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**NO.1 MISSION MAGAZINE  
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FOCUS ON VELLORE  
INTERNATIONAL**



CAMBODGIENNE  
Culte DIMANCHE A 15 H.  
**CENTRE  
PROTESTANT**

## The challenge of other faiths

*Jesus is Lord.*



EGLISE EVANGELIQUE  
BAPTISTE



Culte le Dimanche 10





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**THIS ISSUE  
THE CHALLENGE OF OTHER FAITHS**



Jan Kendall

**A** lot of people since Pilate have asked "What is truth?", and there have been a lot of

different answers as well. Throughout history the pendulum has swung backwards and forwards, between a "this is what you must believe" kind of mindset and the "it doesn't matter what you believe, because whatever it is, it will be true" reasoning that pervades the Western world today.

This issue of *mb* tries to grapple with the kind of questions that people everywhere are asking today, relating to the validity and authority of other world religions, balancing these questions with the ultimate reality of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is all the more pertinent as no longer do we have to "go" overseas, to the furthest corners of the world, to experience other belief systems. Many in the UK are rubbing shoulders daily with people who have come to the UK — or whose parents or grandparents came here — from a different cultural and faith background.

Bewitched by the spirit of the age, it's all too easy for our faith to be a secret personal belief. After all, what right have I (or you) to tell someone else Jesus can save them, but Krishna, Islam, communism, karma, Sikhism, or even materialism can't and won't? For a fascinating unpacking of this dilemma, turn to Alistair Brown's article on page 10.

You'll find our Christmas catalogue with your magazine this time. We have more goods than ever for you to look at, and we hope you will buy gifts and cards for family and friends. Every item purchased is helping the work of BMS, making Jesus known.

With best wishes

*Jan*



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**NEXT ISSUE NOVEMBER - DECEMBER  
BEING A BAPTIST – WORLDWIDE**





# News



## Jamaica Reggae Gospel

A group of Jamaican Christians have begun to record Bible passages in Patois, a dialect spoken by many people on this northern Caribbean island.

The project is being undertaken in affiliation with the United Bible Society. Courtney Stewart, General Secretary of the Bible Society of the West Indies, said: "The idea of

translating the Bible is by no means an attempt to induce people to stop speaking in English. But clearly in a society where people live, communicate, and conceptualise ideas in Patois, it is quite appropriate to provide them with the Scriptures" (*in that dialect*).

The project group has already translated and recorded John chapter 9 on cassette. John 9:35 in a traditional version reads: "Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when he had found him he said unto him, 'Dost thou believe in the Son of God?'" (Jerusalem Bible)

The recorded Patois version, if transcribed, would read: "Jesus ear seh dem trow im out and when im fine im, im seh, 'Yu believe ina di son of man?'"

The Jamaican Council of Churches has hailed the project as "a move in the right direction." It also has the support of linguists, who say that Patois satisfies all the criteria for an accepted language. (LAP)

## Niger "Teach us the Bible" plea

A remote Muslim community in Niger has asked to have its own Bible school, so that it can learn more about Christ. Wer Isenet, whose name ironically means "I don't know" in the nomadic Tuareg's Tamasheq language, is a remote desert settlement, 500 miles from the capital, Niamey. The Fulani families who live there are traditionally nominally Islamic in their faith. The families are part of the Woodabe Fulani, of



whom there are around 700,000 in Niger, with only a few Christians. They are semi-nomadic, and have been fiercely resistant to Christianity over the centuries.

A member of the Wer Isenet community became a Christian while visiting

News in Brief



### Estonia

The clause in a new Estonian proposed law that stated only Lutheran and Orthodox churches would have special legal status, has been taken out of the bill. "The emergency situation is over" spokesman Toivo Piili said. "The government establishing a special relationship with Lutheran and Orthodox churches would put other churches and congregations into an unequal position." (BWA)

### Uzbekistan

The situation for religious freedom in Uzbekistan continues to worsen. In May the Uzbek government ruled that all religious organisations must register to be legal. All groups need 100 or more signatures to start a new congregation. This directly affects many small Baptist churches outside of Tashkent. In addition, no religious meetings will be allowed in homes. (BWA/Open Doors)

### Sierra Leone

"Hundreds of defenceless civilians have had arms, legs and other body parts amputated", General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone Moses Khanu said, attributing these atrocities to the military junta overthrown last February. According to the UNHCR 530,000 refugees from Sierra Leone are currently in Guinea and Liberia, including 182,000 who fled the fighting earlier this year. (BWA)

### Lebanon

The Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut, Lebanon has doubled its intake of students in the academic year 1997/98. Fifty-eight students have registered, twice the number of the previous academic year. The students - 40 men and 28 women - have come from seven Arab countries and four non-Arab countries: Austria, Canada, Egypt, Greece, India, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan and Syria. (EBPS)

### Romania

A Christian radio network in Romania, Radio Voice of the Gospel, believes it is being unfairly discriminated against by the Romanian National Council of Audiovisual, and is facing restrictions that do not apply to commercial stations. Every year since 1992 it has applied for broadcasting licences in 13 cities, and has received only six frequencies, four of which were shared. Further applications have been disallowed, and shared frequencies will not be renewed. (Rutherford Institute)





Niamey on business, and told his friends and family about how his life had changed. Others followed, and the community appealed to Youth With A Mission (YWAM) for someone to go and teach them about Jesus.

YWAM leader Jeff Woodke made a two-day trek to Wer Isenet to validate the story. "I was amazed when I found out it was true," he said. The group's new and unexpected openness is in part due to social changes and a recent 'general awakening'. "In the past they simply moved away from any problems. But now farmers push further into the pastoral zone every year and the Woodabe are finding they cannot run from the world any more," said Woodke.

"God is at work in the African nation too," he added.

"Missionaries have been

**"God is at work in the African nation too..."**

working among the Woodabe for many years laying down the spiritual foundation. Now, from their patient sowing, we are about to reap a harvest."

Now two other Woodabe groups have contacted Woodke, one interested in learning more about the Bible, and the other requesting development help. (YWAM)

## Mali Christian school prepares tomorrow's leaders

Muslim parents in Mali, West Africa are queuing up to put



their children on a waiting list for the country's first Christian school, College Samuel.

Around 160 children aged between five and nine currently attend the school, which was founded two years ago, with a vision of preparing leaders for the 21st century. More classes will be added as funding becomes available.

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world, and most of its 11 million population are Muslims. Generally only a very few children attend under-funded government-run schools, and many leave before they finish their education.

The demand for places is high. "We could have 120 per ➔

## Alistair Brown



**A world of emotion**



Normally we'd describe the picture above as a happy group scene. Some lovely smiles, friends together posing for a photograph.

It's one of the saddest photos I've ever taken. The location is Chiang Mai in north Thailand. In the picture are two missionaries, BMS's Jacqui Wells and American Lauran Bethell. The others are teenage mothers and their children. What distresses me so much is that, other than the missionaries and one of the children, every person in this photograph has AIDS. Humanly, all face a bleak future.

This is the House of Love, and many of the residents were once the abused of the sex industry. No-one wanted them when they got too sick to work. They were just children when they were taken from their villages. Now they don't know where home is or aren't accepted there. No-one wants them. Except Christians, and they've made a home for them where there's love. I'm angry at what's been done in the past to these women and indirectly to their children. But I'm proud that Christians care for them, and glad BMS is part of showing them a divine love, the like of which they've never known before. ●





class," said YWAM director, Jean-Patrick Perrin. "But we stop at 40 because we want to be able to ensure the quality of education remains high."

"Parents know we teach about Jesus," he went on to say, "but they want good education for their children. One father wanted his son to come out of the class while we talked about Jesus, but we said that wasn't possible. He thought about it and decided to put his boy in the school anyway, and was so happy that the next year he came with his second child, and two nephews."

College Samuel's name reflects its aim of producing men and women of character, such as the biblical figures of Samuel and David. The director of the school, Paul Sanogo, said: "we want to teach morals - righteousness, truth and true love - and we want to see our students

become the lawyers, doctors and other professional people of Mali tomorrow. But more than that, we want them all to become disciples of Christ." (YWAM)



## Greenland 'Jesus' film makes history

Campus Crusade for Christ's record-breaking 'Jesus' film

has become the first feature film to be translated into the Greenlandic language.

Ninety-nine people responded to the salvation appeal given at the recent premiere in the country's capital, Nuuk.

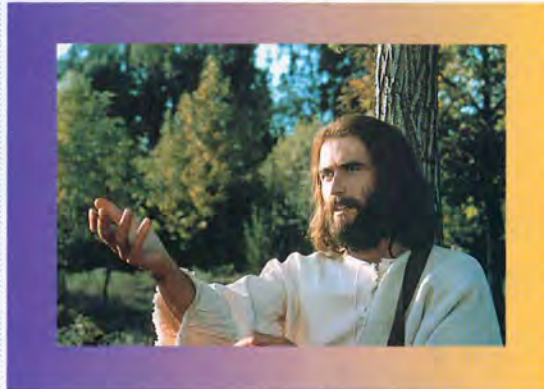
"Because this is the first feature film in history in their own language, there is a great deal of interest in it" director Errol Martens said. "Already a television station in the capital wants to broadcast the film



nationally, but we want to delay that until Christmas next year. First we're planning to train people how to use the film in evangelism so we can send teams out all over Greenland."

The country has a

population of 57,000 people - mostly Inuit - who are scattered among the 70 coastal communities, many of which are only accessible by boat. (YWAM)



USED WITH PERMISSION OF AGAPE

## Latin America El Niño brings disaster

The effects of El Niño are continuing to cause havoc in all parts of Latin America. El Niño has changed atmospheric conditions across the globe, and in so doing has brought warm waters to the western coast of Latin America.

Argentina has been hardest hit - flooding has swamped six provinces in the north west part of the country and the area has been declared a disaster zone. Farmers have lost their tobacco, cotton, rice and soyabean crops.

Millions of people have been left homeless as people in countries from the Dominican Republic to Brazil have suffered drought, and those in Ecuador and Argentina have been driven out of their homes by floods.

In Peru heavy rains in the highlands have caused usually dry rivers to rise and overflow,

forcing more than 200,000 people to flee from their homes.

The governments of South America are faced with a massive relocation problem, and have begun to construct what are euphemistically called 'transfer centres' - in reality tent cities, with no electricity, no water, and no sanitation.



"They told us to come here, then they forgot about us" said Eduardo Argumedo Carlin, a 74-year-old Peruvian. "I don't say, 'My God why have you forsaken me?' Instead I say, 'My God, why have the authorities forsaken me?'" (LAP)

EL COMERCIO





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

# World Mission Link



## Experiencing Africa

Members of the Bedford and district BMS Support Group who arrived at Bromham Baptist Church for "An African Experience" found they really experienced the African way of doing things. As the 100 or so people arrived they were asked to wash their hands using the bowls of water at the two entrances. They then sat down to a three course African style meal.

Jim Clarke, BMS Co-ordinator for Central & Eastern England, caused quite a stir when he produced a metal collar worn by an African woman in the last century on her wedding day and thereafter!

And, at the end of it, the sum of £320 was raised to help the work of BMS missionaries Stephen and Elizabeth Allford in Kinshasa.



## Dinner Disaster

Horfield Baptist Church Bristol World Mission Group wanted to raise money for the BMS Relief Fund, which raises money to help victims of disasters in areas where BMS has partnerships. They wanted to enjoy themselves as well, and so they held a "Disaster Dinner", which raised £300 for the Fund.



