extremely high, and the House of Love is there just to help a few of them! The



House of Love is a hospice where young women and little children come to live and die. Some are referred from the NLCs because they are showing symptoms of full-blown AIDS. Others come by way of the Government's Social Welfare Department.

There are 16 residents at the House of Love; eight are children ranging in age from three months to 14 years. The others are between the ages of 17 and 26. Kim, who heads up this project, says: "Pray that in the midst of the brokenness and death, we will be able to share God's love with others and continue to

celebrate the hope and love of life everlasting that is a gift to us from God. Pray also that those at the House of Love who do not yet know Jesus will come to accept his love and salvation for their lives."



Kim and the children at the House of Love



New Life Centre, Chiang Mai, Worship Service led by NLC chaplain

Below left: Margaret, one of The House of Love staff members

PROFILE: NAWTAK

Her story is a common one among tribal women in Northern Thailand. As a teenager she was sold into prostitution, forced to leave her village home to work in a brothel in Bangkok. By the age of 17 she had been diagnosed with HIV, the virus that leads to AIDS.

Now 21, she is one of 16 residents at the House of Love in Chiang Mai.

3 THE CENTRE FOR THE UPLIFT OF THE HILLTRIBES (CUHT)

The title is another name for the Karen Bible School, where around 45 young people, aged from 17 to 29, are training for the christian ministry.

They are now studying over four years and their studies will equip them to work in the churches in the north of Thailand. Some

will become pastors, others will become evangelists; others will work with women; some will go on to be workers with young people or children. ●



Bin, 3 years old and HIV positive. His mother died this year

The Democratic Republic of

CONGO

Plans for the Bateke women's leadership seminar at Bwantaba were going ahead. All the village groups were aware and preparing to send their delegates. Mama Nsele, the District women's president in Kinshasa, a short, sturdy woman, had prepared a programme of varied sessions with her colleagues, Mama Botende, vice-president, and Mama Monga, secretary, both tall and imposing women.

On the plateau itself Mama Mumfwa, the women's leader at Mbankana, on her own initiative had summoned others to discuss what each village should contribute in the way of manioc, pondou, chickens and fish. Slight of build, but knowing her own mind, she was a potential leader for the whole area. The seminar could enhance that potential. Her husband, Albert, an out-of-work nurse, had been recruited to a medical team tracking sleeping-sickness in the villages.

One important question however,

which concerned Mama Mumfwa, and to which no-one knew the precise answer, was how long it would be before she gave birth to Number Four? Well on in her pregnancy, her term would be reached about the time of the seminar. This could be awkward. If she delivered beforehand she would miss the seminar. A birth during the seminar would be likely to stop the show, such an event being of intrinsically greater interest than a discussion of leadership skills. The ideal scenario would be a delay until after the seminar, but how long had she to go?

The eve of the seminar saw Mama Nsele and team, evangelist Mputu and ourselves taking the long, winding road up and across the plateau. The Mai-Ndombe bridge still being out of action, the diversion led by a slow, bumpy road to where the turbulent waters of first the

Bombo and then the Lumene river were crossed by low, wooden bridges. In spite of the discomfort and one or two anxious moments, we reached Bwantaba at nightfall in good humour, having shed the cares of the big city.

Very few women had arrived from other villages, just three from Mbankana. Mama Mumfwa had not yet given birth, they said, but as Papa Albert had gone to Kinshasa with the medical team, she'd had to stay and look after Numbers One, Two and Three - Jeremiah, Jonah and Adonijah, "Ado" for short. A pity. It had to be hoped that Albert would soon return.

"If she delivered beforehand she would miss the seminar."

After supper six women arrived from Ngwene, having walked the five miles from the main road. Their range of educational backgrounds was typical. Mama

Momponga, their leader, had had no schooling. In her day girls didn't go to school. Agnes, on the other hand, had benefited from a full secondary education. Although no women had arrived from Kinzono, Nsuni or Bombo-Lumene, the seven from Bwantaba itself would bring the total to a worthwhile number.

