

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1998

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A photograph of a woman in a white sari with a red and orange floral pattern being baptized in a river. She is kneeling on a mat, and a person in a white shirt is pouring water over her head. The scene is framed by a blurred crowd of people in the foreground.

**Being a Baptist worldwide**

# BMS



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Deuteronomy 15:10



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**THIS ISSUE  
BAPTISTS WORLDWIDE**



**Jan Kendall**

**A** year or two back a certain t-shirt was all the rage in Baptist circles. It said: "Baptists are wet... all over."

In this post-denominational age it can be difficult to pinpoint exactly what it is that Baptists in the UK have in common — let alone finding common ground for Baptists all over the world.

Yet certain beliefs and practices, the most obvious of which is believers' baptism by immersion in water, combined with biases arising from historical roots, still give Baptists, wherever they are placed, a distinctiveness.

This issue looks at both where Baptists in the UK stand as regards mission, and also looks at a couple of situations in the world — in Bangladesh and Thailand — where the life of a Baptist is far removed from anything most of us have ever encountered.

We are in partnership with Baptists all over the world, whatever their skin colour, status or credit rating. We are part of one larger Body; a family together. We are exhorted to: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." (Rom 12:15)

Let's take our fellow Baptists — especially those who are enduring hardship and suffering — to our hearts, remembering both to pray for them, and give to their plight (via the BMS Relief Fund). Don't let compassion fatigue take over when you put *mb* down!

And on an entirely different note: if you haven't ordered your BMS Christmas cards and calendars yet, it's not too late. See the back cover for details.

With best wishes

*Jan*



COVER DESIGN BY CAROLYN TABOR

Theological  
Seminary Library  
Prague  
Czech Republic

15-10-1998

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**NEXT ISSUE JANUARY — FEBRUARY  
EDUCATION AND MISSION TRAINING**



## East Africa

An American aid worker declared the situation in East Africa to be 'desperate' after visiting Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia. Malawi is experiencing an unprecedented crisis, and by the end of 1999 it is estimated it will have 1,230,000 orphans (mainly as a result of AIDS). This will be 27 per cent of all children aged 15 and under. Zambia will have an estimated 1,656,000 orphans by the year 2000. (ACTION News)

## Latvia

A recent opinion poll in Latvia ranked churches as the most trusted segment of society – trusted by 64.7 per cent of those polled as compared to radio broadcasting (64.2 per cent, television (63.2 per cent) and the press (45.5 per cent). Least trustworthy, according to the poll, were customs and excise bureaus, privatisation agencies, law courts and trade unions. Although Latvians trust churches, they do not tend to get involved; only six per cent of the population belong to one. (EBPS)

## Turkey

The most translated film in the world has broken through restrictive Turkish laws. The Jesus film in the Kurdish language has been given legal permission for distribution and public screening in Turkey – this is an unprecedented decision by the government making it the first ever film in Kurdish to be given an official permit. One Kurdish Christian said in response to this news: "It's brilliant. I have over 40 cousins and I want to show it to them all." (Open Doors)

## Argentina/Bulgaria

Argentina has nominated a diplomat and evangelical Christian, Hotton Risler, as Argentine ambassador to Bulgaria. He is a member of the church called Free Brethren, according to a report in *Comunicazione Cristiane*. (EBPS)

## Saudia Arabia

All 31 Christians detained in the recent spate of arrests in Saudi Arabia have now been freed, thanks to high level diplomatic pressure. Special pleading by United States officials to prince Abdul Aziz Bin Fahad helped to secure the release of the mainly Filipino Christians who were arrested following the distribution of evangelical literature. They are now all safe in their home countries and recovering from the ordeal. (Open Doors)

# News



held here, and under Bulgarian law, when a bomb threat is received in a public institution, it must remain closed for 24 hours. However, the Easter service, which was attended by around 3,000 people, went ahead.

Skin-heads have attacked the church in Vratsa where windows were broken, graffiti painted on the walls and contents of the church destroyed. Members of the congregation also received personal threats.

Four members of a small community of Baptists near Berkovitsa were arrested in June by order of the local mayor, taken to the local police office, threatened by the mayor saying they would have real problems if they continued with their meetings and then abused severely. Among them was a pregnant woman who was physically mistreated.

The Baptist Union of Bulgaria has sent an official complaint to the ministry of Religious Affairs. (BSG)

## Bulgaria

### Opposition to evangelicals intensifies

Attitudes have been hardening against evangelical Christians in Bulgaria over the last few months. This is in spite of the encouragement of the meeting between the President of Bulgaria with evangelical leaders last January, promising freedom of conscience and religious conviction.

However, evangelical Christians still face open opposition:

In Sofia anti-evangelicals attempted to prevent Easter Day services by giving notice of a bomb threat in the National Culture Palace on Easter Saturday. Services are

## Cuba

### Church scene changing



The church scene in Cuba is changing, and, according to a leading Baptist Revd Raúl Suárez, head of the Martin

News in Brief

Luther King Centre, "inter-church relations in Cuba are different from ecumenical relations in other Latin American countries. We have our differences, but there is no doubt that we have overcome the classic Catholic-Protestant antagonism you find in other countries. If you go to a Protestant church, you are not going to hear the



LUCIEN O. CHAUVIN

pastor railing against Catholics. That was something you heard in pre-revolutionary Cuba, but not today," Suárez said.

He added, "In Cuba you are not going to find religion 'sold' the way it is in the United States. Churches here do not offer themselves as if they were a product, like Mitsubishi or General Motors. Cuban churches are



not into selling the gospel."

The Pope's visit last January was a high point in the ecumenical and church-state relations. Pastors of many Protestant churches rescheduled Sunday services so their members could take part in the Pope's outdoor mass. Suarez believes the most

lasting impact of the Pope's visit may be a greater understanding of religion among Cuba's 11 million population.

In the months before the visit, both Catholic and Protestant churches took advantage of an influx of religious material to educate people in gospel basics.

Alejandro Dausá, head of the Martin Luther King Centre's socio-theological programme has commented: "Churches are full on Saturdays and Sundays. People want to read about religion and spirituality. There is a hunger for information." (LAP)

## Nigeria Self-help students build their own college



When the Bible College at Gindri, Nigeria realised they had grown beyond their present building they took an unusual approach to the problem of growth. They resisted the temptation to appeal to the West for funds

and began to build extra accommodation from mud bricks.

Last September the College, which trains Christian workers for the rapidly growing church in Nigeria, had 31 students joining the first year of a four year diploma programme, and for the first time they had

students in all four years of the programme. This year first year students have had to leave their families behind to enrol in the college, because of lack of accommodation. The College looked for a solution to the problem: in faith they decided to do what they could do and resolved to trust God to provide what was needed. Despite a ➔

## Alistair Brown



### Equal rights?



The picture shows three gorgeous children. The girls are turning on the charm for me with beautiful smiles, while the lad looks puzzled. 'Why take photographs here?' he's probably asking.

The scene is Brazil but not one of its beauty spots. It's a favela in São Paulo. These three live there, playing on refuse heaps and scampering among open sewers. Their homes are higgledy-piggledy buildings precariously perched on the side of a hill. They're poor but not destitute. They have a little education, but next to no career choices.

Hardly any Christians go to favelas with the gospel. They're not attractive, not wealthy, not easy. There are simpler places to start churches. But God made those kids, and the millions of others like them. He loves them as much as the richest and cleverest, and they have equal rights to hear of Jesus. May God pour his love into and through us so that *all* can know the gospel. ●



ACTION PARTNERS

chronic shortage of funds, in December 1997 the students spent two weeks making 75,000 mud bricks to build the accommodation blocks required. The foundations were dug, and now ten units are due to be completed before the rains come. (AP)

## Albania

### Albanian believers help refugees

Members of the Albanian Evangelical Community (known as VUSH) – including Baptists – are continuing to provide help for Albanians and refugees fleeing to northern Albania from the Kosovo region of Yugoslavia.

Through an international relief effort, evangelicals were asked to provide clothing for the affected people and transport it to the Albanian border where refugees are coming in daily. Shipments of



clothing have arrived and volunteers from evangelical churches are sorting the clothing in Tirana and packaging assortments of adult and children's clothing for transport to the border area.

An area team then distributes the clothing: this is done carefully, though not directly through a local congregation for security reasons. Even so, their efforts are hampered. Local gunmen in northern



PANOS PICTURES



EPA PHOTO EPA/LOUISIA GOULIAMAKI

Albania and organised local crime groups have stolen cars and aid supplies in an effort to make money from the situation. (EBPS)

## USA

### Don't dress the devil in black



A group of missionaries went back to school recently to learn new ways of stopping people on street corners and drawing crowds to present the gospel.

Drama and music have been effectively used for three decades by international evangelism teams to draw crowds of passers-by and present the gospel everywhere from the capitals of Europe to remote South American villages, but according to the organisers of the Creative Keys to Outreach workshop, it's time for some new ideas.

"The arts can be used to present the gospel in a powerful way," said B J Johnston of YWAM's University of the Nations College of the Arts, who organised the workshop. "But there is a danger of us relying on past glories. The world is changing, and we need to be

looking for new ways to communicate to new generations and new societies."

Johnston also spoke about the great need for research and cultural sensitivity, recognising that what is acceptable in one part of the world may not be appropriate in another.

"For example, to some, black is a sign of purity, so having a drama where a devil figure is dressed in black could send a very mixed message. You can't just take something that worked here and transplant it to another culture and assume it will have the same meaning or impact. Taking the time to accurately research the people and culture of your host country is absolutely essential if you want to effectively communicate the truth" he said. (YWAM News)



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

# World Mission Link

## High Hopes



BBC cameraman Geoffrey Hawkes has just returned from Nepal. He set out four weeks previously aiming to walk 300 miles with fellow Baptist Colin Smith, starting and finishing at Pokhara to raise funds for BMS. Except he only clocked up 25 miles.

Geoff's plans were curtailed when he fell and injured his knee in the early stages of the trek. The nearest telephone was a day's walk away and Geoff found himself stranded in an isolated farmhouse for three days before being rescued by helicopter.

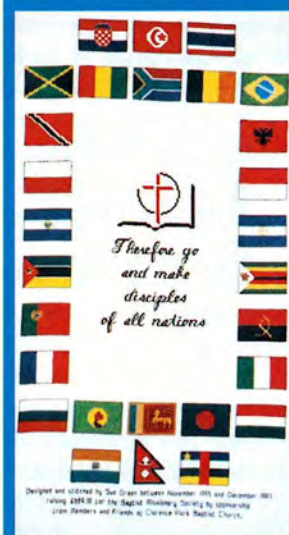
Geoff is now back in the UK and recovering at home after having surgery at Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

He says of his experience: "Nepal was a marvellous experience. The people and the scenery were marvellous. I would recommend anyone with the energy and a sense of adventure to go there, but take my advice and don't go during the monsoon time!"

## What You've been Doing For World Mission



Amphill Baptist Church held a flower festival on the theme of the World Cup. They raised £750 for BMS.



## X stitch

Sue Green at Clarence Park Baptist Church Weston-Super-Mare has designed a cross stitch banner incorporating the flags of all the countries in which BMS is working. She was sponsored to complete the banner flag by flag thus raising £689 for BMS.

## Dates for your Diary Events & Meetings

### Wellington

Sat 21 Nov

Western Association Missionary Secretaries Training and Information Day  
Wellington Baptist Church

More Information: Phil Hindle  
01823 698977

### Leicester

Sat 2 Jan

Leicester Auxiliary New Year Prayer Meeting  
Friar Lane & Braunstone Baptist Church

More Information: John Russell  
0116 241 6299

### Cambridge

Tues 5 Jan

Cambridge Auxiliary New Year Prayer Meeting  
Arbury Road Baptist Church

More Information: Jim Clarke  
01353 778984

Cambridgeshire Baptist Missionary Fellowship welcomed 60 children from the Chernobyl area – all connected with the Baptist Union of Belarus – for a three-week holiday in East Anglia.



