



mb

people in mission
global issues
news & events

MARCH/APRIL 1999 ● £1.10 ● with mission at heart

mission
dilemmas

PHOTOGRAPH: ONE MAN'S VIEW

action team tour

BMS 1998/99 Action Teams, newly returned from near and far will be touring the UK during May and June.

Young people excited with all that God has done, with stories to tell, songs to sing, prayers to pray. Give them a miss only if you can't be bothered to know how God is working in people's lives today - all over the world!



Diary Date!

The 1998-99 Action Teams will be 'in action'

● **Thursday 24 June**

● **7.30pm**

● **in the Oxford area**

Come and meet all the 28:19 Teams, and hear about their experiences, challenges and changes over the past year. Bring your young people and be encouraged yourself! See what God is doing in the world and in people's lives!

More details in May/June mb

visiting a place near you!

North and West Wales

Delyth Wyn Davies ☎ 01766 512957

Wrexham	Nepal Team	☎ Mr John Wells	01978 314441	31 May-7 June
Bangor	Trinidad Team	☎ Dr Bryan Collis	01248 353173	14-21 June

South and Mid Wales

Delyth Wyn Davies ☎ 01766 512957

Cardiff	Albania Team	☎ Miss Beryl Davies	01222 756426	24 April-3 May
Llanelli	France Team	☎ Mr Vivian Williams	01544 755523	3-10 May
Presteigne	Albania Team	☎ Mrs Sue Wilson	01544 267456	3-10 May
Bridgend	Albania Team	☎ Revd Euros Miles	01656 880022	31 May-7 June
Pembroke	Trinidad Team	☎ Mrs Betty Smith	01437 751226	7-14 June
Swansea	Brazil Team	☎ Dr Gaynor McClean	01792 204482	14-21 June

London and South East

Simon Jones ☎ 0171 639 8717 for all venues

Addlestone	Brazil Team	3-10 May
Chatsworth	Thailand Team	10-17 May
Carshalton Beeches	Thailand Team	17-24 May
Northolt Grange	Trinidad Team	17-24 May
Venue TBA	France Team	31 May-7 June
Venue TBA	Trinidad Team	31 May-7 June

South and West

Phil Hindle ☎ 01823 698977 for all venues

Swindon	Brazil Team	24 April-3 May
Exeter	Thailand Team	3-10 May
Swindon	France Team	10-17 May
Banbury and Bloxham	France Team	17-24 May
Salisbury	France Team	24-31 May
Fleet	Trinidad Team	24-31 May
Bloxham	Nepal Team	7-14 June
Chard	Nepal Team	14-21 June
Chipping Campden	Albania Team	14-21 June

North

Cath Mawson ☎ 01274 487341

Dronfield	France Team	☎ Marilyn Fenn	01246 416796	26 April- 3 May
Scapegoat Hill	Albania Team	☎ David Humphries	01484 650816	10-17 May
Ainsdale	Brazil Team	☎ Ralph Gower	01704 577462	24-31 May
Caton	Nepal Team	☎ Cliff Jackson	01524 771261	24-31 May
Rochdale	Thailand Team	☎ Val Treeton	01706 522084	14-21 June
Blackhill	UK Team	☎ Roger Green	01207 505055	14-21 June

Central and Eastern

John Smith ☎ 01502 567686

Ramsden Bellhouse	Nepal Team	☎ John Hopper	01268 710069	26 April-3 May
Leighton Buzzard	Nepal Team	☎ Keith Hales	01525 371312	3-10 May
Southend	Brazil Team	☎ Philip Hughes	01702 477013	10-17 May
Cambs	Trinidad Team	☎ Sheila Bull	01954 231404	10-17 May
Luton	Thailand Team	☎ Mr & Mrs F Taylor	01582 726415	24-31 May
Buckingham	France Team	☎ Dafydd Jones	01280 813862	7-14 June
Saffron Walden	Albania Team	☎ Esme Moon	01799 522629	7-14 June

Midlands

Theo Lambourne 0116 271 3633

Hinckley	Trinidad Team	☎ Miss Dorothy Blower	01455 637 964	24-26 April
Gorsley	Trinidad Team	☎ Mrs Liz Bishop	01989 720 312	26 April-3 May
Leominster	Trinidad Team	☎ Mr Aubrey Roberts	01568 708 247	3-10 May
Oadby	Nepal Team	☎ Theo Lambourne	0116 271 3633	10-17 May
Stratford-upon-Avon	Brazil Team	☎ Mr Richard Cox	01789 205 816	17-24 May
Coventry	Albania Team	☎ Mr Colin Gardner	01203 614 211	24-31 May
Ledbury	Thailand Team	☎ Revd Simon Minshull	01531 632 079	31 May-7 June
Hinckley	France Team	☎ Miss Dorothy Blower	01455 637 964	14-21 June

Scotland

Derek Clark ☎ 0141 775 1201 for all venues

Edinburgh	Nepal Team	17-24 May
Cathcart (Glasgow)	Albania Team	17-24 May
Wigtown	Brazil Team	31 May-7 June
Edinburgh	Thailand Team	7-14 June
Stirling	UK Team	7-14 June
Hamilton	Brazil Team	7-14 June

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World

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We face choices every day of our lives, whether it's which brand of soup to buy in the supermarket, which TV programme to watch, or which songbook to use in church (or none at all if you've got an overhead projector).

Sometimes the number of items available makes choice very difficult, but it is a decision to be made out of the sheer abundance which faces us, and one in which the final decision is not likely to be a matter of life or death.

There are choices, and then there are dilemmas. Every day people have to make agonising decisions, perhaps affecting their own or someone else's life, when there is no clear-cut answer.

The world of mission throws up its own dilemmas. No decision will be easy, and it may be that whichever side of the question you come down on as your response, will mean danger, risk, or suffering for someone else.

Think I'm being melodramatic? Then turn to the features section in this issue. Here we relay to you real issues, problems and dilemmas that confront Christian believers, missionaries and workers, especially in certain areas of the world — so called 'closed areas'.

It is because of the very real danger either to themselves or the people they are writing about that some of the articles deliberately do not carry an author's name, or names and places have been changed to help preserve their identity. The accompanying photos are of necessity general in nature, because to identify someone specifically could mean real trouble for them.

I hope you find it a challenging read.

Once again, thank you for your interest and support of world mission. May God bless you in all you dream and do for the gospel of Christ.

Jan



Thailand Micro-credit scheme yields interest in the gospel

In rural Thailand it is estimated that 80 per cent of the population live in debt. But a micro-credit scheme funded by churches, individuals and grants from the Australian government has enabled villagers living in the Taphraya district, near the Cambodian border, to find their feet financially. These people were previously untouched by

traditional evangelism. In turn, the scheme which is run in co-operation with a local church, has given an opportunity to Christians running the loan project to

both demonstrate and talk about God's love.

The loans are usually around £100 or so, and are given with a monthly repayment rate of 1.5 per cent — far below the typical market rate, which, in Thailand, stands at more than 60 per cent per year.

Start-up funds have been used to buy fertiliser for rice fields, purchase a motor cycle, and buy noodle-making equipment. One group used borrowed money to buy 30 piglets and made several hundred pounds profit within four months.

Altogether 83 loans have been completed, with another 106 ongoing. The interest earned, provides the next round of loans.

news

news in brief ○ news in brief ○ news in brief ○ news in brief

A spokesman for the project said, "Recipients of relief are sometimes made to feel that they can't do anything themselves to become self-sufficient, and so they develop a mentality of dependence.

"Micro-credit tackles this by freeing the individual, enabling them to take care of themselves and releasing them to believe in themselves so they can provide for their families.

"We started this because we had a strong desire to see people break out of poverty, become more productive and improve their livelihoods. It also provides a natural opportunity for ongoing interaction with the poor and needy where Christians can portray Jesus through their actions." (YWAM News)

Lebanon "Born-again people" under attack

Books and leaflets directed against the "born-again people" have been distributed in the Koura area, east of Tripoli, Lebanon, specifically attacking the only evangelical witness in the area, the Bechmezzine Baptist Church and its



MARTHA SKELTON [EBPIS]

leaders, Gaby and Louise Eid.

Both graduates from the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut, they moved to the Koura area from their Beirut home two years ago and set up a meeting place for the Bechmezzine church. From a congregation of one (their daughter) the church has now grown to more than 50 baptised members, and a regular attendance of even more.

This area is one in which mosques are being constructed every kilometre or so along major roads. But generally speaking the Muslim citizens are not numerous or



Chechnya

Baptist pastor Alexey Sitnikov of the Grozny Baptist church is one of two clergy who were kidnapped last October and have disappeared without trace. Sitnikov was taken from his church premises by two strangers. He has reportedly been kidnapped and released twice before; on one occasion he was beaten until he lost consciousness and then left at a local hospital. The other victim, Father Issihy, a Russian Orthodox priest, was abducted the next day. The kidnapers have still not made any attempt to make contact. (BWA/Open Doors)

Egypt

A new law on the statute books means that church construction will now be in the hands of local administrators, rather than the State. Churches may not be built near a mosque, another church, a railway, farmland, in an inappropriate district, or contrary to local wishes. If local bodies are antagonistic, it could mean delays in building work could be even longer than previously encountered. (EMA)

Greece

The European Court of Law in Strasbourg, France, has exonerated two officers of the Greek Air Force who had been court-martialled for evangelism. In 1992, a military court in Greece found the pair "unworthy of military service" and sentenced them to detention for undermining the Greek Orthodox Church by their actions. (EMA)

Guinea-Bissau

Three hundred thousand people – a quarter of the population – have been forced to leave their homes as a result of fighting between the Army and rebel soldiers. These people now live as refugees, and the United Nations fears they may starve as other parts of the world are making huge demands on relief resources. (EMA)

Central America

Baptists around the world have given money for food, medicine, water and building materials following the devastation in Central America caused by Hurricane Mitch. However Baptist World Alliance Regional Secretary for Latin America, Daniel Carro, is concerned that poverty has created even more destruction than natural disasters. He pointed out that Hurricanes Georges and Mitch would not have been as devastating if there were not already such poverty in the region. (BWA)

fanatical, although money is paid to anyone who "reconverts" to Islam.