## Dates for your Diary Events & Meetings

### Aberystwyth

**Tues 8 to Fri 11 Sept**

Wales Annual bilingual women's conference, Aberystwyth University

More information: Gareth Hutchinson 01792 360909

### Edinburgh

**Sat 12 Sept**

BMS Youth Event, Bristo Baptist Church

More information: Derek Clark 0141 775 1201

### Edinburgh

**Wed 16 Sept**

East of Scotland Women's Missionary Association

Bristo Baptist Church

More information: Kathleen Barclay 0131 229 3084

### Kington

**Tues 22 Sept**

Worcester Women's Federation Rally

More information: Lavinia Hand 01527 520136

### Newport

**Sat 26 Sept**

Shropshire Women's Auxiliary Missionary Rally

More information: Ivy Jones 01952 506933

### Northants

**Sat 3 Oct**

In Step with the Spirit - in mission and 206th BMS Birthday Celebration, Hackleton Baptist Church

More information: Jim Clarke 01353 778984

### Bristol

**Sat 3 to Sun 4 Oct**

BMS Weekend

Bristol Villages and College Missionary Fellowship

More information Phil Hindle: 01823 698977

### Godalming

**Tues 6 Oct & 20 October**

Evening School of World Mission

Godalming Baptist Church

More Information Martin Poole: 01483 418562

### Bournemouth

**Wed 7 Oct**

Bournemouth Women's Day Apart

More information: Barbara Goose 01202 692 482

### West Glamorgan

**Wed 7 Oct**

Welsh WMA Rally, Brynaman, Siloam Baptist Church

More information: Joyce Williams 01656 732691

### Bristol

**Sat 10 Oct**

Training Day for Missionary Secretaries and other BMS supporters Bristol and District Association

More information: Phil Hindle 01823 698977

### Hove

**Sun 11 Oct**

Sussex Association Area Celebration, Hove Town Hall

More information: David Hall 01444 870662

### Glasgow

**Mon 12 Oct**

BMS Women's Missionary Fellowship, Adelades, Bath Street

More information: Jan Watson 0141 882 1201

### Rogerstone

**Sat 17 Oct**

Mission Home and Away, Bethesda Baptist Church

More information: Ruth Wood 01633 852367

### Doncaster

**Sat 24 to Sun 25 Oct**

BMS Weekend

More information: Cath Mawson 01274 487341

### Aberdeen

**Tues 27 Oct**

BMS tea

BU of Scotland Assembly

More information:

Derek Clark

0141 775 1201





### Stamp Bureau

March 17 was a day for the record books – on that one day the BMS Stamp Bureau received 70 parcels, weighing a total of 136 kg – almost ten per cent of the expected annual intake. Not surprisingly at the end of the year's first quarter, intake of stamps was up on 1997.

### Desmond Samuels

Desmond Samuels, husband to BMS missionary Sheila, died after a short illness on 1 June 1998 of complications associated with cerebral malaria. Desmond was a Presbyterian in the Church of North India and Sheila worked alongside him as a hospital chaplain. Sheila had rushed back to Delhi from home assignment in Scotland and both she and their sons were at his bedside when he died. Please remember Sheila and family in your prayers.

### Your Giving

From 1 Nov 97 to 30 June 98	
Birthday Scheme	£134,891
Relief Fund	£66,677
Lights Camera Action	£834
Word on the Street	£2,986

### Geoff writes First Commentary on John

BMS missionary Geoff Bland has just received his latest Thai commentary on John's gospel back from the printers. Geoff says: "It's got a bright green and orange cover and looks really 'cool'. With 220 pages it's obviously not in the R E Brown class, but as there is no other commentary available on John in Thai, it should be useful. The price is 75 baht, about £1.20. Pity that good quality paper-backs can't be bought for that price in the UK!" This is a major achievement for Geoff, and to have produced an original work in the Thai language is no mean feat. Well done Geoff!

# News



Alistair Brown

## June General Committee report

### Service Opportunities

In a great move of faith, BMS, in line with its strategy to take it into the next century, is now actively seeking to recruit up to 40 new personnel within the next year.

BMS is faced with around 80 needs in nine countries. Says General Director Alistair Brown: "This is not the time for scaling down our mission work. BMS is committed to cutting edge mission, back to its pioneering roots, and there

are many places where people have still to experience the gospel. We mean to be there."

## Missionary Allowances

The way BMS pays its missionaries is to be made simpler. In so doing, allowances will be made fairer to all, and will provide personnel with an adequate lifestyle in their country of service.

The current system involves intricate calculations, and factors such as children's ages, days in or out of the country, plus a huge array of small allowances for specific purposes and has made the task of paying missionaries a very complex one.

BMS will adopt an index of indices, supplied by an outside professional body, to give the ratio of costs between countries. This gives BMS a much more objective basis to calculate costs relative to the UK.

## Management Structures Reviewed

Two BMS departments will be amalgamated under plans proposed by a Management Structures Review Group. The Department for Missionaries and Department of Operations will be brought together, thus eliminating uncertainty and confusion as to which department is doing what, and also should do away with duplication of work.

This new department will be called the Department for World Mission. It will have one director, and seven managers, five of whom would ideally be based overseas, and two — a manager for missionaries and a manager

News in Brief



for operations — who would be based at Didcot.

Other recommendations that were carried were: the Department for Constituency Support will be renamed the Department of Communications, and all senior staff, that is directors, managers and co-ordinators, will be appointed on an open contract, instead of the current five-year renewable contracts.

These changes will all be implemented in January 1999.



**Chris Hutt**

## Giving Down, Legacies Up

Every Baptist in Great Britain needs to give £27 this year to enable BMS to move forward. This was the message Chris Hutt, Director for Finance and Administration told General Committee. At this time of challenge and new opportunities, giving to BMS was down 5.3 per cent for the period November 1997 to May 1998 compared to figures for the same period the previous year.

## New Personnel

Two teachers from Worcester were the latest additions to BMS personnel as General Committee voted to accept an open-ended long-term offer of service from Simon and Kate Harry. It is hoped they will work in Nepal with UMN.

Simon is an economics teacher, preacher, and Alpha group leader and Kate is a primary school teacher, and Sunday school teacher. They have led housegroups together and are both



members of Red Hill Baptist Church, Worcester.

## Other News In Brief:

John Passmore, currently the BMS Representative for Europe, will take on the new role of Representative for Asia and North Africa in the autumn. John worked alongside his wife, Nan, in Bangladesh with BMS from



**John Passmore**

1977 to 1987, and so will bring considerable knowledge and expertise with him when he takes up this post. John will have responsibility for Bangladesh, Indonesia, Central Asia and North Africa, whilst David Kerrigan, who is based in Sri Lanka, will continue to have responsibility for Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Nepal and China. Because of his family commitments, John will be based in the UK.

## Baptist House News

Welcome to:

### Helen Vallis

Helen has joined BMS as Payments Clerk, which means she pays the bills! Helen spent 25 years at the Inland Revenue, and then a year with her own dressmaking business. Together with her husband she is involved with the children's and youth work at her local Baptist church, and she also does the catering on Crusaders holidays.



### Julie Buckle

Julie is also working in BMS's Finance and Administration Department as Accounts Clerk. Her responsibilities include keeping control of BMS grants and missionaries' personal accounts. She previously worked for Lloyds Bank and Habitat. Her hobbies include horse-riding, glass painting and embroidery.



### Carolyn Tabor

Carolyn is the latest addition to the design team in the Department for Constituency Support. She comes to BMS as a mature student from the Oxford College of Further Education, and has previously worked in marketing and had her own interior design business.



## IAM

The body working with healthcare and economic and educational development in Afghanistan, have approved the application for membership from BMS.

## Nominations for the BMS Vice-Presidency

Nominations will take place at the October General Committee rather than March of the following year, as has been the general practice. Last October Andrew Green was elected as Vice-President to take effect from April 1998, and this has proved helpful in planning for the responsibilities and promotion of the Presidential year.

## CBFC report

David Martin, BMS Director of Operations, and Pam Bryan, BMS Regional Representative for Africa elect, recently attended the CBFC General Assembly held in a Roman Catholic retreat centre in Kinshasa.

Most of the delegates came from the church provinces. The meeting ratified the revised constitution and bylaws, and also gave time for praise, worship, and for reconciliation between members and peaceful resolution of long-held conflicts.

At the climax of the meeting the Revd Dr Bokundoa and Revd Zinu were elected as General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary respectively.



**WHAT RIGHT  
HAVE WE  
TO  
EVANGELISE**



**ALISTAIR BROWN**  
ANSWERS ONE OF  
LIFE'S MOST OFTEN  
ASKED QUESTIONS



**I**an's an enthusiast for his latest car. No wonder. His four-wheel drive Toyota is comfortable, spacious and could go over almost any terrain (including the city streets where he does 99 per cent of his driving!). "Everyone ought to have one of these," he enthuses.

Well, Ian's enthusiasm for his Toyota is good, but I won't be buying one. First, I can't afford it. Second, I'm happy with the car I have. Sure it's not as impressive as his but it gets me from A to B safely. I'm pleased he likes his car but content that what I have will do for me.





Much the same logic I've just used to justify keeping my car is the logic of our modern world about faith. "You believe what you want, and I'll believe what I want. Each to their own." All that counts, our post modern world seems to say, is that it works for you. As someone has quipped, it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe it doesn't matter.

If that's true, though, I've no right to tell anyone they ought to believe what I believe. Imposing your faith on someone is at least arrogant and at worst a form of abuse.

So was William Carey wrong in 1792 to form BMS on the grounds that Christians needed to take the gospel to the world? Was his colleague at Serampore, William Ward, mistaken in 1818 when he urged Chittagong converts to evangelise their neighbours? "Labour day and night and beg of them with tears not to cast themselves into hell, but to come to Christ and live."

Are we more enlightened now? Should BMS shut up shop and all of us keep quiet about what we believe? Have we a right to evangelise others?

The most critical questions must be: Are all faiths equally valid? Does it not matter what you believe providing you're sincere and trying your best?

There are equally critical answers to these questions.

1) It's no good sincerely believing the wrong thing. People hallucinating on drugs have sincerely believed they could fly and launched themselves from ten-storey high windows. Their sincerity didn't save them from a tragic death. Sincerely believing Buddha has the key

to life doesn't make Buddhism right.

2) Your best isn't necessarily good enough. If a bush fire was overtaking me at 30 mph, my very best top speed (12 mph!?) won't save me. Not even a Linford Christie could keep running at 30 mph. Sometimes even our best won't do. No-one will get into heaven on their efforts for they'll never reach an acceptable standard for a perfect God.

3) The Bible shows Jesus as unique. Many times that's said, including by Jesus himself. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

## Jesus is the ultimate authority, and he says "Go"

Peter and the apostles were no less definite: "Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Words like these were spoken to sincere adherents of another faith, not because what they believed was wholly wrong but because it was incomplete. They needed to believe in Jesus. And those words were spoken at immense personal risk, not something people do unless they're convinced that what they're telling has to be known.

But even if we believe Jesus is special, have we a right to try and persuade others to believe in him?

Of course, others have the right to believe what they want. We may despise what others think but, in general, they're

entitled to think it.

But that doesn't keep Christians quiet, for at least two reasons.