# News

## Millennium Gift Aid — the Scheme is open!

People who give money to help alleviate world poverty and advance education in poor countries can now find that their money goes even further, thanks to the Millennium Gift Aid Scheme.

BMS can reclaim the tax on the gift — tax that tax payers have already paid in income tax — on donations of £100 or more, (given as one lump sum or smaller instalments).

BMS is able to qualify to benefit from this Scheme because much of its work falls within the Government's guidelines both for nature of work, and because much of our work is in countries designated 'low-income countries' by the International Development Association of the World Bank.

BMS will be issuing more information about the Millennium Gift Aid Scheme and how you can give to it during 1999 and 2000.

For more information NOW write to Resources, BMS, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA or phone Rob Vaines on 01235 517700.

## Prayer and Fasting

Three days of prayer and fasting were called — supported by BMS — following the American military strikes on terrorist bases in Afghanistan.

As a result of these bombings the International Assistance Mission (IAM) have had to withdraw its personnel from that country, and do not know when they will be able to return.

BMS has only recently entered into a partnership with IAM.

News in Brief



## Congo — two BMS missionaries stay behind

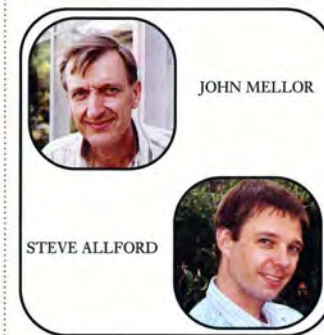
Two BMS missionaries, Steve Allford and John Mellor, were still at their posts in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo, as other BMS personnel were recalled following British Embassy advice to UK nationals to leave the country.

After talks with BMS's partner body, Baptist Church of the River Congo (CBFC) BMS agreed that Steve, who has a liaison role with the CBFC, and John who works with the Centre for Evangelism in Kinshasa, could both carry on under the protection of the CBFC. But the tension mounts as the world looks on to see how the battle for Congo will turn out.

## Relief Fund grant helps Bangladesh flood victims

Following the longest-lasting flood in Bangladesh's history, the BMS Relief Fund has sent two grants, one of £8,000, and a further one of £20,000.

This money will go towards the post-flood rehabilitation programme, as well as helping to provide emergency assistance for 3,000 families. It will provide water purification tablets, salt, rice and pulses as well as some emergency medicines.



JOHN MELLOR

STEVE ALLFORD

Kinshasa had been under threat from rebel forces reportedly boosted by Rwandan and Ugandan military backing, but subsequently Zimbabwe and Angola sent in troops to support the President Laurent Kabila.

Former BMS missionary Lesley Fuller, who was visiting Lower Zaire when the political situation deteriorated,



had to return to Britain via a Belgian relief flight. She said, "We believe God can use every situation, and it may be that the uncertainty of these days will underline the need to seek his will."

BMS Regional Secretary for Africa, Pam Bryan, is in daily contact with Steve, and he is contact with the British Embassy. Steve's wife, Elizabeth, and children have flown back to the UK, as has John's wife, Rena. Two other BMS personnel, Gwen Hunter and Pat Woolhouse, currently in the UK, are hoping to return to Congo as soon as the situation becomes more stable.



## Trimble twins half-adopted

BMS missionaries in Nepal Tim and Caroline Trimble now find themselves in the unusual situation of having one of their Nepali twins — Karuna — fully adopted under Nepali law, and the other — Samjhana — still waiting for completion. They are hoping and praying that the second adoption will go through smoothly before they come back to the UK on home assignment. Tim works as an Account Controller and Caroline is the BMS Correspondent for BMS in Nepal.

## Baptist House News



**Pam Bryan**



**Karen Stow**



**Andy Voyce**



**Sarah-Jane White**



**Andy Smith**

### Welcome to:

#### **Pam Bryan**

**Pam takes over as Regional Secretary for Africa, but she is no stranger to BMS. After studying at London Bible College, Pam went to Congo (then Zaire) as a BMS missionary to train pastors in the Bible School. Because of the political situation however, she was evacuated from Kisangani in 1991 along with other BMS colleagues and realised she would not be returning immediately.**

**She worked first of all in a UK church for 18 months, facilitating evangelism, and then went to All Nations Christian College as Tutor in the Christian Ministries department. It was while she was at All Nations that she was ordained a minister. As Regional Secretary for Africa Pam finds herself in a position where she will be working with very few missionaries, and in only six countries with which BMS has partnership links. However her job is to implement new strategy and look for more openings for work in Africa. "Africa is a continent with enormous challenges," she says "but I'm excited about it as well."**

**Pam will probably live in the Pretoria area of South Africa, but first of all will go to Portugal to learn basic Portuguese.**

#### **Karen Stow**

**Karen has joined the Finance and Administration Department as a Records and Receipting Clerk, having previously been a care assistant. She attends Christchurch in Abingdon, and says she loves music and socialising.**

#### **Andy Voyce**

**Andy, too, is no stranger to BMS as he came to work temporarily in the Audio Visual part of the (then) Department for Constituency Support straight from studying at university over a year ago. He will now be working permanently as Audio Visual Assistant in the Communications Department. Andy's home church is Upton Vale Baptist Church, Torquay. He lists as his hobbies golf and volleyball, and was the Sussex County Platewinners Champion at volleyball in 1996/97.**

#### **Sarah-Jane White**

**Sarah-Jane has come to BMS as Secretary to the Administration Manager, Michael Quantick. Previously she worked as a secretary in the Faculty of History at Oxford University.**

**Sarah-Jane was born and bred in Didcot, and is an active member of All Saints Church, Didcot. She has a keen interest in local history and is currently studying for an Undergraduate Certificate in this subject.**

### Please pray for:

#### **Andy Smith**

**Andy Smith, Audio-Visual Co-ordinator, who was taken ill while on holiday in France. He suffered what was first thought to be a stroke, but this was subsequently proved otherwise. He was first admitted to hospital in France, and later was repatriated He is now resting at home having undergone tests and observation at an Oxford hospital.**

**Please remember Andy and his family in your prayers.**

# What's special about being a



## DAVID COFFEY, BILL SLACK, PETER DEWIRICHARDS AND ALISTAIR BROWN SPEAK OUT

**T**he conundrum of Baptist identity has been a focal point for debate and discussion for many years, but has resurfaced for members of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) as a result of the 1999 Consultation Process.

We are a tribe of Christians with an illustrious history as a dissenting Free Church. Yet there is a conundrum. That even with a history, a clear tradition and evidence of church growth, some still find it difficult to state without reservation, what is special about being a Baptist.

The reasons are not difficult to distinguish. The resurgence in evangelical trans-denominational identity has reduced the value of a denominational label.

We may have lost a sense of specific identity as Baptists, but it can be regained if we focus on the key issue of meaningful partnership in God's mission. In the world there is a spiritual famine. Young people and children especially are deprived of the basic human right to hear the good news of the gospel in a language and cultural form they can understand.

The task of transforming our mission responsibility is at the heart of the BUGB Consultation Process, so I welcome the formation of the Fellowship of British Baptists and appreciate the supportive friendships it offers. Within this Fellowship there are new possibilities of co-operative mission partnership in these islands.

If we are to face the global challenge of bringing the good news of the gospel to the nations, our identity increasingly has to be shaped by the depth of our worship, the quality of our relationships, a more radical understanding of what it means to be followers of Jesus, and by our sacrificial identity with the missionary God. ●

David Coffey

Can you imagine how small and insignificant young David must have felt when he stood face to face with that towering giant of a man called Goliath? That's sometimes how it feels to be a Baptist in Scotland! Although the largest of the Free Churches in Scotland, our membership of around 15,000 seems minuscule when compared to that of the established church, the Church of Scotland at around 695,000 and the Roman Catholic Church at a similar level. To be a Scottish Baptist is really to be a nonconformist and stand out because of your spiritual convictions. Nevertheless there may well be some truth in the old saying, "Scratch a Scottish Baptist and underneath you'll find a Presbyterian!"

Scottish Baptists hold their convictions with strength and passion. Coming from a land which has been known in earlier days as "the Land of the Book", we have a great love for God's word and for expository preaching. Because our hearts are stirred by the preaching of the gospel, evangelism has a high priority in our churches where visitors usually find a warm welcome and real fellowship. The Scottish Union encourages its churches to support the BMS and rejoices in being well represented by her people serving the



## in the UK today?

Society — including the General Director and the President! ●

**Bill Slack**

The situation in Wales regarding the strength of the churches demands an immediate and positive response. According to "Challenge to Change", the Welsh Churches Survey of 1995 only about 8.7 per cent of the total 2.9 million population of Wales is involved in any church of any denomination. Baptists in Wales have seen 141 churches close between 1982 and 1995, which is a decline of 17 per cent. However, rather than discourage us, these statistics and our current situation have given us a renewed commitment to mission as we trust in God to lead us in bringing the people of Wales to faith in Christ.

The Baptist Union of Wales has appointed the Revd John Robinson as Evangelism and Church Development Officer to initiate a series of projects and programmes to train our church members in the task of mission outreach.

The link between the Baptist Union of Wales and the BMS is appreciated, and I would encourage further developments, especially in world mission to enrich our endeavours. For example, we could identify specific areas where overseas missionaries could serve

in Wales, such as with a Somali community in Cardiff or Muslim community in Swansea. With such a richness in diversity in Wales, we can through the guidance of the Holy Spirit move into a new millennium with a determination and commitment in bringing the people of Wales to Christ. ●

**Peter Dewi Richards**

### AND WHERE DOES THE BMS FIT IN?

Maybe it's our history and maybe it's our theology, but Baptists are people of clearly held convictions. We're strong because of that — often it's Baptists who've got things done, changing the face of society and launching mission activities. But our convictions sometimes make us weak — any two Baptists are enough for an argument.

What's true on the small scale is true on the big scale. British Baptists need to pull together and stick together.

Two things help that happen. One is BMS. All three Baptist Unions in Britain relate equally to BMS, and every Baptist church in the country can belong. Baptists are united for overseas mission. We can pool our vision and resources to share the love of God round the earth.

The other help is the Fellowship of

British Baptists. The three Unions and the BMS agreed a covenant four years ago which promises we'll work for fellowship and cooperation. We can be honest about our differences. We can help each other with our problems. We can work together.

British Baptists don't all have the same history, don't all have the same concerns, don't all have the same specialisations. But we have the same Lord and same overall mission. If our clear convictions work together, and we have God's help, nothing can hold us back. ●

**Alistair Brown**

**David Coffey is General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain**

**Bill Slack is General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Scotland**

**Peter Dewi Richards is General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Wales**

**Alistair Brown is General Director of the Baptist Missionary Society**

**Photographs above:**

**B - David Coffey**

**A - Action Team Members**

**P - Bill Slack**

**T - Baptist Church Members**

**I - Peter Dewi Richards**

**S - Baptist Church Members**

**T - Alistair Brown**

# Bangladesh

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## BAPTISTS AS A TINY MINORITY

**DONALD FOSTER**  
SPENT SEVERAL MONTHS IN BANGLADESH, WHERE CHRISTIANS MAKE UP LESS THAN 0.5 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION. HERE ARE SOME OF HIS OBSERVATIONS.

**T**he Mitsubishi Projero parked in the middle of the village and we left the driver as guard. Ignoring the stares of people we followed a woman along the narrow track between the rice paddy fields for a further half-mile. Slipping, sliding, but not too dirty, we took off

shoes and ducked into the entrance of the spotlessly clean mud hut. Inside it was dark and once our eyes adjusted, mud stairs could be seen in the corner. Climbing to an upper room a group of new Christians were waiting for us. We sat cross-legged on mats and Revd James S Roy, General Secretary of Bangladesh Baptist Sangha addressed the potential new church. Twenty three new churches were started last year but this one was quite different. Most new Christians are from Hindu or tribal backgrounds. This was a Moslem village.