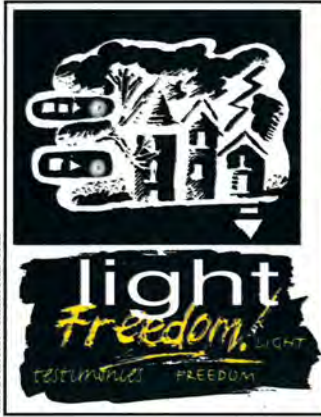
The Greek Orthodox presence here is strong however, and it is they who have directed a misinformation campaign against the Bechmezzine church. Representatives went on a door-to-door visit warning residents against the Baptists; they wrote booklets against them, calling them the "born-again people", and included factual distortions and innuendoes containing the charges that they were American agents or Jews; and called a community meeting at the Orthodox church to talk about them. The situation remains tense. No one can visit the church without everyone else knowing, and especially for new believers this kind of uncertainty and scrutiny can be hard to bear. (EBPS)

Belgium Surprises for occult web searchers

The title page on the web site of a spooky looking graphic of lightning



breaking over a haunted house welcomes French speakers from across



Europe. But Internet browsers wanting to learn more about the occult then find they are given a warning not to dabble in the unknown, and are then led to testimonies of people caught up in everything from witchcraft to numerology.

The Ichthus Connection web site is run as part of a low-key attempt to bring a biblical message to the growing cyberspace community.

The project leader Jean-Christophe Cailleau commented, "There has always been a certain tradition of occult in the country, and New Age thinking is expanding. When one of the staff was looking for information about the occult on the web she found tons of sites, but none from a Christian point of view. We realised that something needed to be done."

The site was designed with non-Christians in mind so that the average web surfer would not be put off. In fact it has featured as one of the most visited sites by those searching for French-speaking occult sites.

Since its launch a year ago, Cailleau says, "We have had lots of questions, even insults from some people, but have also heard from people who are genuinely interested in our point of view." (YWAM News)



Indonesia Baptists caught in rioting

Baptist churches were among those damaged and burned by the current religious rioting in Indonesia. During November 1998, 13 churches were damaged and burned, including the Baptist church in Grogol, a suburb of Jakarta, whose guard was beaten up. Muslim youths threw stones at its windows, damaging them, and a car belonging to the church was also burned.

Baptist leaders were able to guard the offices of the Union of Indonesian Baptist churches and the Calvary Baptist church in Jakarta. Twice they were approached by rioting young people, but the leaders were able to persuade them to leave.

"It was just like war," one leader said, "we did not dare stay inside our homes. We turned off all the lights in the homes and took down all the signs that identified the church, school and office buildings."

Continuing reports say that in retaliation, some Christian young people have burned mosques and other Muslim buildings. The whole situation is escalating, fuelled by the severe economic crisis in

Indonesia.

Some 15,000 Indonesians are being put out of work every day, and inflation stood at 70 per cent over the first eight months of 1998. Denton Lotz, the General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, has appealed for Baptists around the world to pray for believers in



Indonesia, and to make known their concern for religious tolerance and peace to their government leaders. (BWA/EMA)

Ukraine Worship from the heart

As part of a pilot programme a group of Christians are spending six months in the Ukraine studying how to use traditional music styles in church services. Participants from as far afield as Switzerland and the Soviet Republic of Bashkir as well as from within the Ukraine, have come to Kiev for the first-ever School of

Indigenous Music and Songwriting.

The course is being led by American Vicki Hoodikoff, who developed the programme after being involved for several years in evangelism and discipleship work in the country.

“As I began to think and pray about it, I believed that God was saying that he wanted to hear the Ukrainians write their own songs to express their adoration to him, and to include the Ukrainian sounds too.”

Subjects covered on the course include



ethnomusicology, cross-cultural missions and communication, songwriting and biblical worldview. The group plan to make a recording of some of the songs they create, along with a songbook, to be made available to local churches.

Ukraine has a rich musical heritage, with special songs for every occasion. The music is usually played in a minor key, and songs tend to be

composed without repetition of notes or lyrics. The bandura – a pear-shaped, stringed instrument – is often played.

“We need to be careful as Westerners how we introduce things to other cultures,” said Hoodikoff. “Many developing countries have a poor image of their country, and who God wants them to be. Some Christian musicians here have told me they would much rather learn the Western style than play their ‘primitive’ music in church.

“One woman, a professional folk singer, was turned down by the worship group at her church because her voice did not fit the contemporary Western style being played.”

Having spent time in the Ukraine the students will head for the Crimea to research traditional music there.

(YWAM News)

Laos Intense persecution for Christians

Christians in Laos are suffering severe



persecution.

More than 100 Christian families from the Bru tribal group were warned at the end of the year that they faced eviction from their homes or deportation →

Alistair Brown



Reflects.....

Rome's Colosseum has to be one of the most awesome and moving places I've seen. That's with it in ruins. What must it have been like when it was first built around 79AD?

- space for 55,000 to 80,000, with so many stairways and exits it could be emptied in ten minutes
- what the tourist books grandiosely describe as a moveable roof – a massive canvas awning hauled into place on hot, sunny days
- like most of Rome the Colosseum was covered in marble (stripped away during the Dark Ages and burned to make lime for cement)
- the games inside included wild animal and gladiatorial fights and even battles between ships on water

What an amazing place.

What a dreadful place.

In my mind I see cheering Romans perched on the edge of their seats, a massive circle of faces and wild roar of noise. I look below the old floor to the cells, cages and passages from which gladiators, prisoners and animals were brought up to the arena. I picture animals tearing human flesh. I imagine a gladiator holding his sword over his defeated opponent, asking the crowd to decide whether the beaten man lives or dies. I see fathers, mothers, children enjoying their day out, a family event.

And I weep for a world where people get pleasure from the pain of others, where some are seen as only of value for amusement. A world which still perpetrates evils as great as the Roman games, and where the greatest evil of all may be our contentment that our lives are fine. 'Shame for others', we think.

And I pray, "Come soon, Lord Jesus." But I pray first, "As long as you give me strength, God help me to change this world." ●

Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS





PANOS PICTURES

from the country if they refused to sign documents renouncing their faith.

Elsewhere in Laos three civil servants were sacked from their jobs after they were forced to

sign a document renouncing their faith. In the same month six Christians were arrested during a Christian meeting, accused of an 'illegal gathering' and imprisoned.

Christian Hmongs – also known as Miaos – living in Laos and Vietnam are being tortured by having boiling water poured down their throats, and being beaten and imprisoned by Communist government officials who are using these brutal tactics in an attempt to find out who is supplying them with Bibles. They are also trying to force Christians to return to spirit worship and rebuild their demon altars.

The Luangprabang area of Laos has been designated by UNESCO as a 'World Heritage of the UN'. This has led to the assertion that this area should only have Buddhism as its religion. Many churches have been closed down and determined efforts have been made to wipe out Christianity from that area. (EMA/Open Doors)

CORRECTION from Jan/Feb *mb*. The image of a man in a bazaar (news story 'Closed countries: open hearts') was reproduced courtesy of FEBA Radio and not as printed. We apologise for this mistake.

action

card



Non-formal Education in Nepal

A woman and girl learning by candle light is a common sight in Nepal. Many children are unable to attend school as they are busy all day in the fields, and many women grow up with no literacy skills.

Literacy opens doors. Learning numeracy skills and to read and write is a vital step towards self-reliance and empowerment. Such is its importance that the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) includes non-formal education (NFE) alongside many of its health and development projects.

For some women, NFE offered them the chance to take skills training or to start micro-credit. For all it has enabled them to move about the city with confidence, reading bus destinations and hospital directions, to help children and grandchildren who are in school, and to communicate directly with husbands or sons working in India by being able to read and write in Nepali, the official language of communication, rather than speaking in only their own regional language.

BMS missionary Christine Preston is involved in training Nepali facilitators who, in turn, run NFE classes in villages alongside raising awareness of issues in health care and sanitation, and training people to problem solve. The impact has been seen most clearly in communities who have planned and implemented their own projects to install toilets or bring running water closer to their village.

Please send this month's card, with a message of support to Christine Preston, who will pass them on to the NFE facilitators:

Christine Preston
Yala Urban Health Programme (YUHP)
Saugal, Lalitpur
Nepal.

2000

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OWEN CLARK CONTINUES HIS SERIES ON PRESENT AND FUTURE CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (FORMERLY ZAIRE)

Stark and shocking, the report said that Kisangani was now in rebel hands and that soldiers were raping women and girls. Our minds flew to Justine, recently returned there from Kinshasa with a degree in Theology. Oh God, keep her safe!

The sixth of Pastor Botondo's seven children, Justine grew up and did her schooling at Yakusu, but failed her final year. Going to her older sister Josephine, a civil servant, in Kinshasa, she repeated it and got her State diploma. The door to further study was open.

At Yakusu Justine had felt God calling her to be a pastor, but

“At Yakusu, Justine had felt God calling her to be pastor but had told no-one.”

had told no-one. Now, telling her family, they divided, some encouraging her vocation and others wanting her to be more practical. In the event, further studies were delayed by a serious medical condition necessitating surgery and chemotherapy.

When well again she began a course in Business Administration, Josephine paying her fees. Poor exam results, however, prompted a rethink, and she decided to follow her own convictions. For the next five years Justine worked for a degree at the Faculty of Theology, the first CBFC woman to do so. Josephine supported her until the salaries of civil servants dried up. An ECC scholarship helped for a while, but that too was cut off. Life was hard.