The first reason is compassion. If my friend walks dangerously near a cliff edge I know to be crumbling, I'll warn him and suggest he keeps on the path. If I stayed silent, and a rock slipped and he plunged to his doom, I'd be almost criminally uncaring. Of course, if I warn him and he still wants to walk on the edge, that's his choice. But I must give him the chance of safety. I think it was Charles Finney who said, "To tell someone less than what he needs to know is to fail to love him."

The second is command. Ultimately I don't speak or stay silent about Jesus because of what suits me or suits others. Christians are under Jesus' orders, and his commission is to tell all people everywhere about him. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matt. 28:18-19) Those famous words of The Great Commission are non-negotiable. Jesus is the ultimate authority, and he says "Go".

I fear we've lost confidence in our gospel. We're not sure it's really special. And I suspect we've bought into a pseudo political correctness that doesn't assume any right to tell others one belief or way of life is superior to another. If Jesus or the first apostles had thought like that, the good news would have died with them. It mustn't die with us. We have a unique message. Without it a lost world will stay lost.

Until all have at least heard of Jesus, like other missions BMS has a busy future. ●

**Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS**





THE

GOD-SHAPED

GAP



THE

GOD-SHAPED

GAP

## PHIL HALLIDAY REPORTS ON SECULARISM IN FRANCE

**F**rance is a secular state and proud of it! The strongest religious conviction is the belief that there is no God.

The French have not simply stumbled into secularism. They have not mysteriously and unfortunately found themselves without a faith to call their own. On the contrary, their brand of secularism is strong and determined, articulate and aggressive.

Philosophy rather than religion is taught in French schools, usually from an atheistic standpoint, and indeed all talk of religion has been banned in the educational system since 1905. Communism was more quickly accepted in France than, for example, in Britain. In the elections of 1946, the Communist Party won 28 per cent of the vote and even today the Communists still retain around ten per cent of the country's allegiance.

Whereas in Britain the church is generally perceived as having a positive effect upon society, the French are more likely to shun religion and to protect themselves against what are perceived to be its negative intentions. In a recent national survey, only nine per cent of the French said that they were influenced in any way by religious belief when making important decisions in life.

As a family and as a church, we are confronted constantly by the effects of nearly a hundred years of secularisation in France. At the school carnival last term, one of the little girls in our church was not allowed to dress up as an angel "because such a costume would be too religious". The wearing of a cross or crucifix is also against the rules in school.

Paradoxically, the latest edition of our primary school's magazine reported that the top class's project for the term has been astrology. This top class had also published two pages of horoscopes in the magazine, with the following preamble: "What is going to happen to you over the school holidays? To those of you who have never believed in horoscopes, we say: Go on! You won't be disappointed!"

We have recently had a Clairvoyants'

Fair in our local hypermarket. If Sainsburys or Tescos wanted to compete for customers, one could imagine them giving away tins of beans or cutting the price on a range of products. Here in Massy, our local hypermarket mounted a Clairvoyants' Fair and set up booths in the aisles to give their customers free consultations.

Among the adverts for pizza and soap powder which arrive daily in our post box, we regularly find publicity for mediums and spiritual healers. They claim to offer the answer to all of life's problems – in business, in love, in health matters – for a price.

One could point to the wider statistics in France: two divorces for every five marriages; one abortion for every four births; more than 150,000 suicide attempts each year; 32 per cent of the population taking tranquillisers (seven per cent regularly).

Having removed Christ from the picture, the French have created an all too apparent void in their lives – a void which other non-Christian forces are only too glad to try and fill. ● Phil Halliday is a BMS missionary, involved with church work in France.



# THE CROSS & THE CRESCENT

## RYDER AND HEATHER ROGERS TALK OF THEIR ENCOUNTERS WITH MUSLIMS IN ALBANIA



**T**he man lurched across the road between our houses, the worse for wear with alcohol, pushed his finger into my shoulder and with glaring eyes pronounced, “Zoti është një” (God is one). This is the basic statement of every Muslim. “Yes. God is one”, I agreed.

“But God is ONE”, he shouted. “That’s what Jesus said”, I replied and before he could repeat himself for the third time added, “But as a Christian I believe differently from you because for us, Jesus is Zot (God and Lord)”.

He was in no fit state to be told when he slurred, “I am a Muslim,” that a true Muslim wouldn’t be drunk or smoke cigarettes.

Conversing with Albanian people, they are ready to say as soon as possible, “I’m a Muslim.”

“It’s great that you believe in God” is my usual reply. “Jesus loves Muslims.” He gave his life as a kurban (sacrifice) for Muslims.”

At the end of the month of Ramadan

(the great Muslim fast), the sound of lambs can be heard bleating the night before Kurban Bajrami when they are sacrificed and eaten. “Do you know what Kurban Bajrami is about?” we ask our Muslim neighbours. Generally the answer is “No.” So we explained how God tested Abraham’s faith by asking him to sacrifice his own son, but stopped the knife killing him, giving a lamb as a substitute. “That’s why you substitute a lamb” we inform them but add, “Kurban Bajrami is also special for Christians because on that same mountain range, God promised, “I will provide”. Two thousand years later Jesus gave his life there as the once-for-all sacrifice for our sins. Gëzuar (happy) Kurban Bajrami”.

On another occasion, I met an enthusiastic 16-year-old Muslim lad who complained, “You Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God. God is God alone, he has no son.” As we walked along the dusty road, I tried to explain how Jesus came to earth as ‘God with us’ and was given the name Son of God because people thought that Joseph was his father. He isn’t another God, he isn’t a child of God, but the appearance in human flesh of a part (though still completely God) of the one God.

One evening talking with neighbours

outside a local shop, a young man who came to our church but rejected Christianity complained, “Isa (Jesus) was not the Son of God, he was his prophet.” “As a prophet from God, did he speak only the truth?” I asked as we sat together on a bench surrounded by his friends. “Certainly,” he replied. “But you are making him a liar because in the

**“So we explained how God tested Abraham’s faith by asking him to sacrifice his own son.”**

gospels, when he said that he was the I AM (the one and only God), the Jews took up stones to kill him for making himself God. They knew what he meant. Disbelieve the Bible and you destroy Islam.”

As you can see, there are many common points that we have with our Albanian Muslim friends, but many crucial differences. The most important is “Jezusi është Zot” (Jesus is Lord). ●

**Heather and Ryder Rogers are BMS personnel working in Albania.**







**Lila, her husband  
and her two daughters**



jenny  
dorman

# More than a good working relationship

jenny  
dorman

## JENNY DORMAN TELLS OF A TYPICAL DAY SPENT WITH HER HINDU ASSISTANT, LILA.

It's 9.00 am on Monday morning at United Mission to Nepal (UMN). In the new light and airy open plan office of the Training & Development Section, Lila, who has worked for UMN for nearly eight years, is carefully inspecting her colourful collection of African violets. She sighs as she notes that the resident rat has again been nibbling off the new shoots.

Lila consults her "things to do list", glancing at the pile in her in-tray and adds some other items to the list. I breeze in from the prayer meeting having stopped to chat with one of the Nepali management consultants who has just returned from a three day workshop at Jarjakot. He is exhausted having taken four days to get back to Kathmandu on foot and by bus.

Lila's weekend had been entirely taken up with domestic chores, visiting her mother's house on the other side of Kathmandu with an enormous pile of washing, as there was no water in her flat. Lila and her husband took the radical decision to move out of his parents' home about eighteen months ago. It was an uncomfortably acrimonious parting but each day when Lila returned from work, she would find that her second baby daughter was crying and fractious, mother-in-law having made no serious attempt to feed her. Lila has not produced a son. She has had two difficult deliveries and would like to give her daughters the sort of education she, as a village girl, never had.

Lila and her husband are Brahmin,

high-caste Hindus, but this does not mean that they are wealthy. Lila's mother is illiterate, her father reads Sanskrit and spends several hours each day saying prayers. His three sons and daughter are all earning money. He potters in his well-kept garden and shares his traditional wisdom with any who care to listen. As a family they enjoy observing all the Hindu festivals although Lila admits that the lengthy preparation of food and entertaining of relatives exhaust all the womenfolk. Quite a lot of her annual leave from UMN is absorbed by days off to do 'puja' for relatives who have died. This entails propitiating the gods on behalf of the deceased.

**"We all need to practise forgiveness every day, forgiving and being forgiven"**

Whereas I come from a very different culture in the UK. I spend less time on prayer and scripture reading than many Hindus, and am quite glad to have escaped from the commercialisation of Christmas in the West. Since coming to Nepal, however, I have found new meaning in the traditional church calendar, which presents a distinct message at Advent, Christmas, Lent etc.

We plan the day ahead. There are assignments to be marked from staff in the projects outside Kathmandu. All are

keen to improve their command of English. Lila marks the work of the basic course but doesn't hesitate to refer to me when she is not sure. She now realises that there are many different and correct ways of saying something. Mean-while, I draft a more advanced language and skills development programme on the computer. So both of us can seek and give help.

About 10.00 am Buddhi brings in glasses of sweet, milky tea. We now turn to planning the next workshop we will run in Pokhara. We agree on the objectives if Nepali staff are going to take over the management of projects from expatriates.

Other expatriates and I know that our success should be largely measured by our ability to work ourselves out of a job. We are here to train Nepalis to manage efficiently and with integrity and to this end, UMN has drawn up a list of values. All members of staff should subscribe to these whatever their religious beliefs. However, the values are undoubtedly Christian in that they include concepts like forgiveness. This can only be satisfactorily explained by the unique example of Jesus Christ. We all need to practise forgiveness every day, forgiving and being forgiven. I know I love Lila as a colleague and friend because I can see in her the image of God but I long for Lila to recognise that her love is only real because Jesus first loved her. ●

**Jenny Dorman serves with BMS, teaching English as a foreign language in Kathmandu, Nepal.**





# Muslims in High Wycombe : my neighbour, my concern, my friend?

## **PHIL GOODCHILD ASKS ARE THERE MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS?**

**H**igh Wycombe is home to around 10,000 Pakistani Muslims. How many of this community have received a clear presentation of the gospel? Probably less than half of one percent. How many have been befriended by Christians? It would appear less still. There are no known Muslim-background believers in the town.

What are God's purposes in bringing Muslims to the UK? How is God already at work in their community? These are questions we are seeking to answer. Acts 17:26-27 suggests God determines the placement of peoples for a purpose; that they might find God.

Christians frequently see Islam as an impregnable stronghold and Muslims as typified by radicals or fundamentalists. The Muslim view and understanding of

"Christian" is often that of Spice Girl or Gazza; media's reflection of our secular society.

Our response is based on the premise that the Muslim has to see and know the word 'become flesh' in real, meaningful terms. Genuine spirituality must be demonstrated in our everyday lives.

There will be many ways to a Muslim's heart. We have begun to pursue a three-tiered approach through dialogue, the meeting of practical needs, and proclamation of the gospel. Of course in practice these always overlap.

Experienced missionaries confirm nothing can replace one-to-one friendship building. Such relationships have to begin to overcome the fears and wrong attitudes on both sides to build trust.

We must start prepared to listen and learn; to understand the Muslim mindset, beliefs and values. There is need for involvement and integration with their culture, not least to avoid offence. When open dialogue can be achieved we have the opportunity to present the truth of Christ.

In our pluralistic and

secular society, many concerns of Christians will be shared by Muslims. On issues of mutual concern Christians and Muslims can stand together.