The Sangha rejoiced but complex issues were now raised. Was there evidence of genuine transformation? Did they really want money to alleviate their obvious poverty? In front and to the right were four men. They wanted to know what was going on and demanded money. When it was refused the village leaders walked out. Later they tried again to corner the General Secretary. The accusation was that Moslems only become Christians to get money so why shouldn't the whole village benefit?

The leader of the small Christian group had a fresh dressing on her head. She had received a severe beating from relatives. The others knew it would cost far more than money to proclaim Christ in their village. Still keen to progress to the next stage, church leaders from the nearest town will encourage and support them. We left that village sensing the presence of Christ and knowing the spiritual battle will be fierce.

To the north of the country lies the town of Dinajpur. William Carey Memorial Chapel is here and that founder of modern missions lies buried in a village to the west. In Rangpur also, former missionaries are remembered with great affection.

There are many opportunities to demonstrate the love of Christ by the arranging of income generating activities such as weaving, farming and shop keeping. This is the domain of SHED (Social Health and Education Development) Board with Revd James A Singha as Director. His staff is also involved in disaster assessment. Floods,



# A minority people

cyclones and tornadoes are very common, causing suffering and hardship to millions. They also operate medical clinics in partnership with the German based Liebenzell Mission International.

Senior pastors receive a monthly wage of less than forty pounds. Others receive ten to twenty pounds. Their churches are neat and clean. Visitors receive a very warm welcome. Special guests are greeted with flowers during the service. Afterwards tea and cake are served.

Baridhara Church is just a few hundred yards from the British High Commission in Dhaka. It is in the middle of a slum. A shop selling medicines during the week is transformed on Sundays into a place of worship. The hole in the wall and dodgy electrical wiring don't seem to matter. Recently dirty water has been lapping their feet. They long for their own place.

Ministers wear cassocks so that they are readily identified when preaching.

Many attend church only because their fathers did. It causes serious problems for the image of the truly committed Christians who have to demonstrate their

faith by their works. Friday is the day of rest and Sunday is a normal working day. Only a few children are seen at Sunday morning services because they are at school. Some churches have their Sunday on a Friday.

Sadarghat Baptist Church has almost

**"We left that village sensing  
the presence of Christ and  
knowing the spiritual battle  
will be fierce"**

every window broken on the north side. A few months ago a crowd of about 2,000 people misunderstood the intentions of the Christians and attacked Baptist, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. The people inside were fearful but the

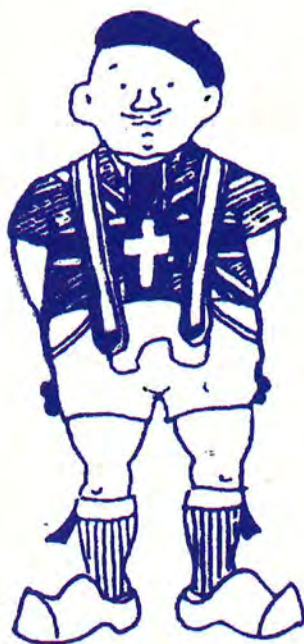
police standing back on that occasion are now ready to give protection. Thankfully it has not been needed.

Despite much poverty the church has taken up the challenge of trying to encourage members to be aware of future generations. Concern for the environment is on their agenda and new trees are planted with ceremony. The Easter sunrise service was a spectacular occasion. Over 10,000 Christians gathered on the steps of Parliament. We look forward to the individual churches responding to needs of other districts and countries. ●

**Donald Foster was a volunteer worker with BMS in Bangladesh, giving advice and training on computer systems.**

# The Eurobaptist

**JOHN  
PASSMORE**  
GOES ON AN  
IRREVERENT  
SEARCH FOR  
THIS ELUSIVE  
CREATURE



**E**urophile, Eurotunnel, Eurosceptic not to mention the Euro itself and then there's Eurobaptist!

I've always wondered if the creature actually exists. I've met his first cousin, Euro-Christian but despite several attempts to capture and domesticate, it has always been more difficult to identify Eurobaptist.

It's hard to write an exact description of this elusive species. First recorded sightings were in Holland nearly 400 years ago but although having gone there in the search for freedom, were soon forced into a migratory habit, moving first across the Channel to England from where some members ventured across the Atlantic to USA in order to flee persecution and possible extinction. By far the biggest colonies of Baptist (the collective noun for Baptists tends to be Union in Europe but Convention in USA) are now to be found in both North and South America.

Although originating here, Baptists have had a varied reception in 20th century Europe and found it difficult to establish large colonies in a

friendly and receptive habitat. Baptists have been variously received during the four centuries of their existence in European countries. At times hunted almost to extinction, persecuted and denied suitable breeding grounds and excluded from the rights offered to other groups.

There have also been times of rapid growth and expansion where external conditions have been favourable (such as the Civil War in England, the new movements of Christian pietism in Germany and Scandinavia in the 19th century and the immediate post-communist era of this decade) when Baptists were able to establish Unions in most countries in Europe until the point today where there are 51 recorded colonies in the wider European area.

The European variety should not be confused with the larger and sometimes more colourful American counterpart. Not only smaller but with some very distinctive markings, the Eurobaptist has often exercised disproportionate influence for its size in the World Baptist arena. ●

**John Passmore is BMS Regional Representative for Europe**



**W**hen I first met this family, they were attending a Sunday morning worship service in a house about four miles away from where they lived. They had walked to church that morning. The church belonged to the 16th Pakh, (or district), and was part of the Baptist grouping of churches within the Church of Christ in Thailand.

As they walked, they had met up with others on the way and, when the family did eventually arrive at 'the church', they were staggered into different groups depending on the walking pace.

I remember them well, because of the time it took the husband and father to find the Scripture reading. He searched for it with painful slowness in the battered-looking Karen Bible that he had dug out of his colourful cloth shoulder bag. Having found the passage, he then read it out loud with equal slowness, his finger carefully moving from word to word.

A few months before this particular Sunday, they had come over the hills from neighbouring Burma and settled at a spot where the flatter terrain of the Kwai River valley takes over. They brought with them what they could carry. They came hoping for somewhere to live that would be free from harassment and threats. Their goods were few in number and their hope was fairly fragile.

Having found a place to live, they built the simplest of split-bamboo houses beside two other equally simple houses belonging to people like themselves. The husband got some work on a nearby 'farm', for which he was paid a low wage that reflected his status as an illegal immigrant with no bargaining rights.

**home  
is  
where  
the  
heart  
is**

ANGUS MACNEILL  
TELLS OF ONE  
REFUGEE FAMILY  
FROM BURMA WHO  
WORSHIP IN A  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
IN THAILAND

The money was barely enough for absolute essentials.

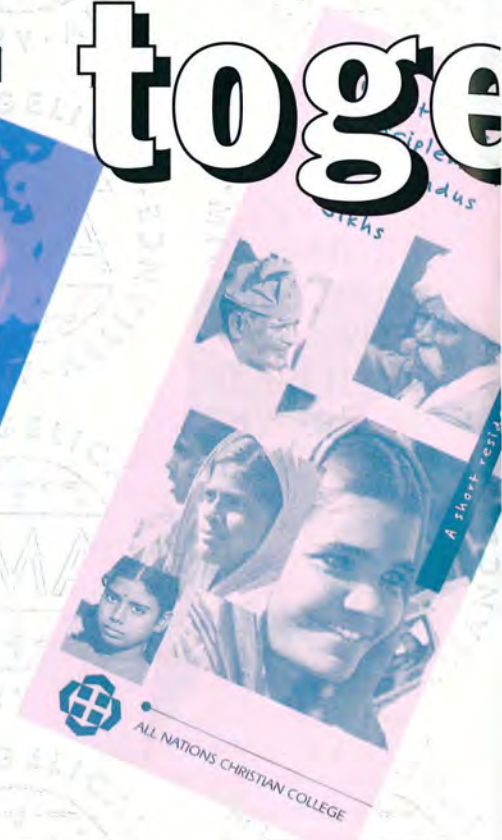
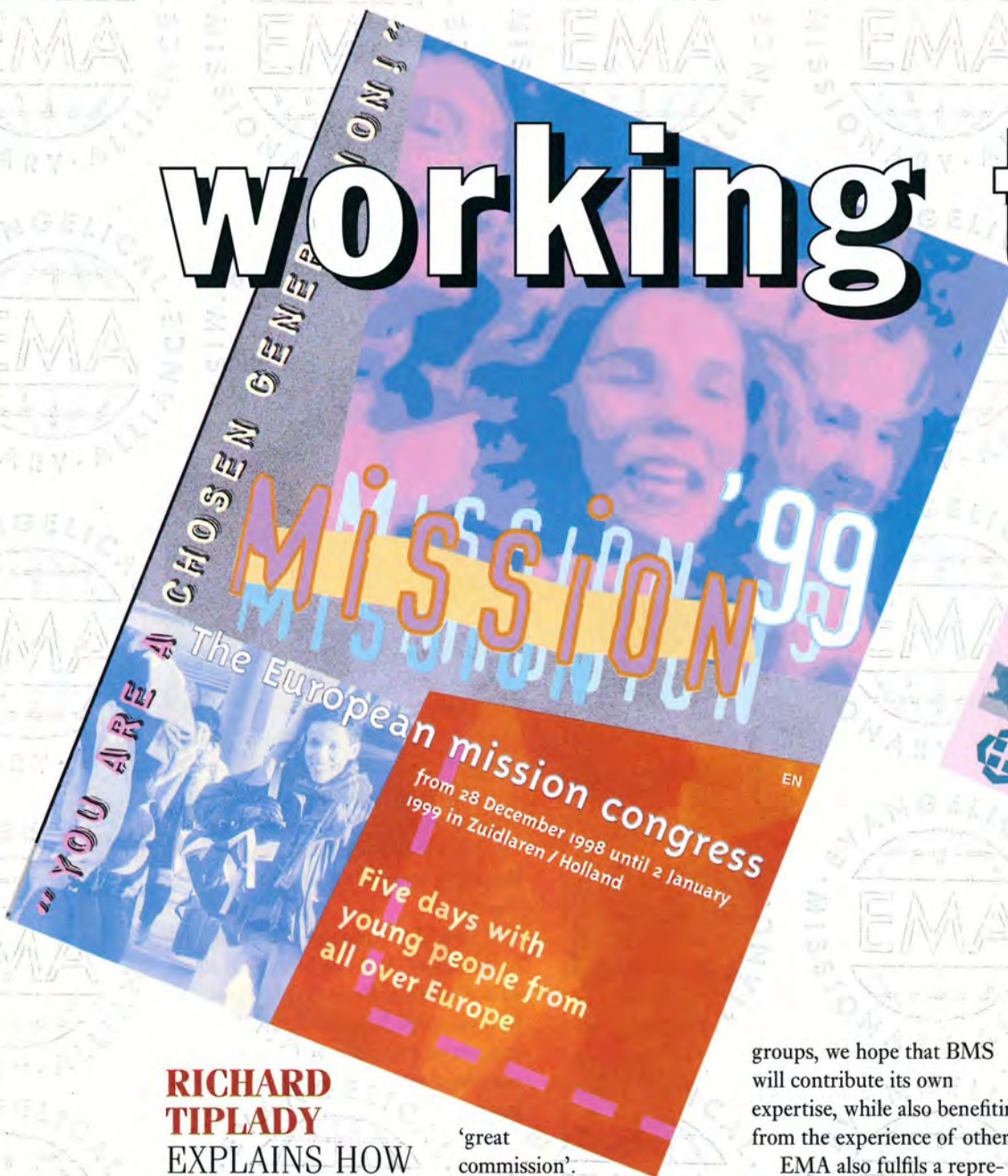
While it was better to be where they were than back in Burma, feelings of fear and insecurity hung over them like a permanent cloud in their sky. They might be rounded up and deported after an unpleasant stay in a detention centre, so they kept very much to themselves. The children could not go to school. Walking four miles to come to church was potentially hazardous should they happen to meet some surprise checkpoint.