Whilst studying Justine learnt the ropes of being a pastor at Kitega church under Pastor Tutonda, displaying an independence of mind not always appreciated. A young woman of promise, certainly, but would such a bright, young, single female fit into a traditionally male domain when she graduated?

Eventually the Upper River Region solved the conundrum by making Justine regional evangelist, and she returned to Kisangani, travelling on the open deck of a boat – come rain, shine or mosquitoes.

Hardly had Justine's ministry begun when war intervened. The Kabila government, in power just over a year, now faced its own rebellion from the east, and before long Kisangani was taken and contact lost. In such circumstances no news is not necessarily good news.

Victorious armies, unless under tight discipline, feel free to help themselves to what they want from a defenceless population, including young women. Little can be done but pray. Oh God, restrain the violent! Protect the helpless! And may Justine be allowed to fulfil her promise. ●

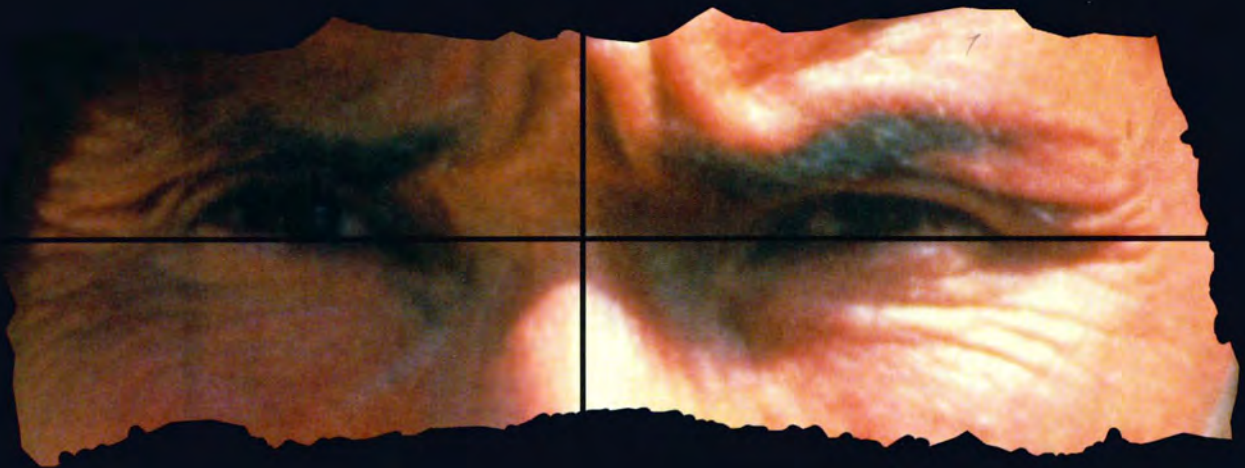
Owen Clark is a church worker with BMS in the Democratic Republic of Congo



Justine

A woman of promise

should we stay...



or should we go ?

**“Those who are
greater risk takers
should not stand in
judgement of those
who are not and
visa versa”**

A CHRISTIAN WORKER IN A CLOSED COUNTRY ENCOUNTERED THIS DILEMMA.

In July 1998 our organisation was faced with a crisis situation. Tension had mounted between the Non-Governmental Organisations and the ruling authorities over human rights issues and restrictive working conditions. Finally the majority of these humanitarian aid agencies felt they were left with no other choice but to evacuate from the country. We had to face the gut-wrenching question: should we also evacuate?

Our development organisation had been serving the people of this closed country for over a quarter of a century. In all that time, through periods of grave danger, we had remained working in the country. On occasion we had been forced to reduce our personnel, and often we were living and working under very trying circumstances, but to evacuate the entire team? It had happened only once before, after the murder of a husband and wife.

Over the years we have developed security guidelines to assess the threat of danger: security factors pertaining to communications, environment, military, work capability, food and drinking water, morale, health and spiritual factors, rated on security levels from 0 to 5. A level 5 under environment factors, for example, indicates a breakdown in law and order, increasing theft and threat of violence to personnel and medical services barely functioning. A level 5 under military factors indicates that sustained offensive operations and aerial bombardment are taking place, street fighting has intensified and all team members are confined to basements or secure areas. When level 5 is reached, most members of the team are strongly urged to evacuate. It is important to have this kind of objective standard in place because in the midst of a volatile situation, it is difficult to ascertain the

increasing risk involved. It also relieves the director from any guilt he may be experiencing due to feelings of abandoning the national staff and projects.

Key questions to answer when faced with the dilemma of evacuating or not are: What is achieved by going? What is achieved by staying? Who goes? Who stays? Some of the general principles to consider are:

Are we being targeted? The danger from random rocketing is quite different from the threat of being directly targeted.

Is there a strong anti-foreign sentiment? If there is, it is more likely that foreigners will be targeted. In that case, we would seriously look at evacuating non-essential personnel and lying low.

Is our presence endangering the lives of our national co-workers?

What is the morale of the team? Different people have different thresholds of coping with the stresses and strains of working in such an environment. Some people are greater risk takers than others and there needs to be a clear understanding and acceptance among the team that such is the case. Those who are greater risk takers should not stand in judgement of those who are not and visa versa.

In this crisis, four main factors led to our decision to evacuate all team members:

1 Interrogation by the authorities. When the religious police interrogated three of our members intensely, we wanted to protect other team members from undergoing a similar grilling. We felt that if others were interrogated and certain information was extracted, it could collectively be used against us. This was the primary reason for deciding it was time to go.

2 Impact of searches. The ruling authorities had started to search our headquarters and homes and several of our houses were then sealed. They informed us that they had found a large supply of sensitive material, which we did not believe was the true case. Nevertheless the cumulative

impact of the searches, sealing, opening and reclosing of our homes was taking a heavy toll.

3 Cumulative stress. The welfare of the team had to be considered. When one person in a key leadership role confided that she did not know how much more of this she could take, this signalled that others had probably reached their limit also. From experience we have seen that people may be able to cope during one crisis, but the cumulative effect of constant pressure, disruption, loss and change can be very exhausting.

4 National co-workers still imprisoned. This situation was very worrying to us. We did not know why they were being detained or what they had been accused of. We felt that in the current environment our co-workers could be endangered by our presence.

We acknowledged that we made mistakes and that the evacuation process could have been managed better, with clearer instructions and guidance given to all, but particularly to those for whom English is their second language. After much prayer and discussion with team members, the leadership wrote a detailed Emergency and Evacuation Plan which gives guidelines for personal, household and workplace preparation. When the next emergency occurs, a crisis management team will be appointed and ready to act.

Did we make the right decision? When we returned to our country of service, authorities wondered why we had gone. Did we have something to hide? We had agreed to stay, and by leaving with the other aid groups, they accused us of lying. We will never know for sure, but we trust God's guidance and for the sake of the team, evacuation was probably the wisest choice.

At present, the situation is still tense and the government is sending us mixed signals. We are learning to live with such ambiguity. It is only by God's grace that we are able to serve the people of this nation. ●

A BAPTIST
CHURCH TEAM
GOES ON
MISSION TO AN
ORPHANAGE IN
CHINA

babies are dying in Chinese orphanages, not from physical neglect, but from the emotional need of love and cuddles they are not receiving. They give up crying because no-one responds and some have never learnt to smile because of lack of human contact. This was Ronny's impassioned plea when he preached from his heart about China and its people, and the opportunities for visiting an orphanage to give love to these babies. Anyone can go on a two or three week mission to the orphanage. You don't need special qualifications and age doesn't matter. Just loving a baby for a few days can bring that first smile. Later, Mary, my wife, said: "I want to go to the orphanage!" That was the start of forming a ten-person group with ages from 20 to 65 years.

One year later we arrived in Thailand for several days' orientation training before flying to East China with Lenny our group leader. China is a country that does not allow freedom of Christian expression. We came as tourists, but unknown to the authorities we were a group of Christians on a mission of love to a Chinese orphanage! During our orientation, Alistair asked, "How can this be a mission when we are not proclaiming the gospel?" Lenny, a one-time street evangelist replied, "You are to be living tracts with your lives reflecting the love of Jesus."

At our first meal in a restaurant, Lenny said grace with his eyes open,

**"They give up crying
because no-one
responds and some
have never learnt to
smile because of lack
of human contact"**

living

"Thank you Boss for this food we are about to enjoy," and we responded, "so be it." Before going to the orphanage we prayed in code with our eyes open, not knowing whether the rooms were bugged! We sang quietly, choosing words that did not include God, Jesus or Holy Spirit. If we wanted a more intimate ministry time we closed the blinds and maybe windows as well. Devotions in China reminded us of how the early church in Acts met behind closed doors.

As we walked into the orphanage baby and toddler rooms for the first time, children rushed up to us with their arms outstretched, desperate for cuddles and attention, even from a group of strangers! Conditions were better than expected, but quite distressing to us was the children's lack of stimulation and of social opportunities, and the fact that most seemed traumatised from experiences

in their short lives.

The 39 children were usually looked after by four Chinese workers who only had time to provide their basic physical care. This was where the team came in, to cuddle, play with, and show gentleness and love. In just two weeks the children's responses included smiling, less aggression, more interaction, and more play. We also worked with older children and children with special needs. Unknown to the authorities we prayed over each child we were with.

On the last day, the Director of the orphanage thanked us saying they had noticed the spirit in which we worked together, a spirit which they would like to copy. We could only praise God that his Spirit at work in us seemed to have challenged the Director and his staff. It was so hard to leave. We had to give the children back into God's care and be thankful that he had allowed us the privilege of loving these little ones for this short time.