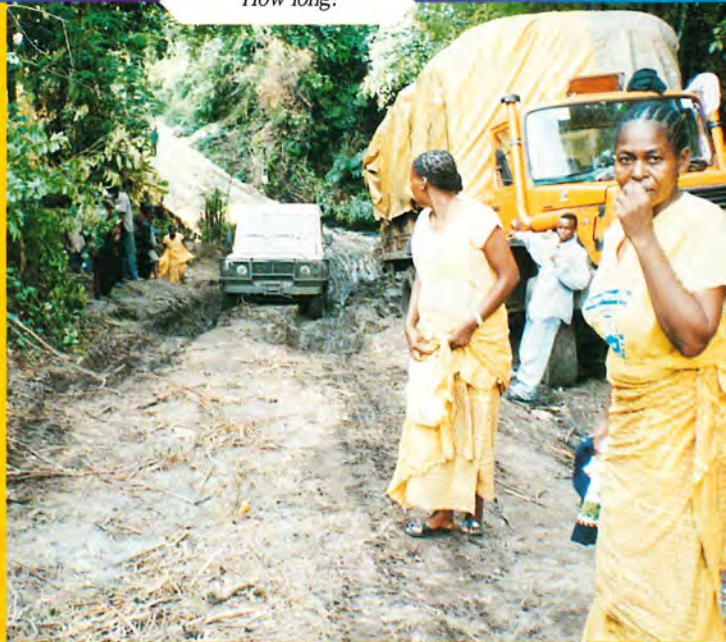
At seven o'clock next morning, the programme got under way - prayers, breakfast, Bible study, two main sessions, lunch, siesta, two more sessions and supper. Collapse exhausted! The younger women took notes. Others could not so much as read a line of Scripture. Mama Momponga's eyes never left the speaker's



Mama Nsele leading a session at Bwantala

How long ?

... she had gone
into labour and had the baby
at the side of the road



Mama Mumfwa, Ezekiel and Papa Albert

face, and she nodded her agreement. Still no sign of Mama Mumfwa or other delegates, and so it was to be for the next two days.

In spite of a rainstorm or two and minor crises of food or water, the women present gained new insights into their role in the home, in society and in the church. They found new strength of purpose in the bond that developed between them and with the Kinshasa leaders. Each group reported on their activities or lack of the same, and resolved to do things differently in future.

A joyous Sunday morning service, led by the Kinshasa women, with Mama Nsele preaching on, "Go, tell!" brought the seminar to a suitable close. In the afternoon Deanna drove the Mbankana women home, and learned that Mama Mumfwa had given birth to a boy early that morning. On her way to the medical centre with her mother she had gone into labour and had the baby at the side of the road. Her mother had

done the necessary, wrapped the infant in a cloth and helped her home. Albert had not yet returned from Kinshasa.

On the Monday the plan was to take the Kinshasa women to the Mai Ndombe, where they would cross by canoe and get transport home. On the way we

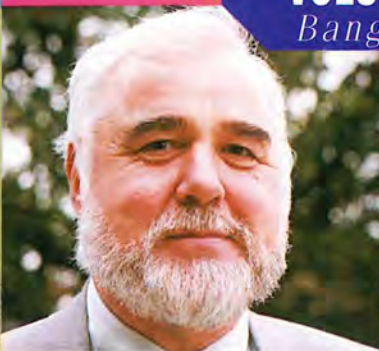
dropped the Ngwene women at their village. They immediately rushed to their fields to get manioc, aubergines, peppers and tomatoes, which were stuffed into the bags of Mama Nsele and co as tokens of their

appreciation. Finally they crossed the fast-flowing river without incident and began to negotiate with the driver of a taxi-bus. We waved farewell and returned to Bwantaba.

Only next day did we get to visit Mama Mumfwa. Looking bright as a button she was proudly feeding Number Four, whom, in Albert's prolonged absence, she had named Ezekiel. "Another prophet!" exclaimed Mputu. Mama Mumfwa, however, turned pensive. "How long will it be before the next seminar?" she asked, "for those of us who missed out. In two months time the baby will have grown....." Ah, Mama Mumfwa! How long? "We shall have to start thinking about that," we said. ●



Kitchen
Team at
Bwantala



Travel Travails of a

BMS VOLUNTEER **DONALD FOSTER** RECALLS HOW HE GOT LOST AND NEARLY MET THE PRIME MINISTER OF BANGLADESH

By way of experimentation, I thought a baby taxi ride to the Sonargaon Hotel would be an easy start for me to get used to the Bangladesh traffic system. It is after all the largest and poshest hotel and I am a Westerner. That was my big mistake – I should have read Sue Headlam’s well written note. It said Sonargaon Hotel – Kowran Bazaar.

A man stood by his vehicle and looked at me in horror as I said in my best, newly-acquired Bangla English – “Son-ar-ga-on”. I got the message he was not going to take me. Perhaps he’s broken down and waiting for the AA, I thought.

There were lots of empty taxis passing by so I watched the professionals. Then, taking the plunge, I stepped out into the middle of the road with my hand

waving downwards. As I opened my eyes, I realised a friendly gentleman with a black beard and whitish/grey muslim fez hat was talking to me as he sat back at the controls of his machine. Proud of my ability to understand some limited conversation, I correctly assumed he was saying, “Get in. Where do you want to

convincingly with that knowing, gentle smile that meant, “I know the real price”. I quickly changed it to, “OK. One hundred Taka” in a rather frightened voice at the force of his reaction. A shrug of the shoulders, he was affable again and set off in a southerly direction.