Their Christian faith is anything but sophisticated, but they brought it along with them from Burma. When the bamboo house had been built, the Bible was put on a single, wooden ledge up near the thatch roof, sharing space with other special things like a lamp, a note book, a nice cloth, a decent shirt, and some soap. The Bible comes off the ledge and into the cloth shoulder bag every Sunday when they set out to walk to church or whenever there is a time of special prayer in the house. Only the husband can read the Bible.

Their trust in God is foundational to their way of life. They feel themselves to be the people of God and while they cannot understand clearly why their lives should have turned out the way they have, they hold on to God. For them in their pilgrimage through the 'desert' and their present stay at an 'oasis' where they can enjoy Christian fellowship with others, what counts is that the light of God's love in Christ should still stand over them and that there should be real hope for the future. ●

Angus MacNeill is a BMS missionary and church worker in Thailand.

# working together



## RICHARD TIPLADY EXPLAINS HOW BAPTISTS AND THE BMS HAVE A PART TO PLAY ON THE WIDER MISSION SCENE

The Evangelical Missionary Alliance (EMA) is the primary UK network for co-operation on world mission. BMS became EMA members in 1996. In so doing, they have joined a network of over 140 different mission agencies, and 18 Bible and theological colleges, all committed to fulfilling the

'great commission'. As part of EMA, BMS is contributing to co-operative interdenominational mission activity on a variety of issues. The EMA Youth Forum brings together youth workers from a variety of different mission agencies to look at youth discipleship trends in the UK and the role that mission service overseas can play in this. The EMA Short-Term Mission Forum has developed a Code of Best Practice for volunteer placements and teams, to ensure that all such programmes are run to the highest possible professional standards. In both these

groups, we hope that BMS will contribute its own expertise, while also benefiting from the experience of others.

EMA also fulfils a representative role on behalf of its members here in the UK. We act as a voice to the UK government on behalf of our

most traditional of roles (ie evangelism and church work) often struggle to obtain visas, and we are working to change Home Office rules in this regard. We have helped Spring Harvest to include world mission material within its adult and youth programmes. With large mission organisations like BMS within the EMA network, this only adds weight to the voice we speak on behalf of world mission to the UK government, media and churches.

EMA itself is part of a wider association of mission agencies, such as the European Evangelical Missionary Alliance (EEMA). This organisation represents, through the various national EMAs, the whole European

**EMA is delighted that BMS is a member of our network**

members. Missionaries intending to come to work in the UK in anything but the



# together

13 - 17 July

**1998**

WORSHIP  
MINISTRY  
CELEBRATION  
SHARING  
SEMINARS  
FRINGE ACTIVITIES  
SPEAKERS  
MUSIC  
YOUTH PROGRAMME  
CHILDREN'S GROUPS  
FAMILY FUN

A CHRISTIAN  
HOLIDAY CONFERENCE

AUGUST 8TH TO 14TH  
(MEETINGS END LATE ON THE EVENING OF THE 14TH)  
PLEASE BE OFF SITE BY 10.00 A.M. ON 15TH)

THIRSK, NORTH YORKSHIRE.

evangelical missionary movement. One of the goals of EEMA is to assist in the development of national missionary movements in every European country. In both western and northern Europe, these are reasonably strong but, for obvious reasons, cross-cultural mission work from eastern Europe and Russia is only in the earliest stages of development. Yet the number of evangelical Christians in some former Communist countries is comparatively large (eg Romania, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia). Given that many of these are Baptists, any hope of such a missionary movement occurring would



seem to require their involvement, co-operation and even leadership. This surely is something to which BMS can contribute its influence and experience. The EEMA is itself a regional grouping of the Missions Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. The Missions Commission works to identify key trends and issues which affect cross-cultural mission worldwide, and to propose responses. One recent example is the book, "Too Valuable to Lose", which addresses the causes of "missionary attrition" (that is,



## Mike Pilavachi

### Baptists – a tribal religion ?

work with christian young people, and anyone who works with them will know that they do not seem to pay much attention to denominational barriers. In fact, many of them seem to see the whole denominational structure irrelevant.

So, is there any benefit to denominations? I believe the answer is yes. As the nation of Israel was divided into 12 tribes, each with their distinctive emphases and jobs to do, so too the one church of Jesus Christ has its tribes. Tribes are not a bad thing as long as they do not see themselves in competition with one another but instead see themselves, as with different regiments in an army, fighting on the same side.

Many of us have spent more time than we should apologising for our denomination, instead of thanking God for the unique strength that we can bring to the wider church. As an Anglican, what do I see as the unique contributions of the Baptist church to the whole family of God? In the main, it is an emphasis on every-member ministry and the priesthood of all believers. Now we all say that but the Baptist church puts that doctrine into practice in very practical ways. In the best of the Baptist denomination, the church is governed by the church. That does not mean that leaders are not allowed to lead but it is the context of leading a mature group of people and not a bunch of spiritual children. And clearly the emphasis on believer's baptism keeps the church very aware of the importance of conversion.

There are many other elements to Baptist life that I could comment on, but a short column does not permit. Let us each rejoice in the distinctiveness and the heritage that God has given us, while being always open to the Spirit who leads us on and binds us together in unity. ●

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

cross-cultural mission workers who return home earlier than planned for preventable, and often painful, reasons.) The aim of the book (and its underlying study) is to find ways to maximise the effectiveness and longevity of those working in tough cross-cultural situations. As part of EMA, BMS has the opportunity to work through and apply these lessons for the benefit of their own personnel.

EMA is delighted that BMS is a member of our

network. I have only touched on a few of the ways that BMS is contributing (or could do so) to the wider UK, European and world missionary movements. We hope and anticipate that this co-operation will continue to increase, for a mutual benefit, and look forward to a future of partnership for the sake of the gospel. ●

**Richard Tiplady** is Associate Director of the EMA

# FIRE, FIRE!

## JENNIFER BARRETT LOOKS AT FAITH AND MISSION IN THE LIFE OF WILTSHIRE'S FIRE CHIEF

**I**n the early hours of 20 July 1992, a convoy of vans, lorries and fire engines approached the docks at Dover. Its £30,000 cargo was waved through by customs, and lumbered onto a ferry bound for Dunkirk. This was Romaid – the first of eight convoys sent by New Baptist Church in Devizes – which over the next few years would rebuild the fire service in far away Romania. And all because of a phone call to Wiltshire Fire Chief, John Craig.

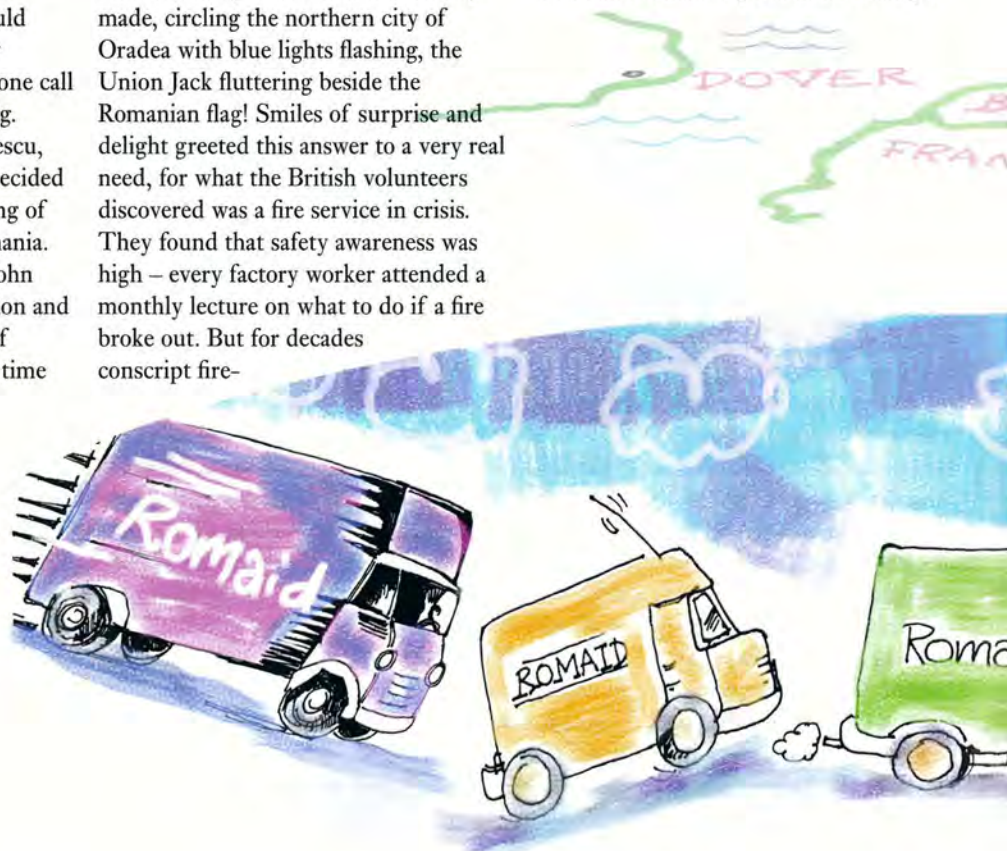
Shortly after the fall of Ceausescu, New Baptist Church in Devizes decided to do something about the suffering of men, women and children in Romania. As one of the church's deacons, John offered his fire station as a collection and storage point for the lorry-loads of donated relief supplies. And next time

around, members of his own fire fighting team would volunteer to be part of a second convoy.

So, when five Romanian fire officers came to visit their colleagues in the UK, John made sure they included his headquarters in Potterne on their itinerary. All around the country offers had come in of enough fire fighting and rescue equipment to transform the Romanian fire service in its sworn duty to protect the public. But how could they get these vital gifts safely back home across 1,400 miles and six national borders? Simple – ask John Craig. And what a spectacle that first convoy made, circling the northern city of Oradea with blue lights flashing, the Union Jack fluttering beside the Romanian flag! Smiles of surprise and delight greeted this answer to a very real need, for what the British volunteers discovered was a fire service in crisis. They found that safety awareness was high – every factory worker attended a monthly lecture on what to do if a fire broke out. But for decades conscript fire-

fighters had had to rely on sheer inventiveness and determination to effect a rescue. Protective clothing to them meant nothing more than a tin helmet, an army greatcoat and a pair of rubber boots. Without lightweight alloy ladders or breathing apparatus, tackling blazes in high rise buildings was almost impossible, and only the local blacksmith had the tools to cut through the wreckage of a car and somehow drag the victims of a road accident to safety.

Addressing fire crews at Oradea station, in northern Romania, John asked for God's blessing on the work ahead of them all. Romaid is yet another example





John Craig (centre) with colleagues

of the international bond of friendship and service between all firemen – a bond which for John is rooted in the christian faith he shares with two of his closest colleagues. “I am convinced that the progress the Brigade is making and the high morale throughout the Wiltshire service owes a lot to a common sense of values” he said.

John meets up regularly with the New Baptist Church minister Pete Butchers to discuss how best to manage change and empower the people in their care to more effective service.

But the challenges are not just operational – what every fireman faces is the trauma of reaching people swiftly

through smoke and flames, often compounded by the trauma of having to remove corpses from a burnt-out building or vehicle.

So in two Brigades – first in Suffolk, and now in Wiltshire – John has helped to recruit a chaplain; someone independent to whom the men can come for advice and support without fear of being judged or of prejudicing their careers in any way. “Sometimes we can be so busy we miss what is happening. The Chaplain can stand back and see what needs to be done – always on the lookout for opportunities to share the love of God with anyone who is

hurting.”