We went to China to make a difference to others lives, and on returning found that God had worked life-changing things in our lives! We had become different people with a new perspective of life. ●

NB. Some names, locations and minor details have been changed for their protection. For security reasons article remains anonymous.





tracts

BACKGROUND TO CHINA'S ORPHANAGES

It is estimated that 100,000 orphanages exist in China today. China has been forced by its population growth and the necessity to avoid mass starvation to adopt a one child per family policy. Parents need permission to have a baby, and due to cultural traditions they want a boy to carry on the family name and to look after the grandparents in their old age. They pray for a boy, but if a girl is born some families give the baby to an orphanage or worse, leave the baby somewhere. This can also happen if a second child is born, even if a boy. Well-off families can have a second child if they pay the government the equivalent of about \$7000, but less well-off families cannot afford to do so. It is also considered a stigma if a handicapped child is born and these children often end up in orphanages.

The main hope for a normal future life for children in the orphanage is that of adoption by families in the West, including the UK. A total of 94 children were adopted during the past 12 months from this one orphanage. The adoption process can take about two years.



Further information can be obtained from
Church Link Teams, PO Box 308, Luton, LU2 9YL

des res or

Photographs:

Right : Production of 'multifort' vitamins for the small food processing co-operative

A party at Mark and Suzana's

Below : Suzana helps a patient



HOW DOES A MISSIONARY CHOOSE WHERE TO LIVE? TWO MISSIONARIES TELL THEIR STORIES

Mark Greenwood

"Vende-se din-din" – my knowledge of Portuguese easily deciphered the first part of the sign on a good part of the houses - For Sale - but the second half stumped me; was it short for *rapidinho* (quickly)? If so, it wouldn't be difficult finding a good purchase. The locals, in fact, were selling ice lollies, not their houses; it would be eight months before

church have befriended our folk too; one lady has transferred her membership!

Given that we felt convinced God wanted us here, the true dilemmas were linked to fitting in properly; at the same time being comfortable enough to work properly. For instance, we wanted a house built in a way that let in enough light. We managed, even with just one window, as the layout is good.

As the waste water runs down the street we wanted to be on the dry side. We were also able to find a street where everyone has a decent cess pit. A good bathroom was also one of our demands - we made one.

Domestic appliances taxed us a little. We decided to start with almost nothing, get an idea of what people around us had, and build up accordingly. In were the fridge, a liquidiser (almost every Brazilian has one), a radio-cassette recorder, and a luxury we couldn't live without - and which became a minor tourist attraction - the washing machine.

With the passage of time, several factors have increased our quota, but we still struggle between comfort and modesty, aware that some neighbours have much less than others. Television and a sound system seem standard in most front rooms; we have made those acquisitions. After a couple of years a car became a necessity for church and health work, although the entrance hall proved a squeeze as garage and "ambulance" station. As with many neighbouring houses, ours

went upwards. However, upstairs has been used mainly for work, housing a small food processing co-operative. When we arrived back from home assignment the big trend was super cheap telephone connections, so we're expecting ours to be installed in the next few weeks. It will be a sad goodbye to the call box on the corner.

The rewards of living here have been innumerable, despite frustrations. It has been very important to us to be part of the community in which we minister. None of our dilemmas could be considered as sacrifices; living here has helped our work and given us happy memories. The only sign on the front of our house informs people that a nurse lives here. We certainly aren't looking to sell up "*rapidinho*." ●

"It has been very important to us to be part of the community in which we minister"

we moved into our home in Genibaú. On the surface it seemed a challenge to live in this community. Members of our inviting church would rarely come here and advised against it. Favelas, they would say, are very dangerous places. It was soon obvious that the neighbours were great and over these four years they have become good friends. Through the church plant many of the members from the inviting



Mark Greenwood is a BMS missionary involved in community and church work in Brazil.



no adverses

Pam Bryan

The advertisement read "Regional Representative required the person is to be based in Africa". The Lord called me to this job and so seven years after leaving Congo I will be going back to live in Africa. As the previous Regional Rep lived in Didcot, there is no base in place in Africa. Doing the job means that I will be travelling in

and looked at the area near to Johannesburg Airport. The housing was very comfortable and life could have been good, but I knew that it wasn't the right place.

At the moment the whites normally live in white areas surrounded by barbed wire fences. "Typical" Africa is Luanda the capital of Angola, a country which has been at war during the

needs. I came up with cities like Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Kampala, Dakar and Adidjan. But there's more to consider – the future of the BMS work in Africa and our strategy with its emphasis on reaching the unevangelised. West Africa is the least evangelised part of sub-Saharan African and in many of the countries the majority of the population is Muslim. What is amazing is that the majority of these countries are open to Christian mission.

So I'm off to Abidjan in the Ivory Coast to check it out. Is this the right city, Lord? ●

Pam Bryan is BMS Regional Secretary for Africa

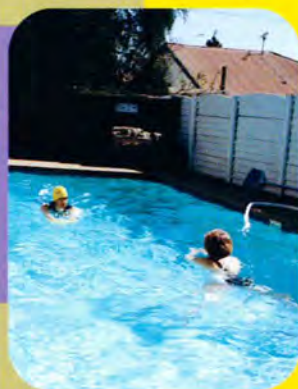


Photographs: Above: In South Africa Pam could have had a house with a swimming pool, like this one.

Below left: A house in Pretoria, South Africa, which Pam looked at.

Below right: A typical South African urban scene

"The housing was very comfortable and life could have been good, but I knew it wasn't the right place"



Africa for about six months of the year. It means that I need to be in constant touch with both national partners and with our missionaries. So I need to find a country with a good airport, with more or less direct flights going to and from as many places as possible. I also need a place with good communications systems – it's not much good to everyone in countries like Angola if when their erratic telephone system works, mine doesn't! I also need a city which has a lots of other Embassies, so that I can get my visas easily.

Before I came to Didcot homework had already been done on location and South Africa seemed a good possibility. It seemed to have everything I needed and so I made a visit in September

lifetime of the majority of the population, a country which is racked by pain and yet a country full of exuberant, courageous people. I visited in December and realised anew that this is my "Africa".

So where shall I live? Well it's a big continent! I started with a clean sheet and worked my way through my list of





strangers in a foreign land



JOHN & LYNNE THOMPSON
SPENT 11 MONTHS WORKING IN
NORTH AFRICA AS VOLUNTEERS
WITH BMS. HERE THEY RELATE
SOME OF THE DILEMMAS THAT
CONFRONTED THEM.

Is being here enough?

In North Africa it's not easy for a national to change the religion they were born into, whether it's a change to become a Hindu, a Muslim or a Christian. Anyone doing this will be viewed with great suspicion by their friends, and it may mean a break in family ties.

Christianity is viewed here as a new and Western religion, whereas in fact there is a large Christian heritage in North Africa. Some very well-known Early Church bishops came from this part of the world! Unfortunately Christianity gets a bad press, and that makes people all the more disparaging. For national Christians today, any contact with foreigners can lead to questioning by family members and police.

So we were constantly faced with the question: All I can do is be here; is my presence here enough?

Eating meat which is sacrificed

Every year the end of the Muslim feast of Ramadan is celebrated by most families by slaughtering a sheep; cooking and eating the meat and offering pieces of cooked meat to friends and neighbours, including foreign Christians.

Bearing in mind that almost the entire population observes Ramadan, but many of the people are not Muslims, the Christian has to decide whether to accept the gift of meat in the spirit of friendship in which it is offered, or to reject it and risk alienating that family which probably is a family

you are trying to befriend. Again, this is not a new dilemma!

The neighbours we had opposite

school had just finished killing their family sheep as I arrived to prepare for school – they greeted me warmly and said they would bring some across for us. What should I do? One hour later, they came across with cooked meat, bread, herbs and big smiles! We accepted with thanks and the children and ourselves ate thankfully, grateful to God for friends and kind neighbours.

Observing Muslim festivals

In North Africa people usually work a five day week, Monday to Thursday as normal, Friday morning and Saturday morning. This emphasises that Friday is the Muslim holy day and enables those who wish to, to attend the mosque. In addition, there are several Muslim festivals during the year which are marked by a public holiday. During Ramadan, work hours are considerably reduced.

Women are given special working hours to allow them to go home to help prepare the daily feast for their family and friends. One male teacher we knew said quite openly that Ramadan was a non-work month for him; he did the



absolute minimum to keep his job. He supervised newly qualified teachers – so they had a relaxed month! By observing these holidays and not eating in public during the hours of daylight, do the Christian workers compromise their distinctive witness, or as guests in the country should they respect the national holidays? Travelling by long distance bus in Ramadan we took the decision not to eat or drink for the journey – about four to five hours – mainly because it was not a good idea to draw attention to oneself and men who are used to drinking 20 cups of coffee each day and chain smoke are not very happy by the afternoon of the day!

At sunset everyday, a rocket went up from the local mosque to indicate time for food and drink. Our neighbours would run home, shops would shut instantly and the owner drive home at top speed. What should you do? (We and our co-workers ate indoors, one colleague worked at the health centre and took a flask of coffee by herself in her office). Holidays were easier, as it was possible to go to a tourist area and blend in with the holiday makers. ●



John & Lynne Thompson continue to work as BMS Volunteers. They are now based in Albania.



steve flashman



Steve Flashman with a street child in Calcutta

A BULL IN A CHINA SHOP

STEVE FLASHMAN

So you're off on a 'mission' trip to Africa! Wonderful! Don't forget the multi-coloured shorts, flip flops, designer sun glasses (preferably mirror shades), the Pentax with a large zoom lens of course, so that you can get 'unobtrusive' pictures of the locals, vest top T-shirts to make the most of the suntan and pith helmet for that safari opportunity!

Wrong to all of the above!