Christ can be made known in very practical ways; for example helping with form filling, schooling concerns, and simple acts of kindness. Our greatest involvements have come through teaching English and providing tuition for children.

We look for opportunities to offer prayer, perhaps for sickness, and this is rarely refused. This can bring an initial awareness of Jesus, in whose name we pray, in the meeting of needs.

The Muslim's conversion

quality fellowship and support. Will converts join existing churches? Again, it will depend how culturally British they have become. For many, ethnic, culturally relevant worship will be a necessity.

From more than 2,000 leaflets hand-delivered this year two fruitful relationships have developed for us. Our on-going prayer is that God will lead us to those who are truly seeking God.

God has the answers to the questions this work poses, and his purposes will be fulfilled in Wycombe's Muslim community. The exciting prospect is that Wycombe's Christians can be a part of it.

There are clearly no short-cuts. It will require long-term commitment but the different approaches required in meeting the needs make this a task in which many can be involved. ●

**God determines the placement of peoples for a purpose**

will be costly for the individual concerned; viewed as betrayal of family and community and deserving of punishment. The cost for the Church will be in providing

**Phil Goodchild recently completed his BTh at London Bible College and co-ordinates the Word of Life team: an inter-church venture reaching out to High Wycombe's Muslim community**





## HOW DOES A BIBLE COLLEGE PREPARE ITS STUDENTS FOR THE CHALLENGE OF OTHER FAITHS? PETER RIDDELL EXPLAINS.

At College we offer a wide range of subjects covering missiology, world religions, and the study of Islam which engage with the challenge of a Christian perspective on other faiths.

In order to help students understand that there are many responses to this challenging issue, the courses present many Christian approaches to other faiths. Students are able to trace particular streams of thought within various Christian churches and to see how attitudes have evolved in response to changing social circumstances, especially as a result of large-scale migration of adherents of other faiths to the UK.

The courses seek to portray the human face of other faiths. By doing this, students are able to see the variety of human



involvement in other faith communities. These include interfaith dialogue – not portrayed as an end in itself – often based more on relationship building than on faith sharing. The skill of apologetics is also necessary, that is Christian responses to difficult questions from adherents of other faiths. This is supplemented by the need for the reverse; that is, asking difficult questions, or levelling challenges, at adherents of other faiths. Interwoven within the above is a commitment to evangelism; affirming the uniqueness of Christ and the Christian message with a commitment to sharing the Christian faith with adherents of other faiths.

The presence of the Centre for Islamic Studies and Muslim-Christian Relations (CIS) at the College means that a major emphasis in our courses about other faiths focuses upon Islamic communities in Britain and overseas. Nevertheless, the study of Islam is accompanied by modules in courses focusing upon other world religions including Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. ●

**Peter Riddell is Director of the Centre for Islamic Studies and Muslim-Christian Relations, and Senior Lecturer in Islam and Linguistics at London Bible College**



## Mike Pilavachi

### Is our faith just “different” ?

**T**he world is changing before our eyes. Modern communications and ease of travel have turned our planet into the ‘global village’. Also, the continued migration of people of different faiths, together with the relative decline on institutional Christianity, has turned our nation into a pluralist society. Add into the mix, the mushrooming growth of New Age religions and a Church which has always seen mission as somewhere you go, it is clear that to be an effective Church today, we have a good deal of adjusting to do. If we are to continue to obey the great commission, we will always need to go into all the world. However, in addition to that, the truth is dawning that the world (Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs etc) has come to us. With all these changes, a new cultural attitude has come, that of relativism. Certainly among the younger generations there is a new approach to truth – the idea that a section of the population has a monopoly on “absolute truth” which, by definition means that others are in error, is regarded as offensive and arrogant. Rather you have your truth and I have mine. One is not superior to the other, they are just different.

How do we, as a people who believe we have had the truth revealed to us and have been given a mandate to pass it on, deal with this new situation? First, we must not lose our confidence in the gospel. It will help us to realise that the first century Church found itself in the same position we are in now. Peter, Paul and the others had to proclaim the gospel in a multi-cultural, pluralist world. Indeed Paul, while in Athens, took the statue dedicated to the unknown god as his starting point as he began to make Christ known. We must learn how to tell our story with courage, sensitivity and respect. We should strive to communicate the unchanging, absolute truth of our gospel in a way that honours the culture in which we find ourselves.

“To the Jews I have become a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (although I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.” (1Cor 9:20-22) ●

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





# Gypsy



# Revival



**JANET MALCOLMSON**  
TALKED TO TWO PEOPLE  
WHOM GOD CALLED TO  
SPREAD CHRISTIANITY  
AMONG THE GYPSIES

**A** trail of yellow fishes led a retired pastor and his wife to discover a remarkable revival. Curiosity led Colin Rogers and his wife Vivienne to follow the crudely painted fishes on a road leading from Malvern – where the couple live – to Worcester just over two years ago.



What they encountered at the end of the trail was to change both their lives. For in a field by the roadside, Colin and Vivienne came across a Christian Gypsy Convention.

Vilified for generations, Gypsies are not commonly associated with Christianity.

But there is a massive silent revival underway among a community still often regarded with suspicion – if not downright hostility – by many members of mainstream society.

The tremendous faith of these Gypsy Christians was brought home to Colin – a former pastor of Upton-upon-Severn Baptist Church forced to retire after suffering two strokes – and Vivienne when they plucked up the courage to enter the field which lay at the end of the trail of fishes.

“We parked in a layby and Vivienne went into the field to a truck where a Gypsy man was handing out cans of drink to some lads,” recalled Colin. “He stopped what he was doing and greeted Vivienne, guiding her to a Gypsy prayer meeting in the red and white striped Big Top erected in the field.

“He then took her to his own caravan and handed her some literature. Vivienne asked if he would come to meet me, as I was still sitting in the car. There ensued the start of a friendship.

“The Gypsy was Davey Jones, the leader of the ‘Light and Life Movement’. He told us revival had broken out among the Gypsies 17 years ago, when he became a Christian.

“It emerged Davey was similar to me in many respects. We both shared a pastor’s heart and, although much younger than me, he had also suffered a stroke which left him with similar problems of speech from which he was recovering.

“The three of us joined hands and prayed for each other and revival with a real sense of unity of spirit. As we left, Davey gave us a warm invitation to return the following day.”

Colin and Vivienne had no doubt the meeting was sent of God.

After Colin retired as a pastor, the couple had been drawn into a ministry of prayer.

“During April 1996, Vivienne felt the distinct impression God was saying to

her ‘pray for the world’,” explained Colin. “The Lord gave her a vision of a solitaire diamond ring in a red leather case. The scene shifted to field upon field of diamonds.

“It seemed God was saying to us he had many precious ‘diamonds’ to gather from ‘fields’ across the world.

“The message seemed urgent and, as we talked together, I urged Vivienne to keep the vision in her heart and share it only when the time was right.”

The significance of this vision suddenly became clear when the couple returned to the Convention the day after

**‘The Lord’s hand is upon the Gypsies at the moment,’ she explained ‘and it’s urgent!’**

meeting Davey Jones, to be warmly welcomed among some 2,000 Gypsies.

After a prayer meeting the couple stepped into the path of a woman.

“She enquired if we were ‘prayer warriors’,” said Colin. “We replied ‘yes’. ‘The Lord’s hand is upon the Gypsies at the moment,’ she explained, ‘and it’s urgent! We don’t know when his hand will be removed and we need your prayers’. Vivienne suddenly felt released to share the vision she had been given two months previously.

“She reached the words ‘field upon field’ and looked down to realise she was standing in a field in which there were many Gypsies coming to Christ. There would be many more Gypsies in similar fields all across the world.

“These were the ‘precious gems’ God was longing to gather in – a harvest of precious souls!

“We believe the Gypsy woman – whose husband we found out later was a jeweller and dealer in diamonds – realised the significance of the vision as she continued ‘we are at the front line. We need people to support us in prayer. We must gather in the Gypsies while there is time’.”

Two months later, Colin and Vivienne received a phone call

from a woman called Penny Foster, who expressed a desire to produce occasional Romani prayer bulletins. They became interested in this work and, by last winter, four had been issued.

At last year’s Convention near Hawkesbury, Coventry, which was attended by Gypsies from all over the world, 20 young trainee pastors were commissioned.

“There was a real sense of the awesome presence of God as we worshipped together,” said Colin. “We were impressed by the sincerity, fervour and passion of the Gypsies for the Lord and the souls he longs to bring to Himself. We heard many wonderful testimonies of transformed lives. We were further impressed by their desire to be good witnesses where they are placed, evidenced by a very practical concern to leave sites cleaner than when they arrived.”

Colin and Vivienne sense God’s call to help further the spread of Christianity among the Gypsies.

“When the well-known 19th Century evangelist Gypsy Rodney Smith was asked why he didn’t preach to Gypsies, he always replied, ‘Their time has not yet come,’” said Colin. “Today, their time has come and the revival – often called the silent revival – among the Gypsies continues, not only in this country but in 45 others around the world.●

Janet Malcolmson is a freelance journalist

Photographs opposite: top: Vivienne with a Gypsy family at a Light and Life Mission; centre: a yellow fish sign on the road, pointing the way to the Mission Tent; inset: Colin and Vivienne Rogers; left: Gypsy worship; below: Light and Life Mission with French Gypsies.





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

**BY ANN BOTHAMLEY**



**Our Town**

**INDIA**

# vellore

## **INTRODUCTION**

Vellore is set among rocky hills just 90 miles due west of Madras. The town is best known in history books as the scene of mutinies and warring factions of Muslims and Hindus. Its 16th century hill fort is a dominating feature still, surrounded by a moat and an old drawbridge which is now a road leading into its precincts. On the outskirts of the town the state jail is famous for the incarceration in the past of such famous people as Jawaharlal Nehru and others at the time of Independence.

Situated not too far from the equator and on the plains of India, the climate of Vellore is hot for most of the year with often a shortage of water when the monsoon fails. The long hot months sap the energy of all who live here.

The population of Vellore is 345,000 while the daily floating population is estimated at more than 250,000 per day. People gravitate to Vellore from all parts of the country every day, by bus, car and train. They come from the surrounding villages with ox carts laden with rice and other grains, vegetables and fruit for the market.

## **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

**BY JUDITH AND TONY SYKES**

### **A place of contrasts**

Transport: bullock carts, cyclists, rickshaws, buses, cars.

Beautifully built and decorated homes next to mud built shacks with coconut matting roofs and cooking pots just outside the door.

Noise, horns, bells, music, shouting stall holders, birds.

Colour: bright saris, neat rows of fruit

and vegetables, contrasted against the rubbish you have to walk over. Crowded streets where you have to manoeuvre around bullocks, rickshaws, mopeds and people sitting on the ground selling their wares, cows sleeping wherever they will. Smells: the whiff of freshly ground coffee, the strong, sweet scent of jasmine, the fish market, the overpowering smell of spices, freshly ground. Now a year later – what was overwhelming has become commonplace.

Streetholders greet us as we pass; we elbow our way on to the buses like everyone else and eat rice with our hands. From those who have so little to share we have learnt generosity. When out cycling or walking complete strangers have invited us into their homes. From them we have learnt friendliness towards strangers.

## **THE PEOPLE**

The people of Vellore are Tamils, but Punjabis can be seen drinking coffee with people from Gujurat and the inhabitants of the north east states shopping beside Malayalees from Kerala and the people of Bihar. There are always those from Bengal and as far away as Kashmir and Bangladesh.