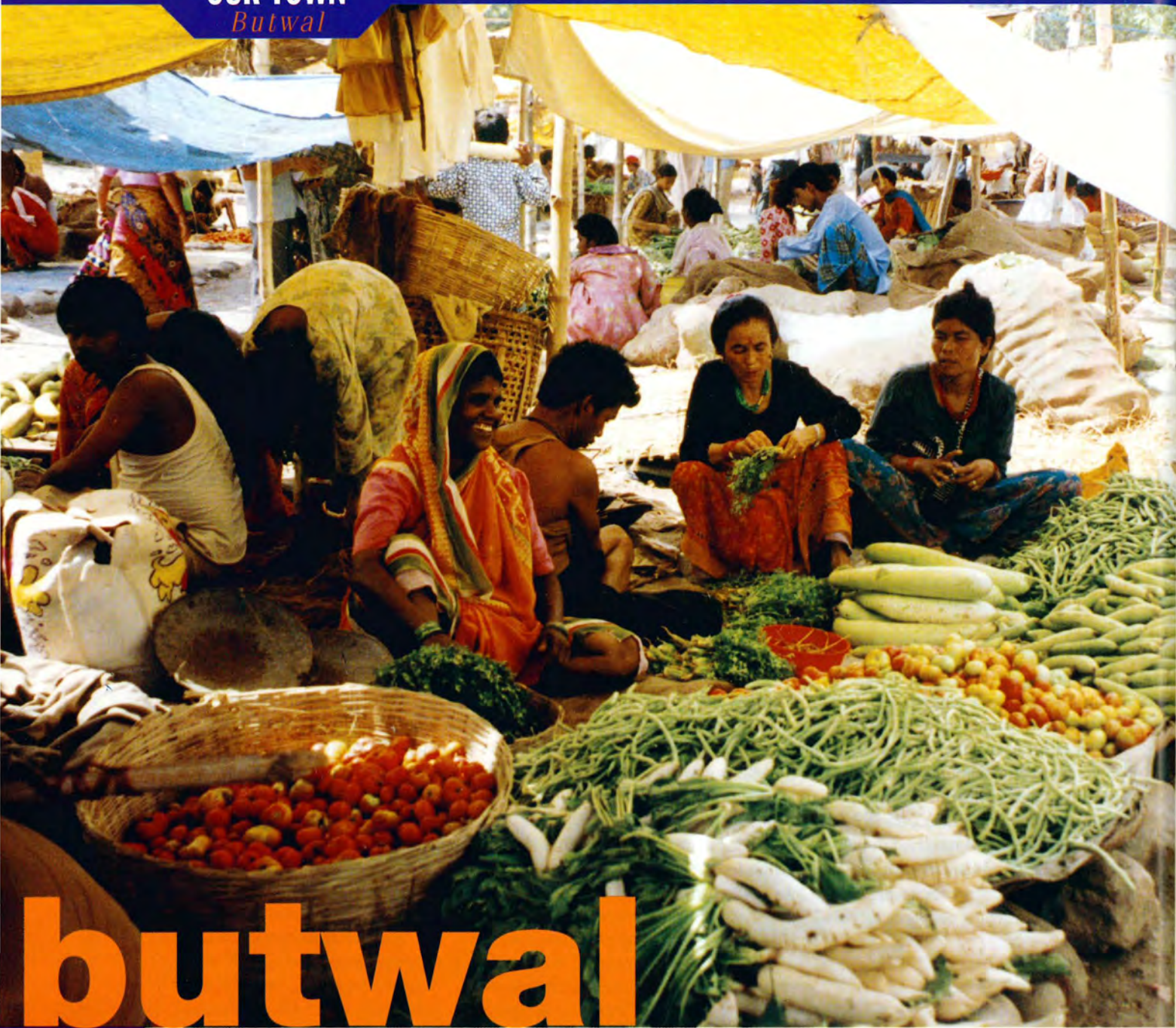
John says he will retire from the fire service in the year 2000. He has seen so much throughout his career – situations of humour and of heartbreak. But he has always felt grateful for the opportunity to serve others. And for the trust in God which has brought him through.

“When you put on your uniform, you never know what the day will bring – what risks, what unexpected challenges. But, in the face of so much uncertainty, faith in the Lord Jesus is a great strength.” ●

*Jennifer Barrett is a freelance writer.*



Fire fighting  
in Romania



# butwal

**Our Town**

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

BY  
**TIM & ALISON  
LEHANE/MACLEAN,  
BOB & RUTH ELLETT,  
MARTIN & KATRINA  
BUTTERWORTH**



**NEPAL**

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Your bus will have left the cold of Kathmandu in the morning and fought its way through the mist and traffic to get out of the valley. Then all the way the bus will be descending going from the hills onto the plains called Terai. After six hours the bus reaches Terai. The sun is strong. If you sit away from the window you will be gasping for air. If you are by the window then the air is not cooling, but like a blast of heat. A seemingly ceaseless journey. Then the bus turns towards the tree-covered hills and Butwal.

When the bus stops, outside is a wall of heat. There is dust everywhere. A cycle rickshaw driver is willing to take you anywhere. But his Nepali is nothing like Kathmandu Nepali. He doesn't understand English, but the people round you translate. You climb in the rickshaw with its hood up to keep the sun off, and then find that because Nepali people are short, your head hits the roof at every bump.

## HISTORY

Fifty years ago Butwal was a forest and there were 5,000 people in a medieval, one street town. The Government kept Nepal free of outside influence until its overthrow in 1951. Butwal was without any modern amenities; there was no medical care for the people and very little schooling.

In 1957 a far-sighted United Mission to Nepal (UMN) missionary started a technical training school on the other side of the river from the old town. From this training school industries have grown. UMN helped build Nepal's first hydro-power station and this helped Butwal grow. Then the Government built the National East-West highway through Butwal which acted as a further stimulus to growth. The population of the town is now over 50,000.

## BUTWAL THE NEW TOWN

Things are freer here than in other parts of Nepal. Ad hoc rules the day, and

planning has a hard time. The council makes a valiant effort at zoning industry away from people, but the natural enterprise of the Nepalese leads them to start factories at home.

This natural enterprise has many side effects. Houses here happen; the design is modified during building. Householders must make their own water connection and pipes are taken across roads in trenches, but as it may be dug up again, the asphalt is not replaced.

## "TOWN WITHOUT A FUTURE"

A national newspaper report entitled "Town without a future" tells of a survey of the hills surrounding Butwal carried out about two years ago, concluding that the hillsides were unstable on all three hill-sided sides of the town.

In late August a small landslide hit the north-east corner of Butwal and took away four houses; no one was killed. Four days later we had a major downpour of rain causing the landslide to advance rapidly, during the course of which an elderly, handicapped man was killed.

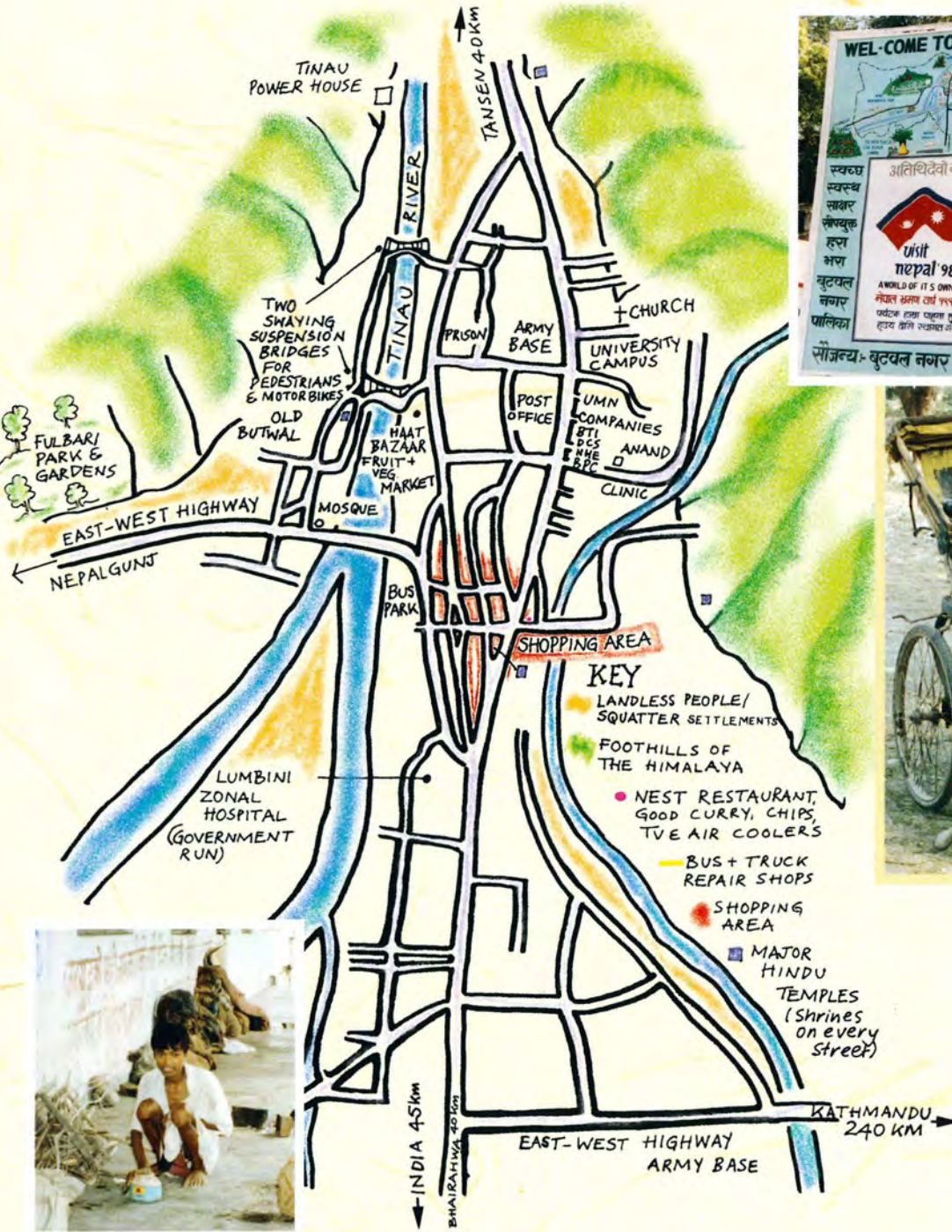
The next day an even heavier downpour lasting between two and three hours brought more rocks and mud down the steep hillside. Forty two houses have been destroyed and 166 people made homeless. Even if the rains have stopped for this year, next year's monsoon will make this landslide move again.

## HAAT BAZAAR

Twice a week there is a market in Butwal held on a reserved piece of ground, close to the river. The farmers come from the hills to sell their produce: rice, vegetables, fruit, chicken and goats. The Terai people bring rice, sugar cane and tropical fruits whilst from Butwal itself comes local cloth and manufactured plastics. Traders from India bring more tropical fruit, cloth and small, everyday items like mirrors.

But the bazaar is not just a selling place. You can have your fortune told here, get a hair-cut, meet friends, and sit in a tea shop and talk. Nepali women put on their good saris to visit the market, since you never know who you will meet!

Rock breakers (smashing individual rocks with hammers) preparing rocks for road building in Butwal



Jess and Jethro Lehane on a rickshaw, the most common form of transport in Butwal, Nepal



Krishna, a street boy

**PROFILE KRISHNA**

Krishna has TB. He used to work on the buses, collecting money and sleeping on the bus. Now he is too weak to work and has lost his bed on the bus. Krishna is lucky he has found his way to Butwal; one of our colleagues at the mission is helping to treat his TB. Krishna is now staying with a pastor and his family, and is gaining strength.

**DIL KUMARI**

Dil Kumari came to Butwal 19 years ago when the town was much smaller, but she and her husband chose to come because of the transport, the hospital and the market. Now her children go to schools that teach lessons through English, and she is proud they are doing so well. Dil and her husband own their own shop and rent out rooms for extra income.