The ride was great fun for the first hour or so. I knew the baby taxi would be slower than the BMS vehicle. I had also been told that rickshaws were not allowed on certain roads. Wasn’t this a kind of Reliant Robin? Perhaps it’s just a one way system – but there were 20 different ways it seemed as we approached a roundabout. The driver veered in and out whilst I choked on the pollution. Car horns blew, the noise was deafening.

“So-nar-ga-on” I kept repeating, realising I was nowhere near my destination. By now we were firmly wedged between numerous vehicles of all types, in a jam with engines switched off. I had a strong feeling a two kilometre journey should not have taken two hours and apart from that, where was the nearest loo?

Not renowned for panic in such situations and forcefully repeating the

**A man stood by his vehicle
and looked at me in horror
as I said in my best, newly-
acquired Bangla English –
“Son-ar-ga-on”.**

go?”.

“Son-ar-ga-on” I repeated several times, wondering why he looked so puzzled.

“Two hundred Taka!” was the eventual response. Sue had written, “about Tk 70”. I remembered that.

“Seventy Taka!” I said very



one stranger

destination required, he nodded, shrugged his shoulders and pointed to a huge crowd of people. I took that to mean, "It's over there".

"It's a strike" I said to myself with my prayer life improving every second. I remembered Sue had told me to stay indoors and "keep well out of the way". Just then I realised that the men in the shirts and white hats were policemen.

A colleague was called over and limited English conversation started: "English?" he asked. Having to confess that I was, a discussion ensued between them. It was clear they were not going to let me through the crowd. Another baby

I had a strong feeling a two kilometre journey should not have taken two hours and apart from that, where was the nearest loo?

taxi drew alongside. "Very far – another kilometre" the policeman said.

I had ended up near the river in Sadharghat, a district of Old Dhaka. The kind policeman gave my new driver instructions. The road was remarkably quiet of traffic but people were everywhere. Suddenly, a flare of sirens. Police vehicles and pick up trucks containing people with guns hurtled by. I kept my camera down. Perhaps it's a strike and they are going to deal with it. A big car whooshed past with the Bangla flag on the bonnet followed by more vehicles.

Within seconds we were in traffic again and our own high speed progress (for a baby taxi) slowed to normal. I was rather glad that even this driver did not take me to the Sonargaon Hotel, but to the Sheraton. In the Sheraton, I knew exactly where the toilets were.

Now I read Sue's note very carefully. It would have helped if I had pronounced 'S' as 'Sh' and in any case, I should have asked for 'Kowran Bazaar' or even something similar. Next week I'm going on a river cruise on my day off. I have already warned my host that I may be a week late for dinner. ●



Where are they now?

...Hannah Clark

ACTION TEAM - ITALY 1992

Before going out to Italy with BMS in 1992, Hannah Clark had promised herself never to follow her mother into teaching. But her experiences of that extraordinary year changed all that.

"It was really the two-month tour we did in churches and schools on our return to Britain that made me begin to question God on what he had in mind for my future. I thoroughly enjoyed all the nerve-racking time of our work out in Italy – especially the time spent with classes..."

But Hannah already had a place to study English at Lancaster: "Being a member of the close-knit Italy team increased my confidence, and I settled into life at university quickly. My faith in God had also grown and I made a real effort to make this clear to others from the start."

By the end of her first year, Hannah was Treasurer of the Christian Union and playing her flute in the music group.

Summer au-pairing was something of a disaster ("The one thing which kept me sane was my visits to the local evangelical church"), but a chance meeting in the mountains resulted in a transfer to help teach English in an Italian school.

At this point Hannah surrendered, and signed up for postgraduate teacher training at Warwick University going on to join the staff of a primary school in Northamptonshire, where she discovered that the Chair of Governors shares her passion for the language and culture of Italy. ●

Prayer focus



EUROPE



Saverio and Betsy Guarna:
Tirana, Albania

Italian born Saverio and Betsy have been involved in church planting in Albania since 1992. When asked about the current situation in Albania, Saverio, a former Secretary of Evangelism and President of the Italian Baptist Union said:

“When I was asked about prayer requests for Albania, my mind jumped back to the wonderful Easter worship service held in the main auditorium of the Tirana Pyramid on Easter Sunday afternoon. All the Evangelical churches of Tirana were present, there must have been more than 1,000 people filling the ground floor and the three balconies; 80 per cent of them were young people. It was a true celebration of Jesus' resurrection, a testimony of how God can change the hearts of people and how this change brings joy and peace to the new life in him.

There are many problems and terrible suffering continues; the future seems black, one can almost touch the hopelessness in the lives of these people, they are discouraged and pessimistic. We have never before felt such a widespread desire in the Albanians to emigrate from their country.

Against this background and even more today, we realise and appreciate

God's loving and patient work in the hearts of the young people in our churches. Please pray for them; they are the hope and the future for a new Albania.