Unfortunately the horror stories abound about well-meaning Christians doing their bit for world mission in astoundingly inappropriate ways — and more often than not, it's because of a total lack of preparation in terms of cultural orientation. This is the obvious danger when local churches decide to send a team to visit one of 'their' missionaries on the field — a commendable thing to do, but so often approached with little or no thought that the people we are going to meet will be very different from us and we will be on their territory, not ours! We need an understanding of local culture not just in terms of the way we conduct ourselves but also in terms of our methods of evangelism. Each culture demands a different approach. For instance, an overtly evangelistic stance in the barrios of South America could reinforce the attitudes of the poor indigenous peoples towards us rich, domineering Westerners because of the oppression and abuse caused by 'Christian' invaders. In Africa anyone can get 'results' through holding mass rallies which look great as statistics on a prayer letter, but perhaps not so effective in terms of discipleship. In India we should be encouraging local cultural forms of worship and church practice rather than the imported forms of Christianity which have resulted in irrelevant expressions of church in a culture which is fast disowning Westernised Christianity.

More and more people are getting involved in world mission. My plea is that we work hard at being culturally sensitive and relevant in what we do and how we do it.



The bull in a china shop approach might give vent to our enthusiasm, but can only end in damage and disaster for the very missionaries we want to support. ●

Steve Flashman is a Baptist minister and International Director of Soapbox Expeditions

more



than

answers

JAN KENDALL REPORTS ON THE DILEMMAS THAT CONFRONTED CHRISTIANS IN ONE TOWN AFTER A MAJOR DISASTER

You've had a local disaster, which has made homes and other buildings, including your church, unusable. The government of the country showed concern. The Prime Minister came to see the damage and offered help to those affected, including the offer of land for those now homeless, and, would you believe it, land on which to rebuild the church. This really is a first for Nepal – where the Government is nervous about Christian activity. Help has been forthcoming from other sources too, including overseas, and whilst the slow

road to recovery is underway, not everything is as straightforward as it seems.

To start at the beginning: 1998 was a year of rain. The monsoon season in Butwal was the worst in living memory. In the past the monsoon has meant a day of rain followed by a day with no rain. But in 1998 the rains started a month earlier and then it rained, and rained, sometimes



continuously for 20 or 25 hours without a break. So the springs on the hillsides started running, and soon the ground had soaked up an enormous amount of water.

As the ground became saturated, it became unstable. The road from

Butwal to Tansen Hospital became blocked by landslides, and people came back to Butwal with stories about how they had to run through falling rocks to get home. The rains should have ended in August, but in September it was still raining just as hard.

One Saturday in September, the hill behind the town – the part of town which is cool, and where richer people want to live – started to crumble. The Christians had met for worship at Joyti church, as they normally do on their day off work.

After it was over, a church member, who had not been at the service, came rushing in. "The hill is starting to go," she cried, "there are rocks coming down, and our house is threatened." Young men from the church rallied together to form a rescue party. But by the time they arrived, most of the damage had been done. People listening for falling rocks spoke in whispers, and the rocks came down, some of them weighing a tonne. Two rooms of the church member's house survived: the rest had gone. Other houses were damaged, smothered with stones, and one was buried up to its roof. People were taking out their belongings and moving them

“Is the best way of showing the love of God to the people of Butwal through the spending of money on a building?”

away – anywhere, just to get them out of the way.

Along with the stones came the mud and water. Rescuers were wading through inches of muddy water, rushing down the hillside into people’s houses, so that they were flooded up to a metre deep.

Altogether 41 houses were substantially damaged and another 100 rendered unfit for habitation. The Government reacted quickly with the offer of land, but so did the landlords in the town where rents just about doubled overnight. People cannot afford these rents so some are, in effect, forced back into homes which are neither safe nor truly habitable.

One man, looking around at the devastation from his flat roof, said, “Well, if it rains, we’ll wake up in time; we just have nowhere to go except back here!”

Even the offer of land is not without its complications. Who should be helped? Clearly those whose homes now lie buried and destroyed under the boulders weighing tons and up to two metres of mud, they are a priority. But some of them did not own the land on which they had built the house – do you compensate the absentee landowner?

And what about the church building – is the best way of showing the love of God to the people of Butwal through the spending of money on a building? Should a priority be to give money away? Paradoxically, in a western country, we might say ‘yes’ very readily, but in Asian culture, in spite of the poverty, respect for your faith is very much tied up with the respect you show for the place of worship, be it temple, mosque or church.

Lots of questions and no clear answers. But positive things do come out of negative situations. Many of the Christians in Butwal, who have lost so much in material terms, have shown themselves rich in love and concern

towards those who are penniless and homeless.

Life throws up unexpected dilemmas, with no easy answers, but even as we struggle together with these issues, there is much gained, not least in our understanding of what it means to be God’s community of people in Nepal. ●

Jan Kendall is BMS Editorial Co-ordinator and *mb* Editor



Photographs: Devastation in Butwal after the floods



Chandraghona

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

History

Dr G O Taylor started medical work

built; and then in 1930 an operating theatre followed. Major surgical cases were operated on and the fame of the hospital began to spread, not only in the Hill Tracts, but also in Chittagong District. In 1937 a Nursing Training School was started and now runs government as well as junior nursing courses for 60 boys and girls. The Leprosy Hospital was also started in 1913 and a new hospital built in 1986. The Community Health outreach programme started in 1971 and serves with Under Fives Village Clinics in the surrounding area.

Photograph:
An Under
Fives Clinic



at Chandraghona in 1907. The hospital then was a mud and bamboo hut situated beside the Karnaphuli river in a clearing in the forest. Dr Taylor left Chandraghona because of ill health and Dr G O Teichman joined as Medical Officer in 1911 and faithfully served until 1939. He was the main architect of the expansion of medical work at Chandraghona.

In 1927 a small female ward was

The local bazaar and shops have built up around the needs of the hospital staff and families living on the compound – now the population has grown to 300 families. A nearby paper mill used to give employment to many men, but this is now gradually closing down. Bamboo used to be floated 15km down the river from the dam at Kaptai to be used as pulp. The supply of bamboo is also greatly reduced.

First Impressions

by Don Foster

I arrived in Chittagong at 2.30pm after a six hour train journey from Dhaka. Then on to Chandraghona – a bustling single street village beside a large river.

When I awoke the next morning I thought I was in a little bit of Britain. The view over the hospital towards the river was delightful. Then Sue (Headlam) mentioned that she was concerned about the crack appearing in the ground. I hoped her house would not fall over that day, because I might be in it!

The pace of life was relaxed. Women in black with their matching umbrellas to shade them from the hot sun crossed the river in boats, as they returned from the clinic.

Authoi invited me for a cup of tea. His house was halfway up the hillside and as it was my first visit, he was like a cat on hot bricks. Having lived in a bamboo shack which let in the rain at every opportunity, he was now building his mansion! Today the roof was being done. We sat in the wooded hillside overlooking the house admiring the work of 30 men. It was a concrete roof, and the quality was good. I could have stayed longer, but he urged me to scramble up the hill.

"We picnic here. Many people come from round about."

It was a plateau and we could see beyond the paper mill into the Rangamatti Hill Tracts. The grass was green and lush. Some boys playing cricket had lost their ball.

Was I really in Bangladesh? No wonder Sue has been there for so long! As a mere tourist volunteer escaping the rigours of Dhaka, I found it surprising she is not mentioned in the Lonely Planet Guide.



Christian Scene

There are two churches, both Baptist. The Leprosy Church serves the staff of the Leprosy Hospital with their families and any patients who attend. The General Hospital Church is bigger with an 8.30am Sunday service attended by around 150 people – staff and their families. There is a women's meeting on a Friday afternoon and a Wednesday

evening prayer meeting which is held in a different home each week. At the church services women sit on the left side, men on the right, and shoes are left at the door. The music is provided by harmonium and tobla (drums) and some young people get together as a "singing group". Any offering is auctioned off after church for church funds eg vegetables, chicken, first cow's milk etc.