**THE CHURCH**

Almost as soon as the borders opened in 1952 an Indian missionary couple started a Christian book shop and school in Butwal. Butwal's first church, Jyoti (light) was started a few years later and has a recognised place in the life of the town. Often sick and needy people are directed by local Hindu people to the church as a place of refuge. The Christian is still less than one per cent of the population.

# butwal



## SPECIAL FEATURE: OUR BUSES

How is it that in a place where attitudes to time are very elastic, we can have a well-run and regular bus service to our nearest town? Every bus is privately owned and individual, but the route is let out to an owners co-operative. There are strict rules about getting out of sequence, and when the bus behind arrives, the bus in front must move on!



## THE BEST AND WORST ABOUT LIVING IN BUTWAL

by Jess (aged six) and Jethro (aged four) Lehane

### BEST

- ✓ Swimming in the Tinau river every hot season (March to June)
- ✓ Riding on rickshaws
- ✓ Playing with mud and dirt outside our house

### WORST

- ✓ Our friends here
- ✓ Cold season (November to February) because we don't get heat rash
- ✗ People being rude; Nepali people staring at us and strangers touching our hair and faces in the street
- ✗ Missing England and relatives
- ✗ Snakes and scorpions which live around our house ●

Jess and Jethro have lived in Butwal since 1994.

# democratic republic of

# CONGO



**W**ith some relief we told the Inama chief that we would begin evangelising his village the following Monday. It had been a long wait, and his folk might well have dismissed us as fly-by-nights.

Six months earlier Matondo, the Mbankana leader, had made an evangelistic trip to four villages ten miles to the south, and asked the District team – evangelist Mputu and ourselves – to follow it up. Whilst agreeing in principle, there was no prospect of doing it soon. We had enough on our hands already, but we did agree to go after the women's seminar, still two-and-a-half months off,



and built that promise into our programme.

Just as well, for on the day that the women speakers returned to Kinshasa we'd had a rude reminder.

Inching back up the main road, past the market stalls and parked lorries, whose passengers mingled with local people and the usual stray chickens, dogs and goats, we had suddenly been flagged down by a small agitated man, who leapt from his seat at a table, where he had been enjoying a quiet drink with friends.

"Why haven't you been to my village yet?" he demanded aggressively in a hoarse voice. "You promised you would!" Not aware that we'd ever met we were dumbfounded. "I'm the chief of Inama," (a village unknown to us) he added and produced a folded piece of paper, which testified that this was so.

"We can go there now!" he said, opening the passenger door and climbing into the seats behind us. "You can start a school in my village and a dispensary! Fifty-two children, but no school!" His voice was loud and his breath strong, making Mputu grimace. A converted drunkard himself, he always came down very strongly on the demon Drink in his preaching. Now he was more amused than put out.

"We're on our way to Bwantaba," I said. "That's fine," said the chief, "It's a

bit further on." It seemed best to press on to Bwantaba, where the pastor would know how to deal with this rather inebriated Authority. His plea for help was valid, but he was in no state to discuss it rationally.

On the way Mputu had humoured him, while putting him straight. "When we start work in a village," he said, "we first preach the gospel. If people respond and a church is founded, other things follow."

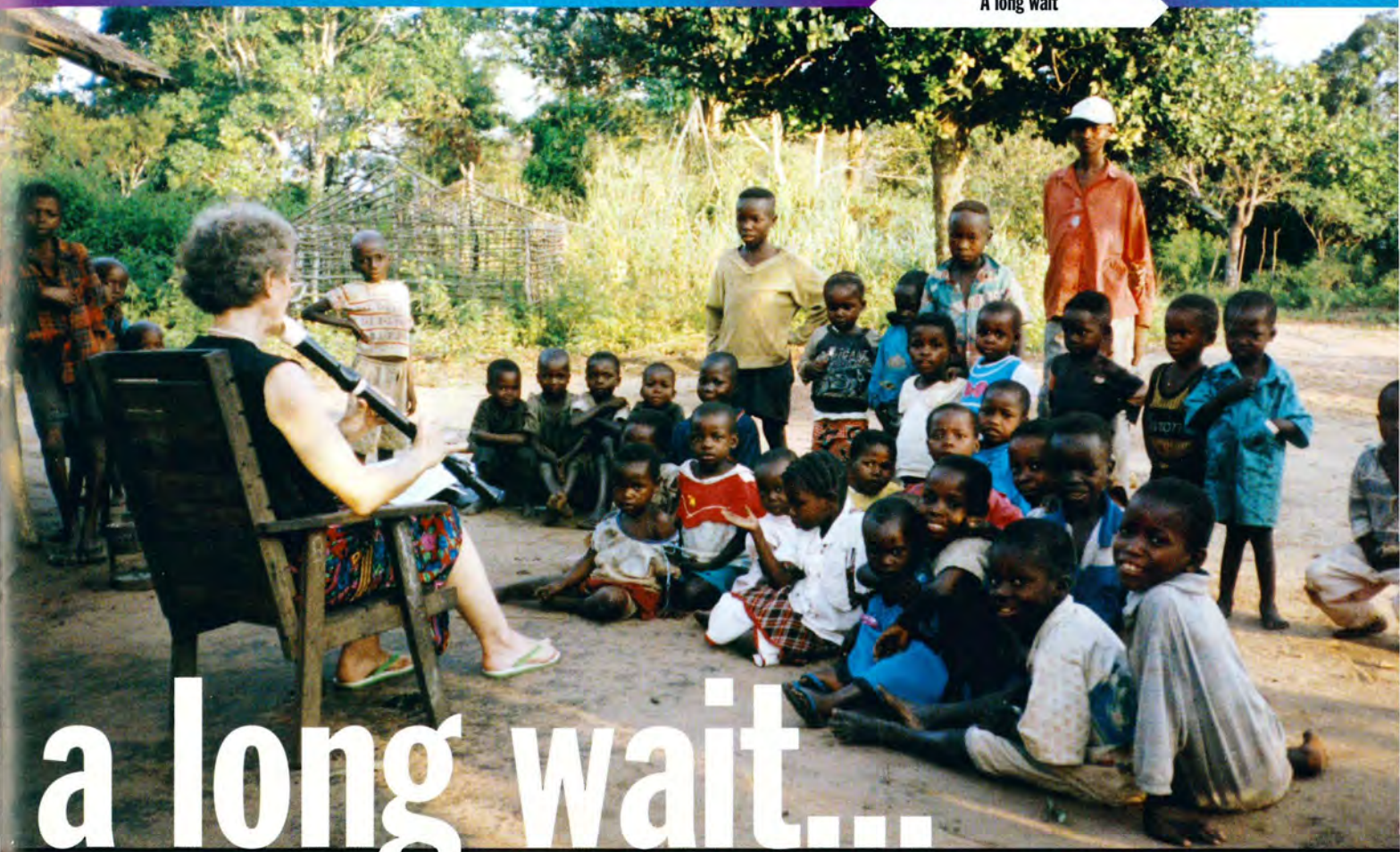
**"You can start a school in my village and a dispensary."**

This only excited our friend further. "I'm not talking to you, *petit* (squirt)," he exploded, "I'm talking to the *mondele* (white man). I want him to go to my village. I'll kill some chickens... and... and... a goat!" Mputu guffawed. "That'll be great. We'll have a feast."

At Bwantaba the pastor and villagers had sat the chief down, heard him out, said that it was too late that day, and sent him on his way. At Mbankana next day Matondo said that Inama was one of the villages he'd visited, and we agreed to go there two days later.

We wondered what kind of reception we'd get. What would the chief remember of our encounter? How would his demeanour be? Those who gathered, however, said that he was not yet back from the forest. They brought chairs, and a good, mixed group came to talk – a few adults, young men, three lads with home-made guitars, young mums and a few





# a long wait...

girls. Curious children came to stare. A young man spoke up. Referring to Matondo's visit he said that they had been expecting us ever since. It had been a long wait, but now they were glad that we'd come. Some were Christians, but the church was defunct. They hoped we would come and start work, and open a school. Mputu apologised for the delay, but said we were now ready to start work in the village. Our first step would be an evangelistic campaign in a month's time.

"The best laid plans of mice and men," wrote the poet, "gang aft agley." Circumstances intervene. So it had proved to be. A personal medical emergency. Pastor Mbieme's untimely death, obligations in Kinshasa, all had intervened. It had not been possible to return a month later. By the time our next trip was planned and prepared, one month had become three.

At last in Mbankana again, inching down the main road past the market and the lorries, the passengers, locals,

chickens, dogs and goats milling around as ever, suddenly the familiar sight of a small, agitated man leaping from his seat at a table produced that 'Oh no! We've been here before!' feeling. Loud, aggressive and hoarse, he was firing verbally from the hip as he approached.

"Why didn't you come back to my village?" he roared. "You lied to me!" Chief Labi, seated at the table, spoke sharply to him in Teke, and he calmed down. "We were prevented," we said, "but we'll come on Monday to begin evangelisation. Make sure everybody knows."

It had been a long wait, but this time we were ready to start work at Inama. ●

**Owen Clark is a church worker with BMS in the Democratic Republic of Congo.**



**Top of page: Children galore – but no school Bateke plateau**

**Above: Matondo (centre, wearing jacket) Mbankana church leader, and members with District evangelism team (three on right) Far left: Evangelist Mputu preaching in the village, Bateke plateau**



# Where are they now?



## ALISON WILLIAMS (SRI LANKA TEAM, 93/94)

*Alison speaks:*

Following my year on a 28:19 Action Team I wanted to go back overseas and work with the poor. I was delighted when World Vision offered me a one year volunteer trainee position.

During that year I worked raising government funding for relief and development projects in Asia. I really enjoyed it, especially the contact I was able to have with friends in Sri Lanka and the exciting trips I made to India, Bangladesh, Myanmar (Burma), and Thailand. After a year I became a permanent employee and was seconded to work in Myanmar, developing a programme to address the serious HIV/AIDS situation and working on a project which helps communities to prepare and cope with the many disasters which they constantly face.

After this experience I was soon on another plane bound for Laos. I've been here for 18 months now. I work with Lao people developing their skills. This has involved lots of adventures travelling all over the country – staying in remote villages where I've been asked questions like “do men have skin like yours too?”, and sampling interesting delicacies such

as ant larvae, snake and water buffalo intestine.

This all comes to an end in January when Lao staff will be able to take over my role. I'm not sure what will happen next but it's amazing to look back and see how 28:19 prepared me for what has happened since – it was really a life-

*I've been asked questions like “do men have skin like yours too?”*

changing experience and it's exciting to think where God might lead me next!

*Alison's mother Margaret adds:*

“Looking back, Alison's time in Sri Lanka had a profound effect on her in many different ways. She loved the adventure of it, loved experiencing a different culture, learned to cope with all sorts of difficulties, and was deeply affected by the enormous needs of a Third World country. At the end of her time with the Action Team, she was delighted to find herself working for Asia, helping to design development projects, write proposals and raise

funding.

She now lives and works in Laos. Though based in an office in Vientiane, much of her time is spent travelling to remote rural areas.

Alison is particularly committed to trying to reach the poorest people, often ethnic minorities, and to consulting women, even though this flies contrary to the culture. She visits projects to see how future planning can improve provision, be it education, training, health, medicines, water systems, income generation, revolving loans, whatever.

Alison describes this job as her biggest challenge yet. Laos is one of the poorest countries in the world with little infrastructure. Travel is always difficult and often dangerous. Recently she travelled by an elderly helicopter that needed a runway and where you travelled in the same compartment as fuel tanks, baggage and pigs! There was a notice up: “All passengers are covered by insurance”. Was this meant to reassure?