Please pray:

- **for the Christians who have stood firm in their faith and continued the running of the churches when all expatriate personnel were evacuated; thank God for these people and pray for his strength**
- **for calm and peace to return to Albania and for the news of the hope that new life in Jesus brings to be spread widely**
- **that God, by his Spirit, would bring an end to the cycle of hatred and violence, allowing the people of Albania to move on and rebuild their lives**
- **for Saverio, Betsy and all christian workers in the country, that God would lift and sustain their spirits and bless their work**



Wendy and Wayne Hadley:
St Etienne, France

The Hadleys have been in France since December 1995, first learning the lan-

guage and now involved in church work. Much of that work is evangelistic and the spring and summer months tend to be especially busy. Sometimes the local churches join together in initiatives or teams from the UK travel to France to work with Wayne and Wendy. Easter saw one such group of ten young people from the Hadleys home church in Sutton Coldfield who were involved in a week of street evangelism. More street evangelism took place in early May with an almost 30 strong team from Baptist churches in the Rhone Alps region of France. That team handed out lots of literature, sang and performed drama and the Hadleys say that whilst fruit from such events is often hard to see at first in France, at the evening events there were people present who had never been to an evangelical service before (many French people still view Protestants with suspicion).

A more recent event was held during the World Cup. A mini football tournament was a highlight for those in the city between 14 and 21 June. It was organised by the St Etienne church and featured teams from Ambassadors in Sport UK, Christians in Sport from St Etienne and Valence and many other secular teams. During this period the six evangelical churches of St Etienne joined together to support one another's initiatives and also to support the work of Christians in Sport at their events, handing out water to thirsty visitors as well as evangelistic literature designed especially for the World Cup. As Wayne puts it, they were “giving the message to as many as will come to St Etienne... that there is life after football...er, I mean, after death!” BMS gave a grant of £1,500 for the pur-



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

£1,500 for the purchase of evangelistic literature to be used at this and similar events throughout the country.

Please pray:

- for those who heard the gospel at all of these events, that God would move their hearts to respond
- for good follow up and support in the local churches
- that the Lord would break down the barriers of mistrust in those who do not usually have dealings with Protestant churches



Stuart and Joyce Filby:
Bredene, Belgium

The Filbys pastor a church which began in their home and has now moved out to rented accommodation in the town. There have been recent encouragements with some people giving their lives to the Lord and others being baptised, but there are also many struggles. Stuart and Joyce write:
“Our church numbers have dropped recently because many folk must now work on a Sunday... Our Sunday school numbers have also decreased and we would value your prayers for them that

we might receive a couple who have a heart for this work among children. We have, over the months, also lost several key workers... It is not that they have found somewhere else to go but simply that they find it difficult to commit themselves to their fellow Christians. During the last months, we have become so aware of the many Belgian Christians who stay at home having had, in the past, disagreements in their churches and who are not prepared to put things right. No amount of reasoning with them seems to be able to change this attitude. One couple said to me that they had gone from church to church in the last 18 months, looking for a church that “fits them”! I told them that they would never find one but they should seek themselves to “fit in and adapt” to a church. We haven’t seen them since! We have met pastors, musicians, youth leaders etc, all sitting at home whilst the church cries out for such people to help and return.”

Please pray:

- that the Lord would encourage Stuart, Joyce and their church in the good things and give them strength to deal with the battles
- for workers to come forward to help - particularly a couple for the Sunday school
- for the new Christians - that they would grow quickly and not be discouraged
- for a spirit of reconciliation amongst the Belgian Christians who no longer attend a church

Around the world



Prayer focus

AFRICA



Margot Bafende: Mbanza Ngungu, Democratic Republic of Congo

Margot officially retired from service with the BMS at the end of April, returning home to Mbanza Ngungu with her Congolese husband Augustin in mid May. Margot has faithfully served as a teacher in Congo with BMS since 1959, originally in Mbanza Ngungu then Ngombe Lutete and Kinshasa, returning to Mbanza Ngungu in 1987 as lecturer at the ISP teacher training college. She will probably do a small amount of teaching there for a while but much of Margot's time will continue to be taken up with her work at the Kola church involved in evangelism, teaching, youth and children's work and so on. It won't all be work though – after an introduction during her last Home Assignment, Margot is hoping to teach the ladies at the church how to line dance!