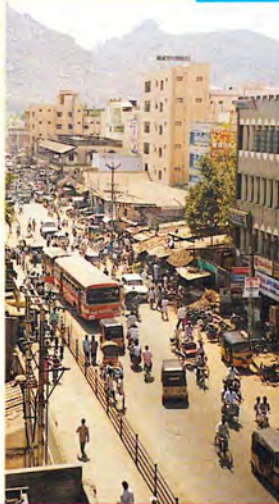
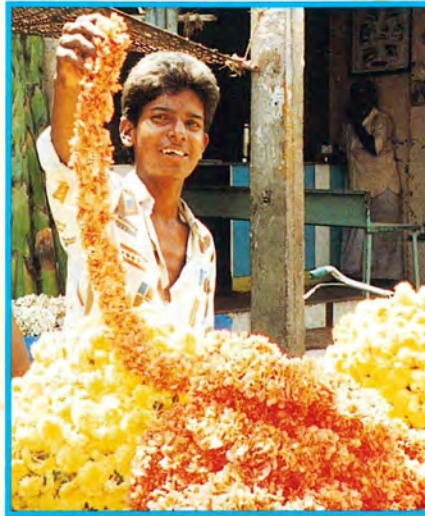
While older, wealthy families have lived in Vellore for generations, others have been overseas and return to build houses and settle here. Like every city and town in India, Vellore has its population of poor people, who eke out a living on the pavement or at the bus stand. There are the rag pickers, who live in comparative squalor, and a considerable number of beggars.

Everywhere you go in this town you will find hundreds of people. They hang on the footplates of crowded buses, jostle



*bullock carts*  
*cyclists rickshaws*  
*buses cars*  
*noise horns*  
*bells music*  
*shouting stalls*  
*holders bright*  
*saris overpowering*  
*smell of spices*

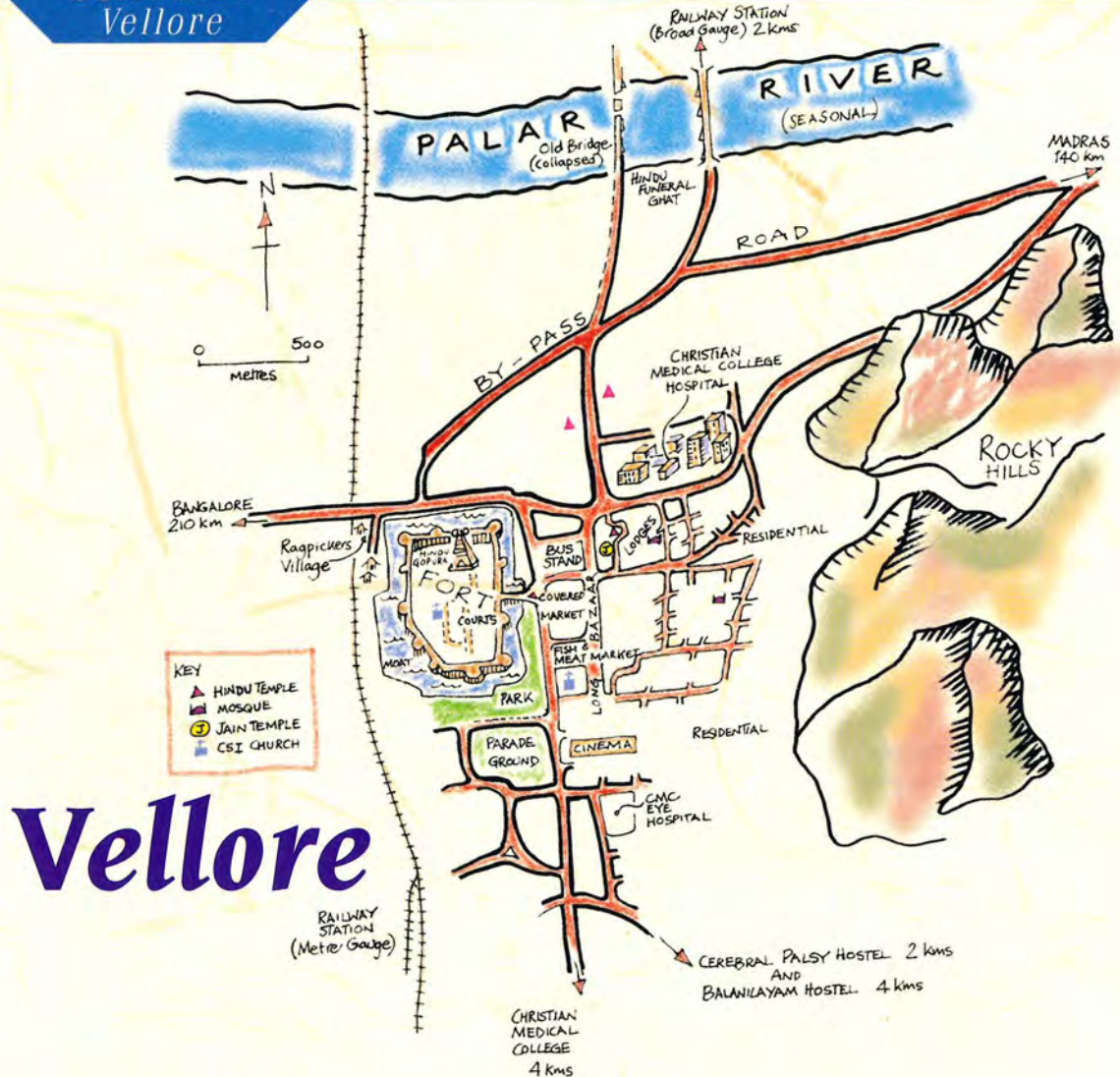
in the market to buy vegetables and fruit. Pour into the outpatient building and eke out a living drawing pictures on the pavement or repairing sandals under an umbrella at the side of the road. They cram into coffee shops, are seen purchasing expensive saris, they strain on the pedals of the rickshaw, pulling far too many children home from school and drive their oxen carts laden with rice into the market. They weep as they arrange transport for a dead relative back to their home in Assam or Calcutta, and sometimes they light candles in thanks to the God of the Christians who has brought a son safely into the world.



*bullock carts*  
*cyclists rickshaws*  
*buses cars*  
*noise horns*  
*bells music*  
*shouting stalls*  
*holders bright*  
*saris overpowering*  
*smell of spices*

# india





# Vellore

## RELIGION

Vellore is predominantly a Hindu town, but is also known to have one of the largest populations of Muslims in the south of India. The turrets of mosques mingle with the Hindu gopurums, while Christian churches range from the Sri Lankan Pentecostals and small independent congregations to the Church of South India and the Catholics. Religious tolerance is part of Vellore. Both Hindu and Muslim shop-keepers sit side-by-side and all excel in stocking the requirements for each festival, be it Hindu, Muslim or Christian.

## CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE AND HOSPITAL

The hospital is shortly to celebrate its centenary. Started by a single lady missionary of the American Reformed Church, it soon became a Protestant interdenominational and international institution, bringing qualified missionary

staff from the USA, Britain, Germany and Australia. The hospital now has 1,500 beds and almost all its staff are highly qualified Indians. The hospital still remains willing and actually wants people from overseas to work alongside its staff.

Training is given in every aspect of the medical, nursing and paramedical sciences and recently the Christian Medical College and Hospital was given a ranking as the second best medical college and hospital in the Indian sub-continent.

The hospital is known especially for its impartial care for all who come, from the urban poor of Vellore itself to those from the far northern states and beyond. By the year 2000, the much-needed centenary project of a hospital for women and children will be completed. Tony Sykes has considerable responsibility as a civil engineer working as a liaison between the contractors and the institution.

Vellore has many schools, Catholic, Muslim and government besides two which are run by the Christian Medical College and Hospital for its staff children and others from the town. The Ida Scudder school has considerable standing in the town and while openly Christian in character, Hindu and Muslim families also seek admission to the school.

## PROFILE JEAN JEBEGNAMAM

Jean is now headmistress of the Junior School on the College Campus. Some years ago Jean resigned from her job at Scudder school to start a work among the rag pickers and gypsies of Vellore, bringing their needs to the attention of the local church and





government officials. The gypsies have already been given land and homes to live in. It is hoped that the rag pickers will soon be relocated where they no longer have to walk more than a kilometre to fetch water.

## PROFILE

### JOHNSON

Johnson is a Telegu sweeper from Andrah Pradesh. As a young man he came across the border with other families seeking work in the Christian Hospital in Vellore. Challenged by a christian doctor Johnson turned from Hinduism and for years has faithfully spread the good news of Jesus, not only in the sweeper's village, but to the relatives of patients who stay in the hospital annexe. Many would see his work of cleaning the bathrooms and toilets as demeaning, yet for Johnson, he believes this work was given by God. Everyone without exception wants their bathroom clean so Johnson has access to every room. With his ability to speak in Tamil, Hindi and English besides his mother tongue of Telegu he quickly communicates with those he meets. ●



Children from the Rag Pickers village, Vellore.  
Below left: The school, at the Rag Pickers village, Vellore





## The Democratic Republic of

# CONGO

# Not



Right : Pastor Mbieme (right of group) with leaders of a women's seminar at Bwantaba.

**T**wo years is not long in terms of ministry. Barely long enough to get to know your flock, let alone lead them anywhere. It was all that Pastor Mbieme had on the Bateke plateau, however, before his ministry was cut short by his untimely death.

He had been unwell, but during the women's seminar at Bwantaba had seemed to be back on form. He'd

accompanied the evangelisation team to several villages and then back to Kinshasa, anticipating a hernia operation. In the event the doctor threw in appendix removal for good measure, as is often the case here. Six weeks later, well recovered, moving about the city, he was planning to return to work on the plateau.

Then, one Monday, he was hit by severe abdominal pains and nausea. Next day his wife got him to the medical centre, where medicines were prescribed. Wednesday afternoon he did not look good. In considerable discomfort, he nonetheless talked about returning to the plateau. "It's a struggle," he said, "but in Jesus there's victory."

We prayed, and left him in the care of his wife and his mother. Pastor Enguta arrived and fetched the doctor, who began to scrub up. Before he could intervene, however, to their shock and dismay, Pastor Mbieme passed away. Just like that. On the Wednesday night.

Only the next morning did it become generally known. The Kingasani District committee, in monthly session, stunned

by the news, suspended business and agreed on the amount each fellowship should contribute to cover the cost of coffin and burial, some NZ\$20,000,000 (about £100). Some went off to find the money, while the pastors crossed town to the medical centre. Members of the family had gathered, the women among them sobbing.

An impromptu service was held under the trees, the district evangelist preaching on being surprised by death, and the need to be ready. The coffin's arrival provoked a lengthy discussion as to



where the body was to be exposed but, once loaded, it was taken briefly to the family home and then to the Kingasani church, the District headquarters. There, according to custom, people gathered to



# Long...



view the body, to weep, pray and sing through the night, with choirs arriving to take their turn.

At midday on the Friday, after a service of thanksgiving in a packed church, the coffin was transferred to a Land Rover and, accompanied by family, fellow pastors and friends in other vehicles, taken to Kinkole cemetery. In a quiet, grassy plain, in sight of the Bateke plateau rising abruptly on the skyline, under a

broiling tropical

sun, to the sound

of prayers and

words of Scripture, the

pastor's body in its

wooden box was lowered into the sandy soil.