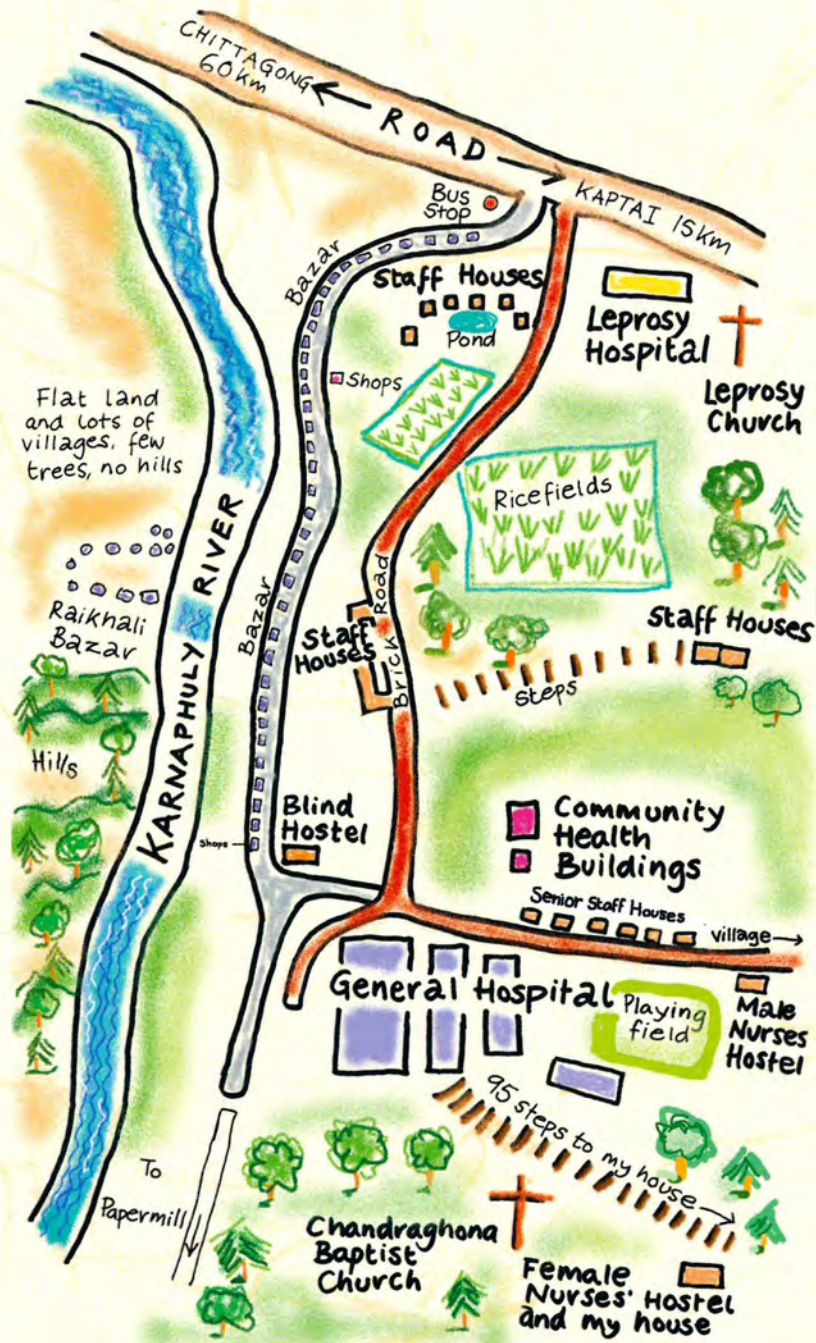
People mix

There is a mixture of Bengalis and tribal people who have different ethnic origins but get along well in Chandraghona. Love marriages amongst staff have resulted in many mixed marriages. There are 13 different tribes in the Hill Tracts and nearly all are represented in the students and staff at Chandraghona.

our town: Chandraghona

Chandraghona

village and hospital compound



Employment

Many are employed in the hospital. Some own shops in the bazaar or are employed in the village stalls. There are local school teachers, several doctors in private practice, medicine shop owners, laboratory owners, all of whom earn a good living. A few are still employed at the paper mill. Some people farm their

own land for rice. Chandraghona is famous for its hospital. The Weaving Centre for "at risk" women is an income generating scheme which is part of the Community Health Programme.

Leisure

Being a village, people make their own entertainment. The young boys play

football, cricket and badminton in the cool season. Women stay at home and sew and embroider pillow cases, saree blouses and often make their childrens' clothes. Karam, a board game, is popular, especially amongst men and can be seen in tea shops in the bazaar.

Some medical statistics

Chandraghona has:

- one hospital
- six doctors in the hospital
- 20 doctors in the local bazaar
- one physiotherapist in the hospital to help with the disabled
- no social workers
- no help for the aged
- three primary and two high schools
- one hostel for four blind boys who go to the local high school for integrated education. They have extra classes in Braille at the hostel.

Profiles

Sufia Begum is 17 years-old. She lives across the river from Chandraghona. Both of her parents are dead and she is left as the eldest of four sisters so she has the responsibility for the family. They live in a small bamboo hut with a straw floor and all live in one room. They have a lean-to which acts as a cooking room and they cook on an earth stove using firewood. Sufia came to the weaving centre looking for work to support her sisters. In time we were able to train her up, first as a spinner and now she has her own loom. She enjoys the work with the other weavers and is able to earn an income to feed herself and her sisters. Sufia has matured and gained in confidence in the two years she has been with us and we know that she has been rescued out of the poverty trap. There are many like Sufia on our weaving project.



Photographs:
Top left opposite: Tribal mother
Centre left opposite: Harvesting rice, Chandraghona
Above: Sue Headlam
Below: Sufia Begum
Right: Tribal girl Don Foster met
Below right: patient at Chandraghona



Hello, our names are (left to right) **Jui, Sally, Shorna, Tulie** and **Bubby**. We are all eight years-old and our parents work in Christian Hospital Chandraghona. We are on our way to school which lasts from 8.00am to 12.00 noon five days a week. In this photo we are not wearing school uniform because we have an exam and can wear what we like.●



Jo Took

volunteers &

BMS VOLUNTEERS The Smallest Detail

JO TOOK

Jo Took, a 23-year-old primary school teacher from London was three months into a one year placement teaching in North Africa when an accident brought her home for an operation. Here she writes about some of her experiences during that initial period.

Spending three months living and working overseas was an experience that affected me in so many ways. Here is a brief outline of just one of the many lessons that I learnt while I was away, and which continues to be developed as I wait in hope of returning to North Africa as soon as I can.

Before I went away, I was fortunate enough to get the chance to talk to somebody who had just returned from a year's work in a place very near to where I was to be going. I remember very clearly her telling me that during her time overseas, she found that she had learnt to rely on God in a totally new way. I remember being curious about this, and somehow expecting that she meant that she came into a deeper spiritual communion with the Lord in some kind of super-holy-much-pondering-and-contemplation type way. But when I got to North Africa and began trying to live my life there, it became obvious within the first couple

of weeks that this was not what she had meant at all.

I found myself in a situation where I had no idea how to do the simplest things in life – the type of things that we take for granted every day of our lives, like buying a loaf of bread or catching a bus or even how to greet people without offending them. Not only did I have absolutely no idea of the language, but the cultural difference seemed immense and I felt entirely helpless to interpret or react to anything going on around me. It was very much like being five years old again, except a hundred times more frustrating because I felt that these were things I should be able to manage, since at home they were second nature.

So, I had no choice but to rely very much on my co-workers who had experience of how to live in that place, and ultimately, I found that I had to rely on God to help me through every part of each day. I learned to begin each day by praying to the Lord to be with me and help me through the simplest of things, like walking down the street or buying a ticket for the metro or a loaf of bread. Not surprisingly, he stayed right by my side throughout all of these things and because of this, my times of prayer, both intercession and thanksgiving, were greatly enriched. God was working in my life down to the smallest detail and in a more obvious and practical way that I had ever experienced or imagined. Our God is a real God and he wants to be involved in our lives at every level. ●





action teams

BMS 28:19 ACTION TEAMS

Claire Barraclough, Emily O'Brien, Ben Norbury and David Edge are coming to the end of their six months in Thailand as part of a 28:19 Action Team. They have been teaching English to theology students at the Bangkok Institute of Theology (BIT) through friendship and conversation as well as working in local churches and schools. Here they share some of their thoughts and experiences from the early weeks of their stay.

Dave

We are having a great time over here. We've experienced everything from huge Buddhist temples in the mountains, monks riding on the back of motorbikes, cockroaches hiding in my shirts, singing at a Karen hill tribe funeral, amazing scenery up north as well as sneaking over the Burmese border SIX times in ten seconds. (Does putting one foot over the border count as sneaking across?) We've also been eating some nasty food like chicken's feet, fish head and MARROWS. Generally, in the parts of Thailand we go to, we are the only westerners around for miles, so we get a lot of stares, giggles and screaming children. Being just about the only person with blue eyes and light hair around does have some advantages. Thai people tell me I look like Leonardo DiCaprio, Michael Owen and David Beckham!

Dave

Claire

The work is going quite well and I'm really beginning to settle in. I've started to make friends at BIT and I'm



gradually picking up more of the language. This week I learnt how to say 'I smell good and you smell really bad' a phrase that kept me amused for hours! I'm also becoming addicted to pineapple, which they sell here on street stalls for about 10p for half a pineapple. Later today is Patana, otherwise known as chores, so we'll be doing battle with the red ants! While on the subject of killing creepy crawlies, I have to say that I'm becoming a bit of a lethal weapon when it comes to cockroaches!

Claire

Ben

We are becoming pros at coming up with ideas and material at the last minute (with a lot of Gods guidance), when we've been chucked in at the deep end to do a Sunday school the next day or having to do a lesson for two hours when we thought we had it for one. Now that everything is settling down there is a lot less need for that and God is also giving us ideas. Pra jau uae phaun (may God bless you – phonetics of course I've no idea of Thai script).