Please pray:

- **that the Lord would continue to guide Margot and Augustin in this next stage of their lives. It has been said that Christians never really retire.**
- **pray that Margot would relax and enjoy a hopefully slower pace of life now and that the Lord would support those taking on her work**

ASIA



Karen and Peter Lloyd: Pokhara, Nepal

Barnabas Project volunteers, Peter and Karen, returned to the UK at the end of May after nine months in Pokhara. During that time Peter has enjoyed teaching the children of missionary workers at a primary school in Pokhara and Karen has seen progress in her work. Before their return home Karen temporarily took over as line manager of a Workcentre offering vocational training to former leprosy sufferers, helping to rehabilitate them into the community. During her time in post, one of the large hotels in Pokhara showed an interest in selling some of the handicrafts produced by her clients. She and

others are keen to look at ways of expanding the retail outlet but also remembering that clients with leprosy-affected hands can only work slowly. Peter hopes to do some supply teaching from June and returns to teach at St Faith's school in Alcester in September, but Karen's future is currently unknown. They say: "It has been a very special time here during which we have been very aware of God's presence and grace towards us. People keep asking where this experience will lead us. At the moment we don't know, but pray that we will be open to God's leading and guiding to take us on to what he has for us."

Please pray:

- **for a quick and easy re-adjustment to life in the UK – not always easy**
- **that the Lord would open doors for Karen, showing her clearly what he wants her to do next**



Katrina and Martin Butterworth: Butwal, Nepal

Martin feels he is making gradual progress helping his Nepali colleagues at Nepal Hydro and Electric to react to

increasing customer requirements for quality assurance – a somewhat alien concept. In his post as Quality Manager, Martin has had to handle many personnel problems which he was not expecting and problems with the language make life difficult, but things are moving on. Work at the clinic, which Katrina began with another doctor, is increasing and most days there are more people than they can see. Most are very poor people who cannot afford any other medical services. She has also begun working each Friday with the Family Planning Association of Nepal and is hoping to build contacts with other medical professionals locally and encourage them to develop caring services. Katrina's Nepali language skills are developing well and at Easter she gave a 30 minute presentation in Nepali as part of the church service.

Please pray:

- **for good health for Martin, Katrina and baby Ruth**
- **for continued progress in Martin's difficult job and for a greater understanding of how the culture he works in operates**
- **wisdom for Martin in dealing with difficult personnel issues**
- **progress with the language for both but particularly for Martin to communicate well with his colleagues**

mb asks some UK Baptist ministers: Should churches go it alone in mission?

✓ YES



No – Few churches have the resources to fully support a person or people. Also, gone are the days when you simply pack a bag and go – considerable expertise is needed which a professional grouping may have.

*Gerry Barlow,
Waterside, Southampton*

If a local church feels they can commit to a foreign mission project – yes, by all means. However, this could only, in my opinion, be supplementary to supporting mission organisations.

*Colin MacKenzie,
Bellshill BC, Scotland*

My church is very involved with sending medical teams to Chandraghona, Bangladesh in liaison with BMS plus, directly supporting two local churches in Romania and sending teams; also supporting BMS PIPs project.

The hands on, practical experience and exposure to the work gained by people being directly involved pays dividends which could not be gained simply supporting others on the field. It's not always right though and agencies provide a professional channel.

Steve Ibbotson, Sharing Life, Leeds

✓ YES
AND
NO

✗

Yes – Very often a church can send people on a non traditional basis when their area of work might not be readily accepted by a traditional historical missionary organisation. The church may make a judgement about a person but the 'experts' may have a limited view of the type of work that person can be involved in.



Usually not. Many mission agencies have a HUGE history of developing skills in cross cultural issues which local churches do not and you need an understanding of those issues to work effectively.

Also, longer term projects tend to have better results and local churches, for many reasons such as changing leadership, cannot maintain that long term focus. However, there are sometimes issues with a project which mean a mission agency will not touch it, rightly or wrongly; then a short term commitment from a church can help.

Steve Gaukroger, Gold Hill BC, Bucks

✗ NO

Certainly not! We would be foolhardy to ignore the wealth of experience built up over many years and the cross cultural expertise in particular. But I believe the responsibility to identify the calling of an individual is primarily with the local church so it's a partnership – hopefully a mutually beneficial one.

Adrian Prior, Creech St Michael, Somerset

If a missionary is relying on one church for support, their resources are limited and circumstances may change, leaving them high and dry. For that reason it's better for at least a group or area of churches to offer support.

Leslie Edge, Moss Park, Glasgow

There can be a duplication of work if workers are not coordinated. Going it alone leads to a spirit of independence rather than working alongside others with expertise and there can be a lack of accountability when working alone. Churches going it alone often have enthusiasts who are not necessarily skilled or trained. Also, belonging to an umbrella organisation which has credibility overseas gives support to the worker and protection to fall back on if things go wrong. Partnership is more important than individuality.

*Richard Crippen,
Bloxham BC, Oxon*

Probably not unless there is no other way to get missionaries to unreached people

groups in the countries concerned. Going it alone may well pander to the egos of church empire-builders but usually the mission societies do it all better anyway. Leave it to the professionals!

Michael I Bochenski, St Albans

ACTION POINTS

1 Examine how much of your church's life is mission and how much is maintenance. Have you got the proportions as you would like them to be?