Everything had been done

decently and in order, but it

remained for the widow,

family and friends to come to

terms with such a brusque depart-

ure. At the age of 54 Pastor Mbieme had fallen ill on Monday, died on Wednesday and been buried on Friday.

On the plateau too the reaction was stunned disbelief, and full explanations had to be given at each place. During the first Sunday service at Bwantaba thanks were rendered to God for Pastor

Mbieme's life and ministry. Converted and baptised in his late 30s, he decided to leave the army. He was sent to Bolobo

## Like most people

Pastor Mbieme had his times of discouragement, but his steady faith and joy in the Lord enabled him to bounce back.

for pastoral training, but did not stay the course. Given the charge of a new church at Maluku, he founded several daughter groups during an eleven-year ministry.

Appointed to Bwantaba on the Bateke plateau, Pastor Mbieme accepted the challenge and the hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, as did his wife. With the water supply a distant stream down a steep hill, the main road five miles away, the nearest market two miles further on, the need to grow their own food and no school for the children, life in the village was not easy.

From Bwantaba the pastor would cycle the 25 miles to Ngwene, and to other villages, to preach and serve communion. He did so even when Mobutu's troops were fleeing the advancing AFDL forces, and found himself cycling home against the flow. Each group of soldiers threatened him, but he pressed on, reach-ing Bwantaba to find that his wife and most of the villagers had fled for safety. Only when things were quiet did he follow them to bring them home.

Like most people Pastor

Mbieme had his times of

discouragement, but his steady faith and joy in the Lord enabled him to bounce back. He was as pleased as Punch to work with missionaries, as his father had done many years previously at Bolobo. From him he gleaned useful tips as to how to rub along with them. Like, "Don't bother them too early in the morning – they tend to be ratty," and, "Try to respect time – they live by the clock."

No, two years is not long to exercise an effective ministry, yet the memory of Pastor Mbieme's faith, commitment and courage will continue to inspire others for a long time to come. ●

Owen Clark is a church worker with BMS.





**A**  
**28:19**  
**ACTION**  
**TEAMS**

# Born to be



India Action Team  
1997/1998  
Louise Taylor far left

*For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my  
mother's womb.*

*I praise you because I am  
fearfully and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.*

*My frame was not hidden from  
you  
when I was made in the secret  
place.*

*When I was woven together in  
the depths of the earth,  
your eyes saw my unformed body.  
All the days ordained for me  
were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.  
(Psalm 139:13-16)*

**T**hese verses came a live for me in India when I was unexpectedly asked if I wanted to observe a caesarian section. The whole experience made a dramatic impact on me – a tension between intense joy and intense sadness, a mingling, a confusion.

To watch as the surgeon skilfully performed his job was fascinating. The intricacy amazed me and I began to feel a deep sense of wonder at the 'knitting together' of a baby. To watch the baby emerge was like being witness to a miracle. The psalmist's words that the baby is 'wonderfully made' contained a new depth for me. It is so easy to take life for granted, it is all around us, everywhere we look and this can perhaps

cheapen it. But at this moment, I saw life in its true and God given perspective.

This perfect new life was his gift.

I watched this little girl, totally absorbed by her as she took her first breaths.

Watching her, I noticed all her tiny, perfectly formed features. She was perfect and beautiful! As I thought about the beauty and potential of this little girl's life, I began to wonder what the future held for her. I thought of God's love and plans for her and the excitement of having a whole life spanned out before her.

*All the days ordained for me  
were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.  
(v16)*

"The base is more important than the face" was the surgeon's sobering comment. My previous reflections were shaken into harsh reality when the baby was taken out to the father. He realised it was a girl and walked away speechless, physically turning his back on her, his disappointment unashamedly displayed. What a rejection of such a

perfect, beautiful gift! I felt like a blow had been struck and deep sadness.

Indian culture traditionally doesn't value girls and women as highly as our own. Due to the dowry system, women are a financial burden, daughters drain the finances, sons are a financial asset. Sons are the important ones, the ones who will be educated and the ones with rights.

I couldn't help but wonder what would happen to this beautiful baby girl. She has so much potential, but will she ever know it? An even more scary thought, fuelled by my reading on female infanticide in India was, will she even survive? Struck by the fragility of life, all I could do in this situation was to pray

**Indian culture  
traditionally doesn't  
value girls and women as  
highly as our own .... women  
are a financial burden ...  
sons are a financial  
asset**





# shunned

*“All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”*

for her, for her protection, future and that she would be loved and know God's

love and value for her.

Through this experience I realised in a powerful way and for the first time, that life is a gift and the wonder and beauty of life. We are entrusted with life, as these parents were with their children and the realisation of our responsibility to make others aware of God's value and love for them is very strong to me. On the other side, there is beauty in being aware of God's presence (Ps 139:7-10) and no matter what human trustees of life do, or neglect to do, God never lets go of that life. He loves each individual and each life is precious to him. The moment this little girl was born, even before, she was precious to him. ●

Louise Taylor was part of the 1997/98 India Action Team



*Where are they now?*

## ...Allison Lockhart (née McNeill)

Allison continues to use her experiences in France to educate and encourage others to be involved in world mission in a variety of ways. As part of a BMS "Mission Matters" team headed up by BMS Scotland Co-ordinator, Derek Clark, Allison tours churches across Scotland, leading meetings and sharing ideas for how people can be practically involved. "It's a challenge," she says, "as we have to be living up to what we're preaching."

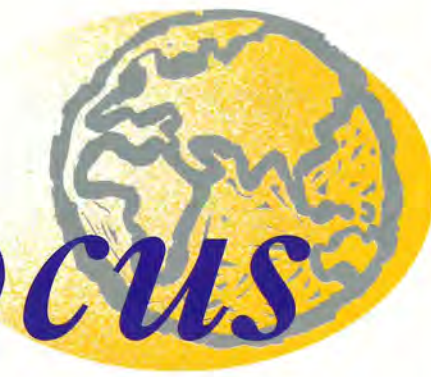
Married in 1994, Allison and her husband Ken are the proud parents of eight-month-old Andrew and are both involved in the work of their church, Partick Baptist Church, Glasgow. They are joint church treasurers and Allison is also a deacon, but she is willing to turn her hand to anything. "Being a church treasurer is something I'd never considered," she says. But the need arose and she was willing to learn.

Allison is keen to serve the Lord in every situation and actively seeks out new openings. Running the church coffee mornings is an excellent form of outreach into her local community, she is hoping to become involved in the church youth work and, as a young mum, is busy building a new circle of social contacts which she hopes will open up further opportunities for witness.

Of it all though it is possibly becoming a mother which has made the most impact on her life. Allison says: "More changes than I had ever thought possible. My outlook and faith are different. I have more to trust God for now – I have to trust him for the future."



# Prayer focus



**BRAZIL**



**Andy and Linda Eaves  
Fortaleza, ITALY**



**Colin and Marcia Pavitt  
Eldorado, BRAZIL**



**Mary Parsons  
Fortaleza, BRAZIL**

Andy has been heading up the distribution of emergency food aid from his church to areas of north-east Brazil severely hit by drought. Harvests have been crippled and those living in rural areas are at great risk. Linda accompanied him on one of his recent trips and she writes:

“The memory of one young boy and his mother still haunts me. The woman was shelling the beans she had harvested on the mud floor of her house, and Andy asked her how many months the beans would last her. She laughed and said they’d probably last two weeks. And then what? ‘Only God knows’ was her reply. Her drinking water was sedimented sludge from the dried up pond.”

*Please pray:*

- for all those who are involved in agricultural and development projects, trying to ensure that future droughts do not result in such devastating effects

For a long time now, Colin and Marcia have been planning a project, to take children off the streets. In Brazil the education system is run in two shifts with some children studying in the mornings and others in the afternoon. Generally both parents need to work all

day, so most children are at a loose end for at least half of the day. The town council runs an all day centre for under-sevens, so Colin and Marcia want-ed to provide something for the seven to 14s.

Projecto Crianca (children’s project) opened on 1 June. Local ladies – all volunteers – each give one or two afternoons per week. The programme includes extra school work, Portuguese, maths, gardening, art, crafts, hygiene, domestic work, sports and Christianity. The project has begun with just 15 children, but as most of these children are poor and behind in their schooling, the project is vitally important to them.

*Please pray:*

- for Marcia and her colleague Precilia who are responsible for the organisation and administration
- both for the ladies who volunteer their time and for the children
- that this venture will find the support to be able to grow and so reach others

Mary attends Edson Queiroz Baptist Church, a little church with a big vision. The church runs a project known as CEAME which sees around 150 children sponsored through Compassion International. The project offers formal

education for many children and backup for those who attend other schools. It also offers courses in computing, English and music and now sells take-away meals, Monday to Friday. This venture has given work to six people, and valuable work experience to many teenagers and children. As few of the church members have permanent jobs and there is no unemployment benefit in Brazil, this venture offers invaluable support to many families.

*Please pray:*

- for the continued success of this project which is helping so many people
- also for Pastor Marcos who has given up his regular job so that he can devote more time to the project and the church



**Stan and Maureen Porter  
Curitiba, BRAZIL**

The Porters returned to the UK in July





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

after nearly 20 years of service in Brazil. They are pleased that all aspects of the work they have been involved in have been taken over by nationals and will be praying for its development. Although their future is uncertain, they know the Lord will guide them. Remembering their return from Brazil in 1972 they say: "we had two children, and little more than two suitcases, and no home – but God had his plan for us, so we look forward to the next stage; 25 years older, less energy, but the same enthusiasm for mission!"

*Please pray*

- for support facing the difficult process of re-entering UK life
- that the Lord would clearly guide them as they step into the future

### EUROPE



**Paul and Elisabeth Towison  
Durres, ALBANIA**

Paul and Elisabeth are based at the Albanian Bible Institute in the town of Durres. In the midst of the obvious challenges in this troubled nation, they have also been encouraged by the positive feedback they have received from the

students. Leaders who receive training at the Institute are viewed by their churches as being better equipped for leadership than those who are not. One student was expected as part of an assignment, to disciple a small group of people who had recently come to faith. Because he couldn't find such a group in his church, he asked some non-christian friends to stand in for him. As a result of attending his class, some of these came to faith!

*Please pray:*

- thank God for the development of the churches in this troubled land and pray for the students at the Institute, that God would use them to reach out to their nation

Massy Baptist Church is becoming better known in the town and more people are coming to ask the church leaders for help. It is not always easy for Protestants to be accepted as Christians and not as a cult in France. Church leaders Phil and Rosemary want to be able to give help in Jesus' name to those in need. They want to put new structures in place so that they might be able to offer more help in the situations with which they are confronted, ie handicap, terminal illness, poverty, depression, family break-down, debt, and domestic violence.



**Phil and Rosemary Halliday  
Massy, FRANCE**

*Please pray:*

- that the Lord will give wisdom and that the church members will be willing to become more involved themselves

### ASIA

After a year living and studying at St Andrew's Hall, Birmingham, Paul and Angela will be heading to Nepal in August, ready to begin language and orientation training in September. Paul will be working as an anaesthetist in the



**Angela and Paul Foster  
Pokhara, NEPAL**

local government hospital and Angela initially as housewife as they settle into the new culture as a family. Angela is a trained nurse and hopes to use her skills, but is also aware of the initial importance of establishing a settled home base. The need for anaesthetists in Nepal is great and Paul also hopes to be involved in training programmes.