Ben

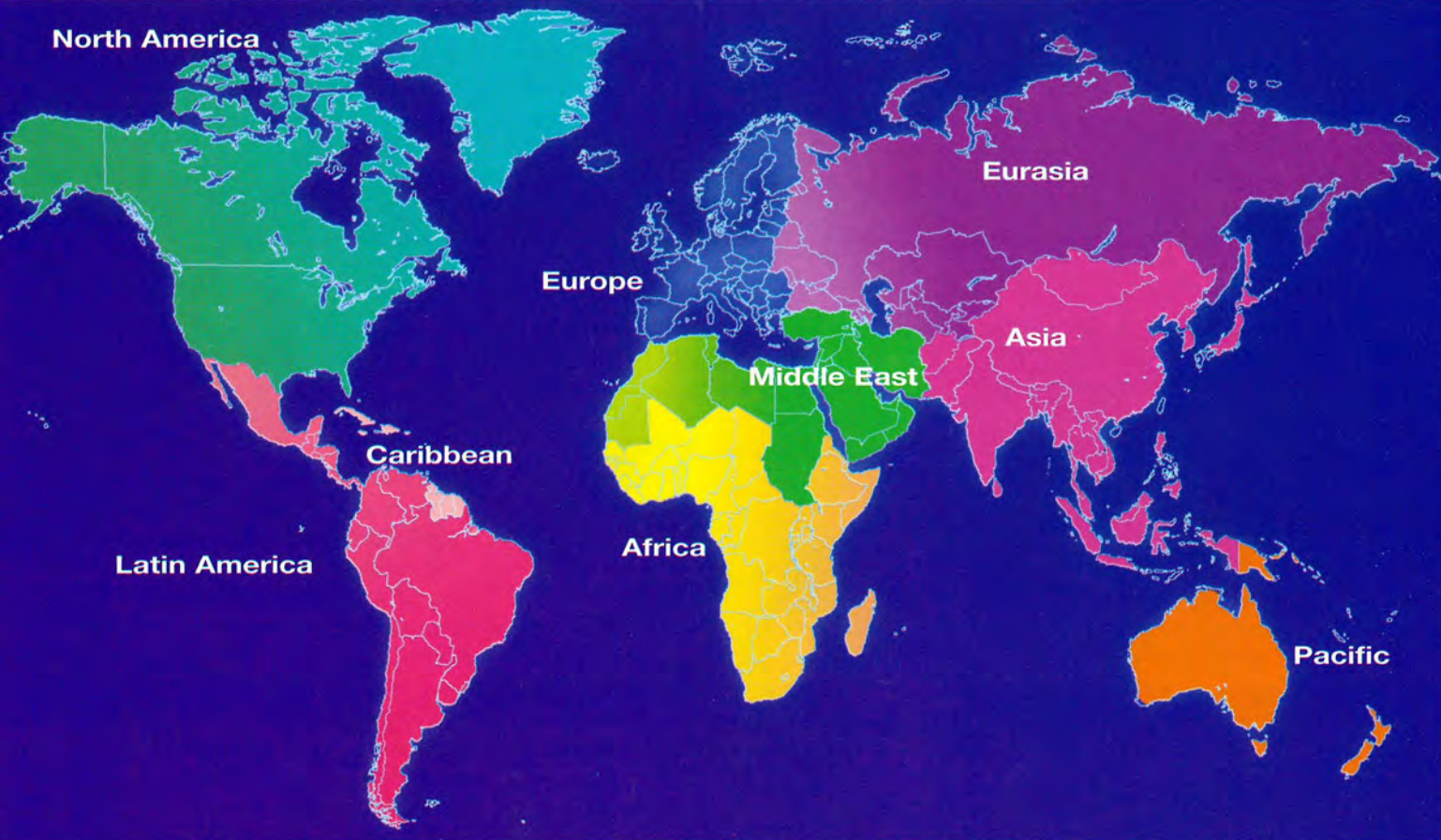
Emily

Winter's definitely on its way – it must be about 25° over here! It's quite humorous seeing all the BIT students wearing their warm jackets etc. Our time at BIT is really enjoyable and the students are just lovely! We're gradually picking up more and more Thai too! What a cool language! Just quite embarrassing when you get the tone wrong and call someone a horse, rather than thanking them! One of the girls in our class is a pop star! She has an album out and everything! Be sure to let us know if 'Raffy Nancy' (Raffy's her older brother) ever make it to the UK. In His hands

Emily



Photographs: Above left, Dave in a Tuk Tuk. Above: Ben, Emily & Claire holding a Burmese python - Dave is absolutely petrified of snakes! Above right, Claire washing her clothes at BIT



Region	Population in millions 1995	Affiliated Christian percentages			Total Number of Peoples	Peoples in Region World		
		Total	Prot	Evang		A	B	C
Africa	557.9	48.1	20.2	13.2	3168	1074	975	1119
Asia	3209.3	7.3	3.9	3.1	2658	1607	503	548
Caribbean	37.8	69.2	16.5	11.1	287	15	83	189
Eurasia	290.5	45.8	1.1	0.9	596	306	104	186
Europe	514.8	77.2	18.3	2.8	1083	120	176	787
Latin America	455.8	90.9	12.1	11.1	1233	96	261	876
Middle East	378.1	4.6	0.6	0.4	889	558	159	172
North America	284.8	70.7	40.6	27.9	427	28	48	351
Pacific	28.4	66.8	37.0	15.8	1533	111	237	1185
WORLD	5757.3	30.1	9.2	5.7	11874	3915	2546	5413

Notes:

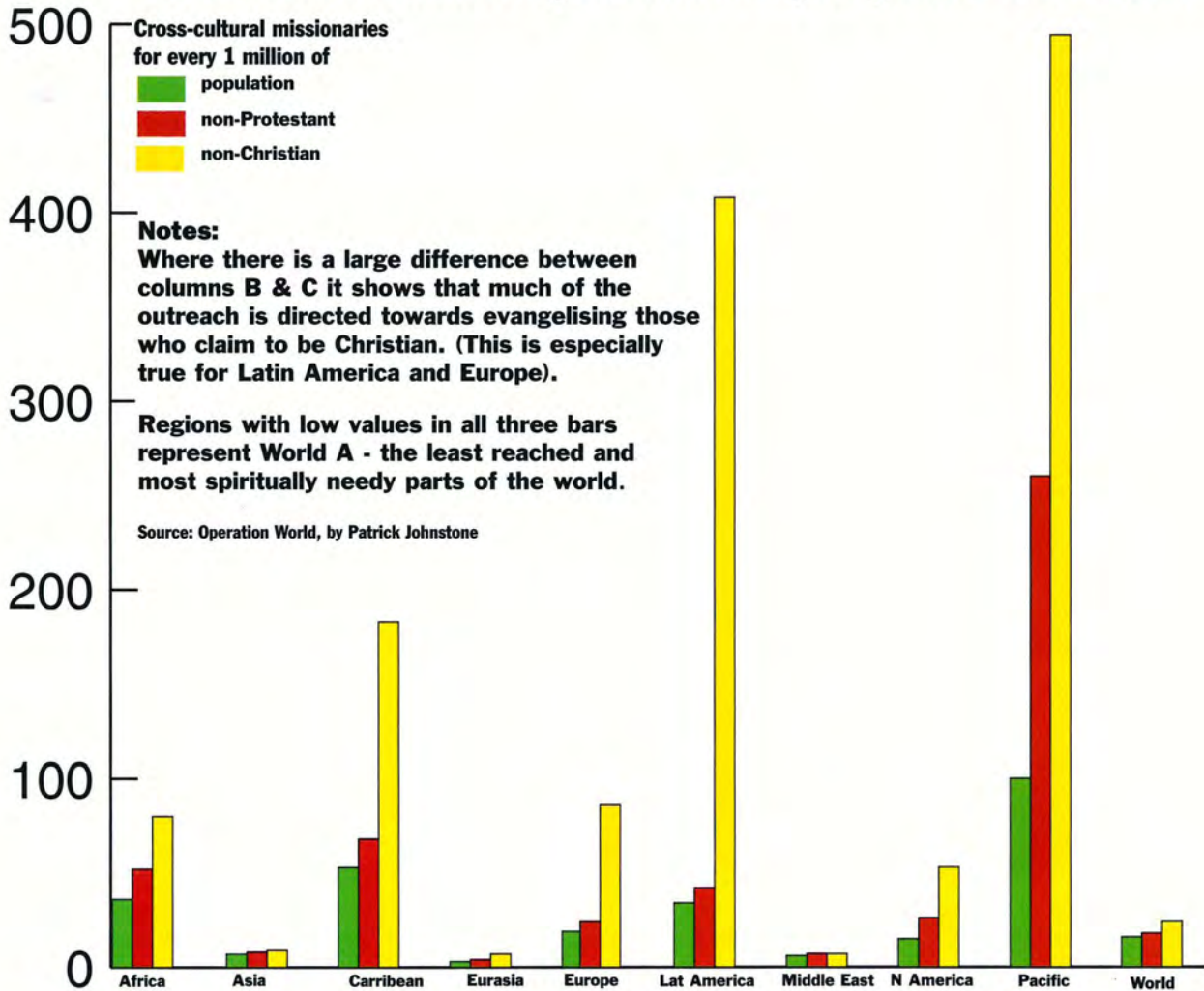
World A
Nations and peoples in the least evangelised world. Defined as those nations and peoples that are less than 50 per cent evangelised as defined in the World Evangelisation Database compiled by Dr David Barrett and team. Roughly corresponds to what is known as the '10/40 Window' (the area of Africa and Asia between the 10th and 40th degree of latitude).

World B
Nations and peoples in the evangelised non-Christian world. Defined as those nations and peoples that are more than 50 per cent evangelised and less than 60 per cent Christian (including all major Christian groups).

World C
Nations and peoples in the Christian world. Defined as those nations and peoples that are more than 60 per cent professing Christian. This includes all nominal and affiliated Christians of all ecclesiological traditions and not only Protestants.

Source: Operation World, by Patrick Johnstone

Protestant Missionary Presence by Regions of the World



What are the main hindrances to mission?

(Tick all that apply)

- countries not issuing visas for missionaries
- Hinduism
- places where open evangelism and church planting are illegal
- illiteracy
- national governments opposing missionary work
- materialism
- Islam
- damage done by colonial powers
- isolated communities and people groups
- lack of prayer
- complacency
- Buddhism
- countries where conversion to Christianity is illegal
- urbanisation
- lack of confidence in the gospel
- tribal religions
- me - not making myself fully available to God



projects prayer people



PROJECTS UPDATE

Project 9020 Grant to River Amazon ministry for £7,200

The state of Rondônia in the southwest corner of the Amazon basin was only created in 1981.

Transport in this partially deforested region is by both road and river. The Evangelism and Social Action Department of the Rondônia Baptist Convention has a boat ministry along several tributaries of the River Amazon, north of Porto Velho, the capital. It's

called the Eric Nelson III ministry, and its aim is to reach lives along these rivers with the message of the gospel and to give social help. The team on

in July, visiting these and other places. The Jesus film was shown five times, Christian literature was distributed and medical help given.



board consists of a doctor, a dentist and preacher/evangelists.

In 1998 two journeys were made; the first in January up the River Machado visiting the communities in Itacoã, São Carlos, Calama, Maicé, Nazaré, Lago do Cuniã and Terra Caída, and the second

Six journeys are planned for 1999 along the Rivers Madeira, Machado, Maicé, and Jamuri.