2 If you have not already got one, ask your church members and leadership to write a mission statement for your church. Give yourself short-term and long-term measurable goals and don't forget to take stock every now and again to see how you're doing.

3 Break this mission statement down for every area of church life, so that everyone can review where they are as against where they should be.

4 See that these goals are reflected in your church's annual report and other literature.

5 What are the factors preventing us being more mission minded?

TAKE 2

Take 2
a resource for
church leaders
& workers

RESOURCES for leaders

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I was interested to read Philip's article "The way I see it" (Jan/Feb *mb*). It would have reflected the situation 20 years ago fairly faithfully. However things have changed rapidly.

BRITISH BAPTISTS AGAINST THE USE OF MODERN MUSIC IN WORSHIP

If I was to quote from certain letters in recent correspondence in the Baptist Times, it would be quite easy to justify the above headline. I don't think it would fairly

represent the British scene! Likewise the use of a letter to embody Brazilian Baptist opinion can distort reality. Philip Clements-Jewery's perspective is about 20 years out of date.

Brazilian Baptists continue to give urgency and importance to evangelism; however, a holistic view of the gospel is now an integral part of their ministry.

It is unfortunate that Philip's article appeared at the beginning of 1998. This is the year that Brazilian

Baptists have declared as the "Year of Social Action". There is even an official hymn for the year. (Do we do anything quite as prophetic in our own hymnal?)

WHAT AM I DOING IF I AM A CHRISTIAN?
IF CHRIST HAS GIVEN ME COMPLETE PARDON?
THERE ARE MANY POOR WITHOUT A HOME OR FOOD.
MY CHRIST CAME TO REDEEM US,
THE WHOLE MAN, WITHOUT DIVISION.
NOT JUST THE SOUL FROM EVIL TO SAVE,
BUT ALSO THE BODY TO RESTORE.

THERE IS MUCH HUNGER IN MY LAND,
SO MANY UNHAPPY PEOPLE!
THERE ARE LITTLE CHILDREN THAT ARE GOING TO DIE,
SO MANY ELDERLY LEFT TO SUFFER!
MILLIONS DO NOT KNOW HOW TO WRITE,
MILLIONS OF EYES DO NOT KNOW HOW TO READ,
THEY LIVE IN DARKNESS, UNAWARE
THAT THEY ARE SLAVES TO OTHER MEN.

According to World Vision

information, one Baptist church in four has a social action project linked to it: an orphanage, a school, a home for the elderly etc. Most State Conventions have a social action board. Our own State Convention has a hospital, a 3,000 pupil school and is building a centre for abandoned children. Many of our churches have their own social action projects.

John Clark
Fortaleza
Brazil

First, I would like to say "thank you" to all those who responded to an earlier letter of mine requesting surplus copies of the Baptist Hymn Book. I believe about eight barrels of books have been sent to Jamaica as a result, and more are still being offered. A response well

beyond my expectations.

My second concern follows on from this good response. As well as hymn books, the churches of Jamaica also need Bibles, and I have received a request to see if Baptists in this country would be willing to help meet this need in Jamaica. The

request is for any Bibles in reasonable condition, but the preference is for the Authorised Version (ideally in a reasonably large print. Eye care is not what it is here!) or for RSV or NIV versions.

The Revd Clifford Taylor of Rye Lane, Peckham is willing once again to act as

the co-ordinator for sending Bibles to Jamaica. He can be contacted on: 0171 639 4286. Ted Hale Northampton

LARGER THAN LIFE

Excerpt from a recent prayer letter from BMS personnel:

"We've had lots of departures from our Butwal team in the last year. Long before someone goes, Nepali friends, acquaintances and strangers come to the house to ask to buy or be given things, and it's customary to let the house worker (Didi) choose what she wants first. A missionary family in Kathmandu asked their didi what she wanted from their things, and after some thought the only thing she asked for were the husband's false teeth. "But Didi," they protested, as they tried to put her off, "they wouldn't even fit you."

"Ah," she said, "but they do!"

Mr Tim Lehane and Mrs Alison Maclean
Nepal



Cartoon by Philip Webb

The WAY I SEE IT



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

DEAR PHILIP

I hear that you joined the Jubilee 2000 human chain at the G8 Summit of world leaders in Birmingham on 16 May. I believe that this was some sort of demonstration calling for the debts of some poorer countries to be cancelled. I have to say that I'm not sure whether or not I approve. I've been reading some of the previous extracts from your correspondence and I have to agree with those people who say that for Christians to get involved in social and political action is an unnecessary distraction from their main task. The really urgent issue for Christians is to preach the gospel. Can you persuade me otherwise?

Yours sincerely

Tom .