*Please pray:*

- that they all settle in quickly
- for new friendships and good relationships with those they will be living and working with
- that they would quickly pick up the language



## FRANCE



One of our church members was attending his foreign language conversation class recently, in a Paris university, when the lecturer handed out some cards and asked the students to use them to make up a story. To his dismay, our Christian student realised that it was tarot cards which were being distributed.  
Phil Halliday - France

We had a missionary family staying with us, following their evacuation from Zaire (now Congo) last year. Shortly after their arrival in Massy, one of the children from this family (an eight year-old) said to her school teacher, in private, "The rebel forces are due to arrive in Kinshasa today. Could I ask my class mates to pray for the friends that I left behind there?" The teacher called for the class's attention and announced to everyone, "I do not believe that God exists. And even if there were a God, I do not believe that we could communicate with him. He has never said anything to me." The missionaries' child was then asked to return to her place.  
Phil Halliday

### SAT-7 quotes

Here are some quotations from recent phone calls and faxes to the SAT-7 offices:

"Your programmes have had a great impact on our hearts and play an important part in our lives. We look forward to receiving a copy of the Holy Bible, about the life of Christ."

*Man from Morocco*

"By chance I watched your film about Jesus. I was very happy to see this film, and so excited and enthusiastic about the story. I was amazed at Jesus' good and moral teaching. Please accept me as a friend and help me to know more about your religion."

*Woman from Algeria*

"I am calling from Al Khoba, Saudi Arabia. I just want to say that I need this channel. Thank you."

*Male caller*

"Could you extend your programmes, even by a few minutes, so we can get more programmes from the Bible. Can you also send me a Bible - even though my friends tell me it is corrupted. I need to know more about the Christian faith..

Please do not mention my name on your programmes because I am writing to you without my family's knowledge."

*17 year-old girl, Jordan*

"We were so happy to find SAT-7 - there has long been a great need for such a channel. We hope you can increase the hours. Through your programmes the words of Christ light our path. We hope our children, who live in a society which knows little of Christ, will come to know him and the Holy Bible through your teaching..."

*Lebanese refugee living in Denmark*

SAT-7 is a television satellite service for Christians of the Middle East and North Africa. BMS is a member of the SAT-7 partnership council.

## How to witness to Asians

● Start praying and ask God to give you a love for Asians. Love communicates in all languages.

● Use greetings like "Namaste" to Hindus, "Sat-sri-akal" to Sikhs (truth is eternal) and "Salam Alekum" (Peace be upon you) to Muslims.

● Go shopping at your local Indian corner shop and stay to chat (the best time is between 1.30 and 3.30pm when there is a lull period).

● When sharing the gospel you don't have to beat about the bush. It's easier to talk about religion with Asians than with secular white people. God is not taboo. Be upfront about who you are, why you are there and that you are a Christian.

● Don't be afraid to pray for healing and other needs.

● Invite your shopkeeper and his family to any local Asian events.

● If they are Hindus or Sikhs their children might be bored on a Sunday morning, so offer to take them to Sunday school. You may be surprised that they are happy to accept. Try it!

● Become a regular at your local Indian restaurant.

● Consider living in an Asian area. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

● Find out what language is most relevant. There are many resources you can give or lend in other languages eg the "Jesus" video in Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu or Sylheti; it's fantastic as all the family will sit and watch it.

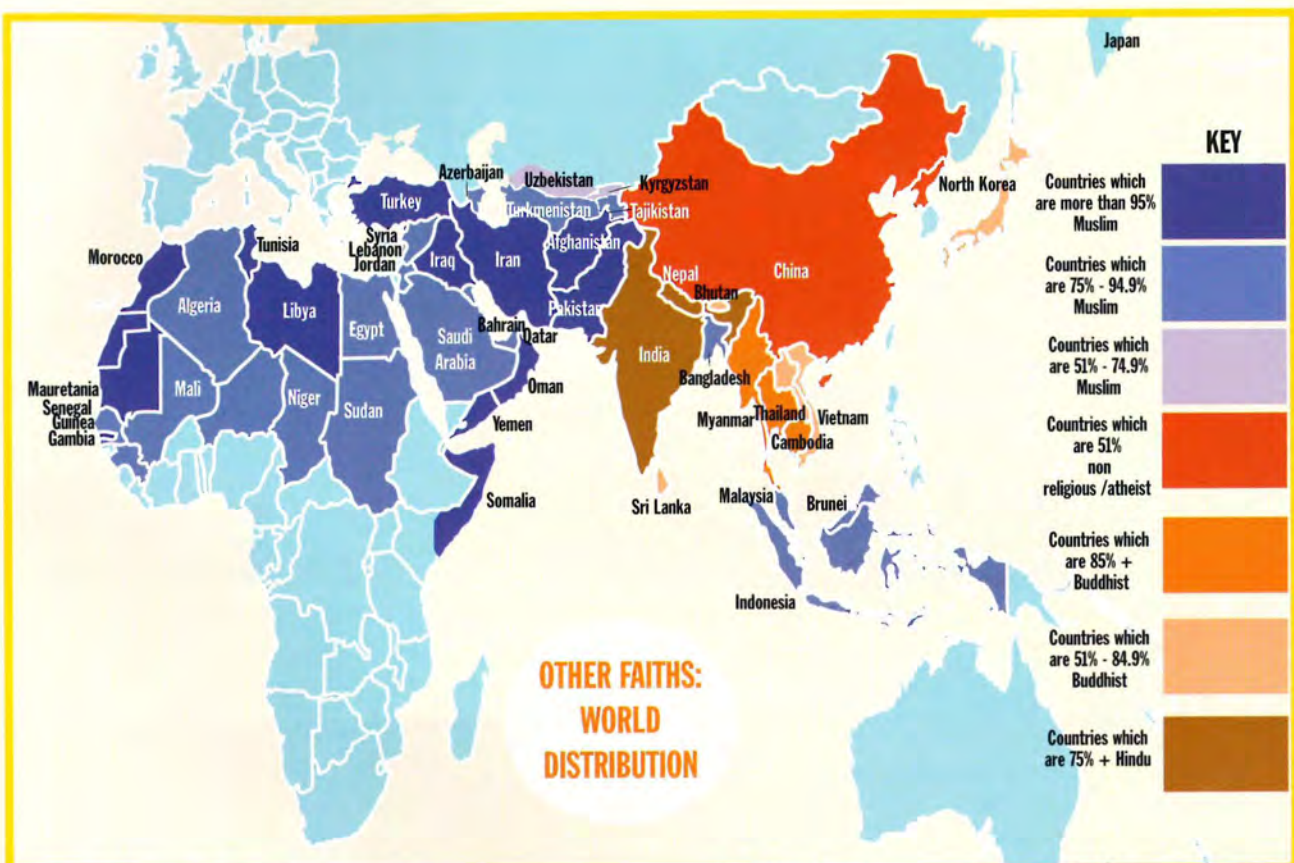
*(By Afri Chandra, taken from "At the heart of the community" leaflet, published by Crowlinks, and used with permission)*



# TAKE 2

Take 2  
a resource for  
church leaders  
& workers

RESOURCES for leaders



OTHER FAITHS:  
WORLD  
DISTRIBUTION

### Predominantly Muslim countries

COUNTRY	TOTAL POPULATION (millions)	% MUSLIM	% CHRISTIAN*
Algeria	29	99.4	0.4
Egypt	60	85	14
Gambia	0.9	95.4	3.7
Guinea	7.8	83.1	4.5
Libya	5.4	96	3
Mali	10.8	86.3	3.8
Mauretania	2.3	99.7	0.26
Morocco, incl Western Sahara	29	99.8	0.16
Niger	8.3	90.5	0.38
Senegal	8.4	90.8	5.6
Somalia	8.5	99.9	0.4
Sudan	29	70	19
Tunisia	9	99.5	0.25
Bahrain	0.6	85	.3
Iran	64.5	99	0.4
Iraq	22.4	95.4	3.3
Jordan	3.8	94	4.7
Kuwait	89.9	5.3	
Lebanon	3.2	53	38.7
Oman	1.7	95.5	2.5
Qatar	0.5	91.4	6
Saudi Arabia	17.1	93.4	4
Syria	14.9	90.5	8
UAE	2.1	84.6	8.7
Yemen	16.1	99.9	0.06
Turkey	61	99.8	0.2
Afghanistan	23	99	0.01
Azerbaijan	7.6	80	2.7
Bangladesh	132	87	0.44
Brunei	0.3	71	8
Indonesia	195	83	12.5
Kyrgyzstan	4.6	60	11.8
Malaysia	19	55	8
Pakistan	141	96.7	1.7
Tajikistan	6.3	82.3	4.2
Turkmenistan	4	76	5.7
Uzbekistan	23.3	68.2	4.7

### Predominantly non-religious/atheist countries

COUNTRY	TOTAL POP (millions)	% NON RELIGIOUS/ATHEIST	% CHRISTIAN*
China	1214	59	6.1
North Korea	25.5	68	0.6/2.0

### Predominantly Buddhist countries

COUNTRY	TOTAL POPULATION (millions)	% BUDDHIST	% CHRISTIAN*
Bhutan	0.6	70	0.33
Cambodia	9.2	87	0.38
Japan	126	58	2.5
Laos	4.5	58.7	1.53
Myanmar	46.2	87.8	6.5
Sri Lanka	18.3	70.3	7.6
Thailand	59.6	93.4	1
Vietnam	75	52	9.8

### Predominantly Hindu countries

COUNTRY	TOTAL POPULATION (millions)	% HINDU	% CHRISTIAN*
India	904.8	79	2.6
Nepal	20	89	0.58

\* Christian represents Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox etc  
All figures taken from Operation World



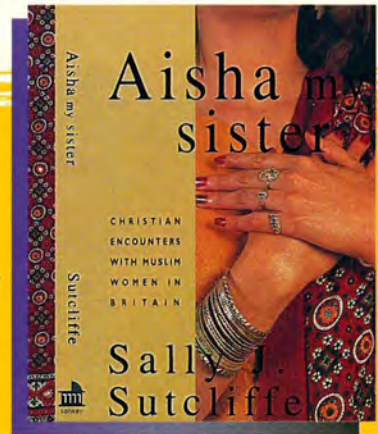
**Aisha my Sister** by Sally Sutcliffe

Do you find it difficult to reach out to Muslim women in the community?

Drawing on the personal insights and experiences of over 20 Christian women from a variety of cultural backgrounds, Aisha my Sister describes the joys and surprises of making friends across ethnic and religious barriers in Britain, encountering Islamic ways of life and the response of the Church to its Muslim neighbours.

Packed with plenty of practical suggestions this is a resource and study book for all Christian women.

Sally Sutcliffe is Communications Consultant for Ministry among Asians in Britain (MAB).



Other recommended reading:

Ishmael my Brother, ed. by A Cooper, a Christian introduction to Islam, MARC, 1993

Cross and Crescent, by C Chapman, IVP, 1995

## Action Cards

Take action on issues like fair trade – poverty – the environment – refugees – child labour – debt – and development.

Each month send a different Action Card with a message of support, protest, congratulations or challenge to a recipient recommended in the briefing which appears in various Christian papers - including *mh*.