Ancient jars of alcohol are cracked open for visitors, deadly snakes cross your path, bacillary and amoebic dysentery result from polluted water...There is really far too much for a parent to worry about. But we are very grateful for her opportunities to respond to such enormous human need. All we can do is entrust her to a heavenly father's loving care.” ●



# Laos

(Part of a letter Alison wrote home)

“ We set off by small boat to visit some isolated mountain villages. We travelled along shallow, rocky rivers through beautiful valleys surrounded by interesting limestone shapes. Then we had four hours' walk across muddy and slippery mountain terrain, so that we arrived covered in mud and soaked in sweat. It made me appreciate how tough life is for the villagers. It was exciting, challenging and very sad at times. There were dirty, naked and malnourished children. Three year olds were carrying babies on their backs. There were women with iodine deficiency. One 30-year-old woman looked more like 60 after having had 10 children, four of which had died. A grandmother was gazing sadly at her sick grandson who lay listlessly there while all she could do was try traditional medicines and pray to the spirits. Then there was a desperate woman with 11 children, pregnant yet again and told that no birth spacing methods were suitable for her. ”



Over the coming year, BMS aims to add up to 40 new missionaries and to further expand its volunteering opportunities. With this in mind, we have been pleased to welcome four new volunteers...

### Jenny Smith



Oxford based Jenny is no stranger to BMS, nor to Budapest where she headed in September. She served with BMS in Hungary from 1992 to 94 teaching English as a foreign language at the International Baptist Lay Academy and acting as pastoral assistant at the International Baptist Church. This time around she will be using her TEFL skills at the Baptist Theological Academy. Please pray that another volunteer will be found who can work alongside Jenny teaching English and German. Perhaps you fit the bill yourself!

### Brian and Wendy Gibbs



Brian and Wendy are following in their daughter Margaret's footsteps by heading off to Nepal with BMS. Margaret completed her time teaching in Nepal with the International Nepal Fellowship (INF) in September 1997 but before that time, whilst visiting her on location and viewing the work of INF, Brian and Wendy felt they had something to offer. Brian will be using his expertise in personnel and Wendy will be working part time wherever there is a need – such as in the library and guesthouse. The couple are members of Chesterfield Baptist Church and left for Nepal in October.

### Joanna Took



As Jo was studying for a lower primary BEd at Homerton College in Cambridge, she became increasingly convinced that her ability to work with children was a gift from God and as such, it should be used for him. With that in mind, her first job has been to head off to North Africa! Jo has been in North Africa since August and asks especially for prayer that she will maintain and develop consistency of faith without the support of family and friends — relying totally on God alone.

# Prayer focus



## ASIA



**David and Sue Jackson**  
Rajagiriya, SRI LANKA

David and Sue have just completed their year of language study and cultural orientation in Sri Lanka and began work with the Baptist Sangamaya (like a Union) in September. The couple, formerly with BMS in Brazil, will be involved with various programmes of teaching and training for adults and, they hope, encouraging those already involved in the work of making Jesus known. Teaching methods in Sri Lanka are very different to those they have used before and David and Sue need to be adaptable so that they can teach in a way their students will be able to learn. They will also need the help of an interpreter at first as even with a full year of study, it will be some time before the couple can be fluent in this difficult language.

*Please pray:*

- for continued progress in language study
- that they would quickly form good working relationships with their students and would be able to communicate their ideas effectively

Colin and Denise Clark write: "One of the things we have recently found difficult about living here is the comings and goings. Often friends in the



**Colin and Denise Clark**  
Pokhara, NEPAL

same situation with similar experiences can become very important. This is true for us and it can sometimes seem that these relationships are necessary for survival and so it brings sadness when it is time to say goodbye... this year we have had to say goodbye to a number of our friends who for one reason or another have gone home. This leaves a gap in our lives and although new people come, it takes time to build new friendships.

"The local church has a new building to meet in. This was built last year and has been an encouragement which has helped to give them an identity in the community. The building belongs to the church but the land is rented and this is a concern for the leaders. The congregation is still small with a few new faces. There has recently been some helpful training on how to encourage each other in their christian faith in their sometimes difficult and discouraging situations. In the wake of World Cup fever, the young people from several churches in Pokhara are entering a team in a local football tournament. It is this kind of event and community involvement that could help the churches become more accepted and for the general public to realise that there are many Nepali Christians."

*Please pray:*

- that new friendships would form quickly and deeply
- some people fear the growth of the Nepali church: pray for God's protection and blessing on all national Christians and upon the expatriate workers

## SOUTH AMERICA

Please pray for John and Lesley Moody, (formerly in Brazil), who left BMS in September for All Nations Christian College where John was appointed Deputy Bursar. Their work in Brazil came to an end after they handled the move of the BMS office from São Paulo to Curitiba. As things can be done more quickly in Curitiba and as BMS is gradually withdrawing personnel from Brazil in favour of less evangelised countries, it was felt there was not enough work at the office for the couple to do full time and so, after much prayer, it was agreed they should return home to consider other possible options for their future. The couple are pleased to return to All Nations where they themselves spent a happy year of training before going overseas and feel they will be able to use their experiences of mission work to encourage new students.

*Please pray:*

- that they would quickly settle into life at a busy college and make good friends

As part of last year's consultation on future BMS work in Brazil, David and Sheila Brown have agreed to conclude their work and leave Rio by the end of 1999. They write: "We know that the



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



**David and Sheila Brown**  
Rio de Janeiro, BRAZIL

Lord has a door to open for us and we are to be sensitive to his leading. We do not know as yet where we are to go. There are several options before us but as yet we have no definite leading from the Lord. Pray for us, so that together, we may discover the Lord's will. To leave Rio de Janeiro after ten years will not be easy, especially considering that we will be leaving family behind also. We are therefore waiting on God and obviously dependent upon your prayers."

### *Please pray:*

- for God's clear guidance, reassurance and peace

### CARIBBEAN/CENTRAL AMERICA

Peter and Sheila Brewer have been visiting Trinidad to represent BMS in plans for future theological training schemes which it is hoped will draw together the various Baptist groups on the island. The couple met with a working group representing several of the Baptist bodies (about half of the total Baptist community) and left a training plan in draft form for their consideration. BMS has asked the working group to arrive at a common mind about a united training programme and to communicate



**Sheila and Peter Brewer**  
TRINIDAD

their agreement to BMS by the end of the year. They will need to show evidence that their proposals are financially viable and that there are sufficient suitable students. They will also need to indicate the availability of qualified Trinidadian tutors and to consider how many missionaries will be needed from the BMS and other bodies such as the Southern Baptist Convention (USA). BMS has promised to make a contribution in personnel, provided that the plan is practical, but other partners will be needed in order to achieve sufficient support in terms of finance and staff. The deadline for these plans is February 1999.

As it is not clear what the outcome of the working group in Trinidad will be, BMS has released Peter and Sheila to seek alternative appropriate ministries, without waiting until the end of the year. If the news in February is positive and if they remain available, Peter and Sheila will be heading back to Trinidad to work on the training programme. If not, BMS will look for other personnel to take on this important role.

### *Please pray:*

- that the Lord would continue to guide all those involved in the planning and decision making processes for this training academy

- for the Lord's blessing on the relationships between the different groups
- for clear guidance for Peter and Sheila as to whether they are to be involved in any future work in Trinidad or if their path lies in another direction



**Rachel and David Quinney Mee**  
San Salvador, EL SALVADOR

Over the past few months, David and Rachel have had the opportunity to pause and reflect on their work and the changing situation in El Salvador. After much heart-searching they have, in their words, "made a decision, albeit somewhat hesitant and unenthusiastic, to return to Britain, at least for the near future."

### *Please pray:*

- that God will make clear their future path now they have left El Salvador
- their time working in a society deeply wounded by poverty, war and injustice will obviously affect their outlook on life in the UK. Please pray that the Lord will help them to deal with the contrast and find ways to use their experiences positively.
- for their young daughter Alice who was born in El Salvador and knows only that life so far.

# Where in the world are

## NORTH AMERICA

	No. of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Canada	1	1,150	122,638
USA	14	97,702	33,175,526
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>98,852</b>	<b>33,298,164</b>

## CENTRAL AMERICA

	No. Of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Costa Rica	2	39	3,024
El Salvador	2	61	5,402
Guatemala	1	200	25,000
Honduras	1	150	11,322
Mexico	1	791	65,398
Nicaragua	1	87	10,000
Panama	1	90	6,400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1,418</b>	<b>126,546</b>

## CARIBBEAN

	No. of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Antigua	1	2	200
Bahamas	1	211	55,000
Barbados	1	3	255
Belize	1	48	1,965
Bermuda	1	4	336
Cuba	3	371	29,727
Dom Rep	1	22	1,299
Haiti	2	416	66,786
Jamaica	1	303	45,150
Trin & Tob	1	23	3,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1,403</b>	<b>204,218</b>

## LATIN AMERICA

	No. Of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Argentina	1	420	56,450
Bolivia	2	221	20,800
Brazil	2	5,910	1,102,000
Chile	2	285	30,163
Columbia	1	115	15,088
Ecuador	1	146	13,615
Guyana	1	3	1,628
Paraguay	1	100	6,630
Peru	1	920	8,500
Uruguay	1	57	4,500
Venezuela	1	230	25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8,407</b>	<b>1,284,374</b>

## ASIA

	No. Of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Australia	2	825	63,921
Bangladesh	3	833	32,289
Fiji	1	14	750
Hong Kong	1	141	55,115
India	17	8,688	1,544,203
Indonesia	3	463	120,939
Japan	4	346	41,863
Korea	1	2,215	650,000
Macau	1	7	750
Malaysia	1	80	7,000
Myanmar	1	3,640	555,063
Nepal	1	40	5,000
New Zealand	1	253	22,770
Papua New Guinea	1	360	35,500
Philippines	5	2,559	212,643
Singapore	1	30	5,937
Sri Lanka	1	21	2,003
Taiwan	1	152	17,162
Thailand	4	308	33,454
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>20,615</b>	<b>3,399,080</b>

**BAPTISTS** *worldwide*

# the Baptists?



## EUROPE

	No. Of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Armenia	1	25	900
Austria	1	19	1,130
Azerbaijan	1	15	520
Belarus	1	188	11,414
Belgium	1	32	917
Bulgaria	1	38	3,405
Croatia	1	41	1,927
Czech Republic	1	26	2,379
Denmark	1	47	5,446
Estonia	1	85	6,234
Finland	2	32	2,120
France	1	111	6,489
Georgia	1	49	5,000
Germany	2	699	91,161
Hungary	1	243	11,026
Italy	1	100	4,622
Kazakhstan	1	197	11,227
Kyrgyzstan	1	33	3,118
Latvia	1	75	6,147
Lithuania	1	7	422
Moldova	1	275	17,200
Netherlands	1	88	12,253
Norway	1	62	5,216
Poland	1	61	3,810
Portugal	1	60	4,204
Romania	2	1,423	84,078
Russia	2	1,431	101,530
Serbia	2	64	2,187
Slovak Republic	1	15	1,984
Slovenia	1	4	150
Spain	1	71	8,195
Sweden	1	278	18,631
Switzerland	1	15	1,291
Ukraine	2	2,537	133,337
United Kingdom	3	2,823	188,263
Uzbekistan	1	37	3,800
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>11,306</b>	<b>761,082</b>

## MIDDLE EAST

	No. of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Egypt	1	12	1,000
Israel	1	12	923
Jordan	1	12	1,000
Lebanon	1	19	1,114
Syrian Arab Republic	1	5	160
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>4,197</b>

## AFRICA

	No. Of Bapt Unions	Churches	Members
Angola	3	175	66,460
Benin	1	40	3,000
Botswana	1	17	657
Burkina Faso	1	60	3,000
Burundi	1	87	32,000
Cameroon	3	1,263	172,061
CAR	1	136	40,800
Cote D'Ivoire	1	57	1,539
D R of Congo	5	1,244	720,159
Ethiopia	1	51	8,009
Ghana	1	684	60,000
Kenya	1	2,036	210,000
Liberia	1	229	60,000
Malawi	3	1,591	163,022
Mozambique	1	35	17,443
Namibia	1	49	3,500
Nigeria	2	5,394	1,040,667
Rwanda	2	191	310,756
Sierra Leone	1	97	6,356
South Africa	2	556	78,833
Tanzania	1	1,072	105,319
Togo	1	230	14,038
Uganda	1	566	20,626
Zambia	2	805	81,700
Zimbabwe	4	308	79,654
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>16,973</b>	<b>3,299,599</b>

## WORLD TOTAL

Churches	Members
159,034	42,377,260

Figures from BWA

CAN'T BELIEVE IT

WOW!