DEAR TOM

Thank you for your letter. I hope I don't have to go over again the reasons why preaching the gospel and social and political action are not opposed to one another, but rather go side by side in the one mission of God which we are called to share. Actually, I believe the demonstration at Birmingham in May was in the great tradition of biblical prophetic protest against injustice. The point is, that the debt burden is crippling poorer countries. It is the poorest and most vulnerable people who suffer as resources are taken from health, education and development to pay off the debt. We are talking about saving lives here. It's no more and no less than a simple matter of justice.

Yours in Christ

Philip .

DEAR PHILIP

I'm still not convinced that cancelling debts is right. It only encourages irresponsibility on the part of the governments of those countries. And what about the wastage as vast fortunes are creamed off into the anonymous Swiss bank accounts of Third World dictators? The wrong isn't all on one side you know.

Yours

Tom .

DEAR TOM

Actually, those Third World countries were actively encouraged back in the 70s to borrow money from the West. If there was any irresponsibility, it belonged to the leaders as well as the debtors. And Europe enjoys its present prosperity because of massive debt relief after the Second World War, so why should we deny to others the same thing from which we have benefited? Above all, isn't the forgiveness of debt at the very heart of our biblical faith, whether it be financial debt as in the book of Deuteronomy, or spiritual debt in the case of our relationship to God? The campaign for debt relief is simply asking that others be treated in the same way as God has treated us. I hope you now see why I believe it was important to have been there in Birmingham in May.

In Christ

Philip .

Action Card

Water Works

How's your access to taps and toilets? "A personal question" you may respond, and you would be correct. The availability of these two vital facilities is quite literally a matter of life or death to each one of us.

In recent years, the numbers of people enjoying clean water has steadily risen. By 1994, three quarters of the world's people were benefitting from safe water, up from 61 per cent just four years earlier. This is a remarkable achievement, but during the same period, the proportion of people who had a sanitary means of excreta disposal declined from a poor 36 per cent to an even poorer 34 per cent. The recent cholera epidemic in Peru and outbreaks of bubonic and pneumonic plague in India are three well highlighted examples of illness resulting from the lack of good sanitation. Diarrhoea thrives in the absence of hygienic conditions and kills 2.2 million children each year.

It has been reported that expenditure on sanitation in poorer countries declined when they found their budgets stretched thin from making payments on enormous international loans. Hopefully, the current calls for debt relief for poorer countries by the year 2000 will have some effect. In the meantime many communities are being helped to help themselves. One



such as this is in Nepal which has one of the highest maternity mortality rates in the world – 12 children in every 100 die before they reach one year old.

The United Mission to Nepal works with local people who, recognising the inter-relatedness of health problems, place great importance on building clean water systems and latrines and promoting literacy and immunisation, resulting in significant reductions in mortality rates.

Please send this month's card with a message of support to: UMN Clean Water and Sanitation Programmes, c/o Jen Marston, Health Service Office, United Mission to Nepal, PO Box 126, Kathmandu, Nepal •

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

ABY Project Barnabas

The Alliance of Baptist Youth is running an initiative aimed at linking up BMS Action Teams with people who are interested in following their progress through the year and in writing to these young people while they are away from home.

Letters from the UK are an important lifeline for these young people, many of whom are leaving home for the first time and going into some very unusual situations. It's a great support for them to know that people back home are thinking of them and praying for them.

If you would like to be a part of this initiative, write to: Paul Brownnutt, ABY Project Barnabas, c/o Sam Gibson, BMS, PO Box 49, Baptist House, Didcot, OX11 8XA or email three@bits.bris.ac.uk

CREDITS

General Director
Managing Editor
Editor

Alistair Brown
Richard Wells
Jan Kendall

Regular Contributors

Alistair Brown, Owen Clark, Philip Clements-Jewery, Sam Gibson, Jan Kendall, Gerry Myhill, Philip Webb, Richard Wells, Robert Seward (RSDesign), Sarah Prentice Joy Knapman (for enquiries about service)
Halcyon Print & Design, Heathfield, East Sussex

Design Editors
Director for Missionaries
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Address
Telephone
Fax
Web site
E-mail
Registered charity no.

PO Box 49, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA
01235 512077
01235 511265
<http://www.rpc.ox.ac.uk/bms/index.htm>
Editorial: herald@bms.org.uk
Other departments: mail@bms.org.uk
233782