To order your pack of 12 full colour postcards, fill in the form below, and send it to Rob Vaines, Resources Assistant, BMS, Didcot, enclosing a cheque or postal order (made payable to BMS) for £2.50.

Action Cards are produced under the auspices of BMS, BUGB, Christians Aware, Church of Scotland, Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.



Please send me \_\_\_\_ pack(s) of Action Cards.

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Action Cards



CARTOON BY PHILIP WEBB



# The WAY I SEE IT



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

DEAR PHILIP

I am worried about the emphasis Christians place on trying to convert adherents of other faiths such as mine. It surely shows great disrespect to Moslems or Hindus, for example, to suggest that their experience of God is deficient, or even lacking. Also, much Christian mission directed at the great world faiths is critical of what even I would admit to be the worst manifestations of those faiths. However, if that is going to be the level at which the dialogue is carried out, then I could think of any number of examples where Christianity also appears in a less than good light.

Yours

*Inderjit*

DEAR INDERJIT

Thank you for your letter. You are right, Christianity has not always been practised in a way that is consistent with the teachings of Christ, but when all is said and done, it remains a missionary faith. Christians believe that Jesus himself told his followers to go and tell the whole world about him. The Bible also claims that Jesus Christ has a unique role when it comes to relationships between human beings and God. If that is true, then it can't be true from a Christian point of view that other religions provide a knowledge of God that is just as good, though different, as Christianity. However, some Christians would admit that other faiths do provide their adherents with a real, though limited, knowledge of God. This is because the Gospel of John tells us that Jesus Christ is the light of the world who enlightens all people. What would you say about that?

Yours

*Philip*

DEAR PHILIP

Your last statement sounds patronising. I find it offensive when Christians suggest that people of my faith or any other are really "secret Christians" when we have no wish to be any such thing. Furthermore, from an historical perspective it would appear that the great world faiths have been singularly unimpressed by such arguments and are not persuaded by them. Christianity can hardly be said to have made a decisive impact in the Moslem world or on the Indian sub-continent. Where Christian mission has been relatively successful, it has been among tribal peoples whose religion is animistic or superstitious. I think we should just accept that in the kind of world in which we live today religions should simply seek to coexist in a friendly way without trying to compete or take each other over.

Yours

*Inderjit*

DEAR INDERJIT

If by your last sentence you are suggesting that religion ought to be a force for peace and reconciliation rather than the cause of conflict and division that it has so often proved to be, then I couldn't agree with you more. I am all for dialogue and seeking mutual understanding. But, as I hinted earlier, if truth matters then the faiths can't all be true at the same time. They make different claims about the nature of the world and of ultimate reality. So in the end, I think we might just have to disagree about the rightness of Christians seeking sensitively to win others to their faith, although I hope we can disagree in a friendly way.

Yours

*Philip*



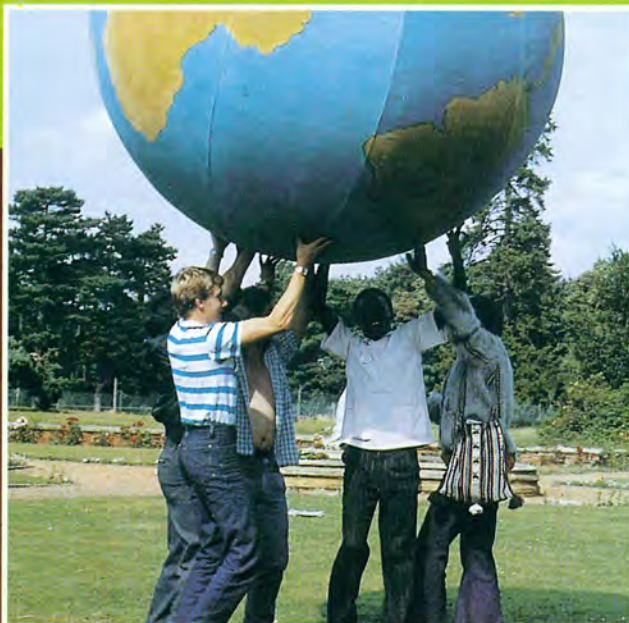
# Action Card

## Shaping our Landscapes

There is a particular connection between the action cards and One World Week. It is you, dear reader! Both are opportunities for 'ordinary' people to affirm the essential connectedness of our world and the importance of doing our bit to improve it. The cards and the Week belong together.

You don't observe One World Week — you celebrate it! Make sure that you do so somewhere this year, 18 to 25 October 1998. The 1998 OWW theme is 'Shaping our Landscapes' which can be taken in lots of imaginative ways, see annual Action guide (£5 from OWW, PO Box 2555, Reading, RG1 4XW).

The theme can also be taken very literally — it is then called civil engineering! We can visit and enjoy shaped landscapes at Blenheim Palace, by a Scottish reservoir, or on the Norfolk Broads. Such engineering is less 'civil' when it devastates the livelihoods of native peoples for the sake of a hydroelectric scheme or open-cast mine. The issues are hotly debated when it comes to shaping Twyford Down for the M3 or the Cheshire countryside for a second runway for Manchester Airport. There are many other examples across the country and around the world. They highlight the tendency of human beings to think of themselves as in charge of the earth, put here to improve



on nature — which is true but to Christians only a half-truth.

For a change, send this month's card to a leading secular environmental activist, signalling our support as Christians for what they represent: Charles Secrett, Director, Friends of the Earth, 26 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ. Even if you do not agree with everything that FOE does, be glad they exist and are critically monitoring how we human beings are shaping our landscapes. ●

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

## JOPPA GROUP

Baptist Group for Christian Witness in a Multi-Faith Society



JOPPA GROUP ● JOPPA GROUP ●

- Encourages reflection on inter-faith issues
- Publishes a regular bulletin and other literature
- Organises meetings and conferences
- Advises on multi-faith questions

More information from: The Secretary, Revd Edward Williams, 12 Penny Lane, Guarford, Malvern, WR13 6PG. Tel 01684 569291

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## Checkout

### Missionary Movements

#### SEPTEMBER

#### OCTOBER

#### Arrivals

#### Arrivals

John and Valerie Furmage from Dos Vizinhois, Brazil

Bob and Ruth Ellett from Butwal, Nepal  
Peter and Valerie Harwood from

Mark and Andrea Hotchkin from Guinea Conakry

Kathmandu, Nepal

Derek and Joanna Punchard from

#### Departures

Curitiba, Brazil

David Kerrigan

Jacqui Wells to Chiang Mai, Thailand  
Paul and Angela Foster to Kathmandu, Nepal

#### Departures

Chris and Sarah Mattock to Carlentini, Italy

Angus and Carol MacNeill to Sanglaburi, Thailand

Margaret Swires to Natal, Brazil

Derek and Joanna Punchard to

Gwen Hunter to Kimpese, Congo

Curitiba, Brazil



The area in which we were living had been devoted almost entirely to the production of coffee for several years. However, the fact that the forests were being destroyed provoked climate changes which brought lower temperatures, including frosts, destroying the coffee bushes.

# The Last Word

## GERRY MYHILL

Gerry Myhill is a BMS missionary working in Antonina, Brazil

The farmers who had held on to earlier profits were able to buy up vast areas of land from those that had been less prudent, and then plant the whole area with grass for pasture. Soon we saw farms with up to twelve thousand head of beef cattle where a short time before had been neat rows of coffee with just a few chickens, a couple of pigs and one cow to supply the farmer and his family with eggs, ham and milk.

The thousands of cattle being bred in the area, primarily for beef, suddenly brought to light the production also of thousands of gallons of milk, most of which was not collected due to the intense heat and the difficulties of getting the milk processed and delivered to markets hundreds of miles away.

The local co-operative rose to the occasion and built a cheese factory. They were able to buy the milk very cheaply and lorries were sent

off before daybreak to the farms to bring in the fresh milk still warm from the cows.

On arrival at the cheese factory, the milk was whisked from the lorries to start on its way through the process of being turned into cheese, the churns being spun across the unloading platform by expert hands, each churn as it reached the far end of the platform being skilfully tipped into a huge funnel

with a fine mesh bottom to catch all the bits of stick and

... "all of a sudden there was a flurry of flying milk in the funnel and the workers stopped the flow of milk..."

straw that invariably came from the farms, as they milked in pretty rustic conditions. It is at this stage that tests are also carried out on the water content of the milk to make sure that the farmer is not adding water to increase his income. One morning the milk was sloshing its way through the wire mesh nicely when all of a sudden there was a flurry of flying milk in the funnel and the workers stopped the flow of milk to discover that the last churn



ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH PRENTICE

had been full of little fish.

The following morning the factory manager went out with the lorry to do the pick up, and on arrival at the farm, identified from the milk churn, the manager spoke to the farmer asking him if he had put water in the milk. Obviously he denied it so the manager asked him to hold a small sieve over an empty churn while that day's milk was tipped through it. Sure enough the sieve filled up with little fish! The farmer's little son set off at a run with the farmer in pursuit with a stick. It turned out that the farmer had been sending his son down to the stream to get water to put in the milk but the son had been sidetracking and doing a bit of fishing. The outcome of all this was that the manager simply said to the farmer that if he was going to put fish in the milk then they should be big enough to eat! End result: the farmer knew he had been found out, deliveries carried on as the manager needed the milk and the farmer's son doesn't fish anymore. ●





**All was fine on the island, people worked, played and  
told their stories...  
until one day the helicopter came.**

**TAKE the RiSK is a spellbinding piece of physical action,  
telling the story of one family's struggle for survival and dignity,  
building into an evening of multi-media communication to  
stimulate thoughts, reactions and challenging people to  
TAKE a RiSK FOR GOD**

### 1998 TOUR DATES

<b>17 SEPTEMBER</b> CHELTENHAM	01823 698977	<b>29 SEPTEMBER</b> LOUGHBOROUGH	0116 271 3633
<b>18 SEPTEMBER</b> CARDIFF	01792 360909	<b>30 SEPTEMBER</b> MANCHESTER	01274 487341
<b>19 SEPTEMBER</b> PLYMOUTH	01823 698977	<b>1 OCTOBER</b> LEEDS	01274 487341
<b>22 SEPTEMBER</b> SOUTHAMPTON	01823 698977	<b>2 OCTOBER</b> EDINBURGH	0141 775 1201
<b>23 SEPTEMBER</b> LONDON	0171 639 8717	<b>3 OCTOBER</b> GLASGOW	0141 775 1201
<b>24 SEPTEMBER</b> TONBRIDGE	0171 639 8717	<b>6 OCTOBER</b> NEWCASTLE	01274 487341
<b>25 SEPTEMBER</b> WATFORD	01353 778984	<b>7 OCTOBER</b> LIVERPOOL	01274 487341
<b>26 SEPTEMBER</b> COLCHESTER	01353 778984	<b>8 OCTOBER</b> BIRMINGHAM	0116 271 3633

Drama directed by Rob Lacey one of the country's leading Christian performers.  
Music provided by Paradise Lost.  
Spectacular set and stage effects by Cheltenham Stage services.  
Fast moving multi-media.  
Insight from Martin Pearse BMS President And YMCA Director.  
Food for thought!

Tickets and more information can be obtained from your local BMS Co-ordinator telephone numbers listed above, or call head office on 01235 517700 and ask to speak to Ruth Berry. Tickets cost £4.00 each (concessions for the unemployed and students at £3.50 with ID). A group of eight coming to Take the Risk will receive the eighth ticket free. So this is a Risk you can afford to Take.

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