IT'S AMAZING

**WOW!** Did you know that your children's group can belong to one of the most exciting world mission clubs around? The WOW club is for children aged between six and 12 years, and it opens up a "Window on the World" to encourage children to learn about God's work in the world in a fun and lively way.

For just £2.40 per child per year, each child in your group receives

- the full colour bi-monthly WOW magazine
- a club badge
- a 'freebie' map they complete themselves. Each WOW magazine will tell them what to stick on next.

The magazine is written especially for children. It is packed full of snippets of information about countries that BMS works in, life in other cultures and also focuses on issues such as food, transport and clothes. There are stories, cartoons, Bible based activities and competitions with brilliant prizes to be won.



There's also WOW Action Days which, if there is sufficient demand, we can arrange in your area or you can use the DIY manual to prepare one yourself. These use songs, activities, stories and a country focus to bring the message of Jesus home to the children. From our experience, WOW members like to bring their friends along to these fun events. WOW! A great opportunity to reach children who don't usually go to church.

Then there's the WOW fundraising project, which aims to educate as well as raise money for exciting work that BMS is involved with. Leaders of children's groups receive one copy of the project booklet in January. In the past children have raised sums of money for God's work beyond all expectations, and have had fun learning about different countries and lifestyles whilst they are doing it. It's also a great way to get your church involved. Look out for the new project available in January 1999.

Thousands of children belong to WOW already, so no matter what size your group is – why not get them excited about the work of world mission, and the important part they can play in it? Call Rob Vaines in Resources at BMS (01235 517700) for WOW membership details.

MAGAZINE

WOW!

MAGAZINE



# The WAY I SEE IT



AN EXTRACT FROM THE REAL  
CORRESPONDENCE OF  
PHILIP CLEMENTS-JEWERY

DEAR JAN,

As this is the last contribution to *mb* that I will be making in this way, I wonder if for once the correspondence might be a real one. I would like to offer my own assessment of the whole series and the way it was conceived. Do you think the exercise has been successful overall? I must say that I have often felt too constrained by the brief you gave me, which was to put both sides of a controversial issue within a limit of 400 words or so. The correspondence format was my attempt to fulfil this brief, but I am not sure that it has really worked. Have you any comments to make?  
Yours,

*Philip*

DEAR PHILIP,

I am sorry you felt constrained by the brief I gave you, but I am consistently told by all kinds of people that they and others won't read articles if there are too many words on the page – it just causes them to shut off and turn over! So I have to give all contributors a word count limit, and if they don't keep to it, I have to (metaphorically) apply the scissors. I also felt it was important that we looked at issues from more than one angle, because almost inevitably things can be a lot more complicated than at first perceived.  
Yours,

*Jan*

DEAR JAN,

You are right about issues being complex. That is why 400 words are too few to make the discussion of an issue anything more than superficial. Another thing is that the sort of issues I have raised in my imaginary correspondence are matters that people feel strongly about, so a piece that tries to put both sides of the case can seem just a little too dispassionate. However, I am glad that what I have written over the past year has been provocative enough for some people to respond. You did publish some of these responses, but did you consider printing more of them so that the debate could have continued?  
Yours,

*Philip*

DEAR PHILIP

Surely the fact that people wrote in about issues raised in your imaginary correspondence shows that feelings and emotions were stirred. As far as I can remember, it has been your column which has generated the most response from *mb* readers over the past year. As for publishing more letters – we fit in as many as we can, but then we've come full circle to the problem of space...  
Yours,

*Jan*

Thanks to Philip for his real and imaginary correspondence over this past year. Ed.

# Action Card

## Something to be valued

Pocket money is a precious thing. It gives us choice. Poor people have no choice. What money they have must be spent on necessities. Baiba and Zana now have a choice. Living in the poorest part of the city of Fortaleza, north-east Brazil, alongside the railway line, they have been encouraged to use their talents to produce multi-coloured greeting cards which are now on sale in the UK.

Last year a small co-operative began producing fortified food for local toddlers. Now another church-based co-operative is making cards from banana leaves and other local materials, (see picture).

A recent training class for making cards selected eight new operatives from a group of 24. They will produce enough per month to earn a minimum wage and will receive this before the cards are sold. The increased self-esteem acquired by the workers is as great a benefit as the money. Further, the work can be done from home and so mothers can look after their children at the same time.

Send this month's card with a Christmas greeting of hope and



a 37p stamp and airmail sticker to:  
Baiba and Zana, greeting card workers  
c/o Linda Eaves  
R. Prof. Fco. Gonçalves, 1400/703, Bl.2  
Dionisio Torres, Fortaleza  
CE 60.135-430 Brazil

If you wish to order these cards, they cost just £3.95 for four. See the back page of this *mb* magazine or phone Rob Vaines on 01235 517700.

## Midlands Christian Resources Exhibition

BMS is going to be at the Midlands Christian Resources Exhibition,  
NEC, Birmingham, 11 to 14 November 1998. See you there!



Open 10 - 5 Wednesday to Friday, 9.30 - 3.00 Saturday

### CREDITS

**General Director**  
**Managing Editor**  
**Editor**  
**Regular Contributors**

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

**Design Editors**  
**Director for Missionaries**  
**Printed by**

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**Address**

**Telephone**

**Fax**

**Web site**

**E-mail**

**E-mail**

**Registered charity no.**

PO Box 49, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA  
01235 517700  
01235 517601  
<http://www.rpc.ox.ac.uk/bms/>  
Editorial: [herald@bms.org.uk](mailto:herald@bms.org.uk)  
Other departments: [mail@bms.org.uk](mailto:mail@bms.org.uk)  
233782

## Checkout

### Missionary Movements

#### NOVEMBER

##### Arrivals

Grace Penney from Kathmandu, Nepal  
Adrian and Sylvia Hopkins from Central African Republic

##### Departures

John and Valerie Furnage to Paran , Brazil  
John and Lidia Pullin to Campo Grande, Brazil

#### DECEMBER

##### Arrivals

Helen Johnston from Amp Pipal, Nepal  
Katie Norris from Jumla, Nepal

##### Departures

Peter and Valerie Harwood to Kathmandu, Nepal

Out visiting the river islands we happened by chance on a small group of houses built of thick bamboo stakes and thatched with palm leaves, the central house being by far the largest and around which were gathered a crowd of at least 200 people.

The boat was tied up and we soon discovered that a

# The Last Word

wedding was in progress, when a group came down to help us ashore, thinking that I was the musician arriving to play for their festivities.

## GERRY MYHILL

Gerry Myhill is a BMS missionary working in Antonina, Brazil

When I said, "No", I wasn't the musician, but a missionary and that I had my Bible, not an accordion, they almost threw me back in the water!

As it turned out I stayed right through the festivities which were like something from another age. More people were arriving — including the musician — pigs were being butchered and roasted, people were dancing and all sorts of games were in progress.

I found a corner at the back of the shelter which formed the kitchen, and settled down to watch the action from a distance. It wasn't long, however, before I had a string of people coming to sit by me seeking guidance for a variety of problems. So the wedding turned into a real

opportunity to present Jesus to many people.

Shortly after this event the house was destroyed by a flood and the owner, Sebastian, built an even bigger one on higher ground to house his very large family. It pleased me to receive an invitation to go out and hold a service of thanksgiving and to ask God's

blessing on the new house. On this visit I was able to take a large group of church members and also invite the Christians from other islands — quite a change from the first visit when there had only been two of us.

The service was held and I am sure God used that meeting to bless many people.

**"... the message is always the same. 'Only Jesus saves' and with each soul saved, the darkness is driven a little further back".**

However, to the casual observer the service would have seemed anything but a christian event, the strangest part being the closing prayers when we were gathered in a large circle inside the bamboo house.

It was almost dark apart

from the flickering light from two paraffin lamps which threw grotesque shadows on the wall and thatch of the roof. A little old lady was running round us in rings waving a tin of fiercely smoking leaves and cow dung to keep away the clouds of mosquitoes. The mosquitoes didn't understand the nature of her mission, I'm sure, as they were being attacked with gusto. This meant that instead of holding hands in a circle for the prayer, most people were doing a sort of weird dance as they slapped about in an effort to defend themselves from the attentions of the insects.

Into the centre of this already-odd scene hopped an enormous toad, which sat and peered round at us, as if approving of the attention we appeared to be giving him.

The service was different, but the message is always the same. Only Jesus saves, and with each soul saved, the darkness is driven a little further back. ●

**This is the last Last Word from Gerry. Thanks to him for his contributions to this page in 1998. Ed.**



ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH PRENTICE

# \*NEW for 1998\*

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

This year we have even more Christmas cards to choose from.  
Don't delay; put your order in today.  
All cards contain Christian verses unless stated



**Impressions** (two designs)  
135mm x 135mm **CC08 Impressions** £2.50 for 10



**Angels** (two designs)  
125mm x 180mm **CC07 Angels** £2.50 for 10



**Three Kings**  
125mm x 180mm (No verse)  
**CC06 Three Kings**  
£2.50 for 10

**Fortaleza** (two designs)  
Hand-made using banana leaves by women from the Railway Favela.  
Fortaleza — a special income generating project set up by BMS missionary  
Linda Eaves. (Blank inside, with no verse)  
104mm x 148mm **CC04 Fortaleza cards** £3.95 for 4  
exclusive to BMS



**Emmanuel & Glory** (two designs)  
103mm x 147mm **CC05 Glory/Emmanuel** £2.40 for 10



**Peace**  
103mm x 207mm (No verse)  
**CC03 Peace** £2.35 for 8



**Joy to the world**  
103mm x 147mm  
**CC01 Joy to the world**  
£2.35 for 8



exclusive  
to BMS

**Silent Night**  
103mm x 205mm  
**CC02 Silent Night**  
£2.50 for 10



1	Wed
2	Thu
3	Fri
4	Sat
5	Sun
6	Mon
7	Tue
8	Wed
9	Thu
10	Fri
11	Sat
12	Sun
13	Mon
14	Tue
15	Wed
16	Thu
17	Fri
18	Sat
19	Sun
20	High
21	Tue
22	Wed
23	Thu
24	Fri
25	Sat
26	Sun
27	Mon
28	Tue
29	Wed
30	Thu

SEPTEMBER

**BMS**

Calendars and Christmas Cards

## \*NEW\* for 1999 CALENDARS

You will find your  
order form inside  
**mb** magazine!

**Photographic Images.**  
This calendar focuses on Justice and Peace issues  
the world over. Designed by Robert Seward.  
**Cal 1 Photographic Images**  
Size 300mm x 300mm £4.99



1	Wed
2	Thu
3	Fri
4	Sat
5	Sun
6	Mon
7	Tue
8	Wed
9	Thu
10	Fri
11	Sat
12	Sun
13	Mon
14	Tue
15	Wed
16	Thu
17	Fri
18	Sat
19	Sun
20	High
21	Tue
22	Wed
23	Thu
24	Fri
25	Sat
26	Sun
27	Mon
28	Tue
29	Wed
30	Thu
31	Fri

**BMS**

**Engagement  
Calendar**  
Wall calendar with beautiful  
illustrations by Sarah Prentice.  
Size 150mm x 370mm  
**Cal 2 Engagement Calendar**  
£2.99