Checkout

Missionary Movements

JULY

AUGUST

Arrivals

Arrivals

Angus and Carol MacNeill from Sangklaburi, Thailand

Chris and Sarah Mattock from Carlentini, Italy

Corinna Woods from Dullu, Nepal

Mark and Claire Ord from Genova, Italy

Neil and Ruth Abbott from Clermont Ferrand, France

Mike and Daveen Wilson from Mossoro, Brazil

Robert and Catherine Atkins from Toulouse, France

John and Lidia Pullin from Campo Grande, Brazil

Wayne and Wendy Hadley from La Talaudière, France

Phil and Rosemary Halliday from Massy, France

Gwen Hunter from Kimpese, Democratic Republic of Congo

Departures

Departures

26 June to 14 July

Sheila Samuels to Delhi

David Martin to South Africa for the BWA Council

John and Maria Dyer to Santa Catarina, Brazil

Paul and Hilary Drinkwater to Kathmandu, Nepal

Mark and Suzana Greenwood to Fortaleza, Brazil

Neil and Ruth Abbott to Clermont Ferrand, France

Mark and Claire Ord to Genova, Italy

Robert and Catherine Atkins to Toulouse, France

Wayne and Wendy Hadley to La Talaudière, France

Phil and Rosemary Halliday to Massy, France

One of our favourite stopping places on our visits was Dona Freda's in Porto Rico, a small riverside town, on the banks of the River Parana. Dona Freda always seemed to know when we were going to arrive and would have fresh bread baked and a meal ready.

The Last Word

One day we found her very upset as her pet tortoise had gone missing. This wasn't too difficult to imagine as she had a large vegetable garden with lots of lettuce and cabbage patches. Also a large orchard full of orange and mango trees, grape vines, as well as other exotic fruits. The tortoise could have been anywhere in the garden quite happily munching away, and not a bit bothered about being lost.

After searching for a while we noticed that a broody hen, sitting on a clutch of eggs, was scolding away to herself and looking very unsettled about something. Sure enough, there was the tortoise, having re-arranged the eggs to make room for himself, and happily thinking that he had found the perfect place to hibernate!

I remember as well the time when the people from the islands on the River Parana were being forced to leave once more as the flood waters invaded their land and houses;

the nearest port with high land being Porto Rico, where as it happened, we worked and had a church building.

Many of the people brought with them the animals and birds that they were able to rescue. Many had family or friends to stay with; others camped along the side of the roads and grazed their livestock on the verges. At the Baptist Church we took in four families, each with an average of six children bawling, seven dogs a-barking, eight ducks a-quacking, nine chickens clucking, and a parrot on a perch!

Each family took up a corner of the building for their sleeping quarters and the centre served as a general communal-cum-cooking area, with an open wood fire on a pile of bricks providing the heat for a ring of pots and pans.

I said that we wouldn't

“...Many of the people brought with them the animals and birds that they were able to rescue.”

hold services while they were there, but the visitors insisted that it was an excellent opportunity for them to participate in services they couldn't normally get to. We therefore had services with people sitting in rows under the gaslight, while the chickens were jostling for space along the backs of the pews and the cats and dogs disputed space underneath. Mothers were bathing and feeding babies; others were

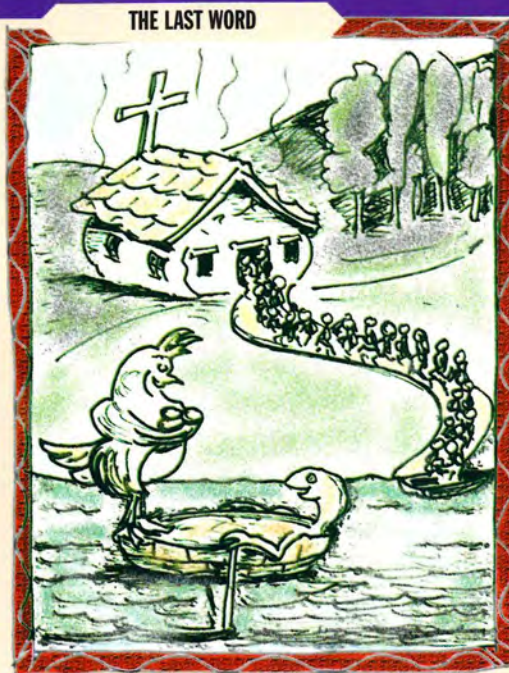


ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT SEWARD

cleaning fish and preparing food.

The overall atmosphere was one of joy and celebration with everybody singing and participating in what were truly family services.

One evening we were well in to the service and the smells coming from the pots and pans were enough to make your mouth water. At this stage there were noticeably less chickens jostling for space on the pew backs, much to the cleaner's relief!

I was preaching and thought I was doing pretty well, so well that I was considering taking notes on myself, and was busy waving my arms about a bit to emphasise different points. The people were animated which all helped toward my self illusion. Alas, it wasn't my message that was causing the animation, but plates being filled with food and passed around. It wasn't long before a plate was slapped into my outflung hand by one of the ladies with the words:

"There Pastor, all this preaching is hungry work. Tuck into that!" Perhaps one way of shutting up the preacher when the time has been forgotten! ●

GERRY MYHILL

Gerry Myhill is a BMS missionary working in Antonina, Brazil



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22 SEPTEMBER SOUTHAMPTON	01823 698977	2 OCTOBER EDINBURGH	0141 775 1201
23 SEPTEMBER LONDON	0171 639 8717	3 OCTOBER GLASGOW	0141 775 1201
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