BMS has a partnership with the Rondônia Baptist Convention,

and gives a grant each year to help carry out this ministry.

If you would like to know more about how you or your church could support a BMS Project, please contact BMS Projects Administrator Ruth Berry on 01235 517700.


PRAYER FOCUS




Linda and Kevin Donaghy: Barreiro, Portugal


Kevin and Linda were relocated from Brazil to Portugal in July 1997 to take over the pastorate of a small church in Barreiro (nine members) and to begin a new work in the nearby town of Montijo. The church at Barreiro recently joined the Baptist Convention after 19 years in existence as an independent church. During that time they had become isolated from other Baptist work and so were not aware of what was going on in the wider church world. One of Kevin and Linda's tasks has therefore been to broaden the horizons of the church members and help them to see that they can do evangelism themselves. Some of the changes which have occurred since the couple arrived are: changing the hours of the service (from 9.00pm), opening the communion table to any believer from an evangelical church, contributing to home mission, opening a bank account in the name of the church, buying an OHP and screen, members leading services, forming links with other evangelical churches in the town, opening a children's club, having official elections for Deacons and doing door to door distribution of tracts and invites to special services. Links with other churches have gone very well, with pulpit exchanges and the building of bridges with another independent Baptist church from which the Barreiro church split 20 years ago.

Please pray:

 Thank God for the building of good relationships with other churches and

church leaders. Pray God will bless this fellowship.

 Thank God for the new ideas Kevin and Linda have been able to implement at the church, and pray they will have wisdom in knowing how to continue moving forward under God's guidance.


 Pray for God's protection over the fellowship and against any spiritual attack as they move forward in his will




Roger and Nikki Pearce: Tirana, Albania

Roger and Nikki are agricultural and health facilitators living in the capital, Tirana. Nikki felt privileged to be able to assist her friend who gave birth to her second child in Tirana. The mother was delighted at how smoothly the birth went compared to her first time and felt conditions in Tirana were much better than in Fier, where her first child was born. Nikki however was horrified by the apparent lack of care displayed by the hospital personnel. She says: "Although we were surrounded by midwives, a doctor and paediatrician, they made it so obvious they were only there for the money, and I was shocked at how they played on pain and fear for extracting extra payment. Given how difficult the situation was, I was therefore so impressed by how amazingly Shpresa coped with the pain, knowing that all that was available to her was the paracetamol we had given her earlier. As I contemplated the experience, I compared it with the midwifery unit I had worked in in Newcastle and I realised how high my expectations are of the care pregnant ladies should receive. However, for so many ladies in Albania, pregnancy is still such a dangerous time, fraught with worry, uncertainty and undoubtedly, excruciating pain..."

Please pray

 Thank God for the knowledge and

training of people like Nikki and Roger and pray for openings for them to share their skills in training others.

 Thank God for the safe arrival of baby Samueli Koca and pray for him, mum Shpresa and dad Bertie as they struggle to live day to day in this troubled land



Colin and Marcia Pavitt: Eldorado, Brazil

In June 1998, the Pavitts' church in Eldorado launched "Projecto Crianca" (children's project) taking children off the streets from 2.00 to 5.00pm and providing a programme of education and activities to supplement the schooling they receive earlier in the mornings. The programme is run by volunteers and varies daily to cover such things as gardening, painting, school studies and even outings to MacDonalds. The Brazilian education system works well for average or above average ability children but there is no organised system for the many requiring extra support. One of the project's boys is 15. He repeated first grade three times and is now repeating second grade for the fourth time. No one from the school or society has taken the trouble to find out why he has learning difficulties and how he can be helped. Unfortunately, as with many of the children, child abuse is part of his problem. He is now receiving extra help at the project in the basics of Portuguese and Maths so hopefully he can make some progress in the next year. Marcelo is 11. The town's social service department asked the project to take him on as his single parent mother was not coping looking after him. He had developed the habit of stealing and selling her things. She had to go out to work every day and was therefore locking him in the house. He was doing badly at school too with consistent results of less than 25 per cent. With the help of Marcia and the



prayer focus & people worldwide

project volunteers, his results are now up to 75 per cent and they are working on his bad habits. Of the project, Colin and Marcia say: "It is very energy and time consuming, but wonderful to see signs of hope in children that are otherwise destined to lives of misery, vice and possibly crime."

Please pray:

P thank God for those willing to give their time and love to taking care of these children

P pray for wisdom for the workers in knowing how to help each individual child, especially those scarred by abuse of many kinds

P pray for energy for those involved in this exhausting work



Irene and Alex Black, Chiang Rai, Thailand

Both Alex and Irene teach English at the Sahasartsuka School. The school provides basic education in a Christian setting for children whose mother tongues are the various hill tribe languages. The Thai curriculum is followed although Christianity is taught instead of Buddhism and all subjects, except the Blacks' English classes, are taught in the official Thai language. Alex and Irene teach children aged 10 to 15 and also run evening English classes for school and hostel staff and for local Christians. Nine hostels provide accommodation for the students. Eight are sponsored by christian organisations and individual students are supported by sponsorship from the West through an organisation called Compassion. Without this support, the children's families would not be able to afford an education for their children. Standards of care at the hostels vary greatly and Irene and some of the other Thailand Baptist Missionary Fellowship (TBMF) workers have been discussing the

possibility of offering a training course to hostel parents. The school also offers a home and education to some AIDS infected orphans. Often they are not welcome in their own villages and other schools refuse to take them. All-year hostel provision needs to be found for these children and special care may also need to be set up as numbers increase.

Please pray:

P for God's guidance on whether to set up the training programme and for the hostel parents to be willing to take on the extra workload if it is right

P thank God for the love and care received by the AIDS orphans and pray for wisdom in knowing what type of special care to set up for these children

P government funding for a new building was cancelled due to cutbacks. Pray that following a visit by Education Department officials to the school, this would be reinstated



Owen and Deanna Clark, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

Owen and Deanna were due to retire in 1998, but requested an extension of service as there were no replacements to hand their work over to in Congo, and the Baptist community there was preoccupied with changes in leadership at the time. This meant they had not had the opportunity to finish, pack up and say their farewells (very important in Bantu culture) before heading to the UK for six months of Home Assignment. After discussions with BMS, the Clarks agreed to return to Kinshasa for a period of about 18 months as from the end of January 1999. This would allow them time to consolidate their church planting and development work and for the BMS and the CBFC (Baptist Community of the River Congo) to consider how to go on from there. At the time of writing,

medical clearance and an official invitation from the CBFC were being awaited and the couple were planning to fly to Congo on 1 February.

Please pray:

P for wisdom for BMS and CBFC as they plan the way ahead for the work the Clarks have been involved in. If the decision is to look for nationals or other missionaries to continue the work, pray the right people would be found quickly.

PEOPLE WORLDWIDE

expanding prayer focus.

BMS personnel introduce friends and acquaintances whom they meet from day to day.

Jules Bayang, Massy, France

Jules featured in *mb* (Nov/Dec 1997) as part of the Our town series, looking at Massy, France. He is a part of Massy Baptist church and was baptised on Easter Sunday a couple of years ago.

To update the situation, the biggest change in Jules' life over the last 18 months has been his getting married to Véronique. Their friendship blossomed into romance, and they were married at Massy Baptist Church at the end of last June.

Véronique comes originally from the French West Indies. She recently qualified as a social worker, and now works as a debt collector.

Within the church Jules and Véronique head up a new joint youth



Profile
Jules Bayang
Jules Bayang is a Congolese Baptist pastor and evangelist. He is currently serving as the pastor of the Massy Baptist Church in France. He has a background in social work and is also a member of the Baptist World Alliance. He is married to Véronique and they have two children.

group for the 15s to 18s in conjunction with the Baptist church in Antony, a town three miles to the north of Massy. Neither church would have had a large enough number of teenagers in this age bracket on its own to make a viable group, but the joint group has got off to a flying start.

Jules and Véronique are well suited to this role. Véronique's bent for organisation means that everything runs smoothly, and Jules' passion for sport – he competes at regional level in martial arts – gives him plenty of common ground with the teenagers.

Phil Halliday (BMS church worker in Massy, France)



Resham Rana, Tansen, Nepal

Resham is a young man of 27 and is currently the only full-time worker at Tansen church, one of the town's two churches. He became a Christian from a Hindu family who promptly rejected him for doing so. They consider him to be dead and won't even accept a glass of water from him.

At the age of 15 Resham was jilted by his girlfriend at school. Being unable to find peace through his Hindu faith he turned to drink and drugs. However his heart could not rest until one day he found himself outside Tansen church during one of the services. His heart was touched by the words of the songs but he felt afraid to enter the building. The next week he returned with the intention of listening outside again, but was persuaded to come in by the man leading the service. Again the words of the songs spoke powerfully to his heart, and during the singing of a song which speaks of "following Jesus" he decided he wanted to do just that.

Resham spent a year at Bible school in Kathmandu where he met his wife, Shanti. She now teaches at a school in Tansen to help the family income. Resham has a heart for sharing his faith

with those outside of Tansen. Of Palpa district's 200 or so believers, around 90 per cent live in the district centre, Tansen. That leaves the rest of the district with a population of more than 250,000 largely unevangelised. Resham believes God has given him a vision for taking the good news of Jesus Christ out into the villages of Palpa. He has already started doing so, sometimes in his own time and with his own resources, sometimes with other friends from church.

We feel privileged to know the Ranas. We have been shocked by the price they have had to pay to follow Jesus in terms of rejection by their families. We have been encouraged by their faithful service in the church despite minimal financial reward. And we have been challenged by their vision to share their faith with the many who have not yet even heard the name of Jesus.

Story based on an interview with the Rana family on 17 October 1998 by Andrew and Michelle Furber, BMS workers in Tansen, Nepal.

Pastor Alcides San Miguel, São Paulo

Pastor Alcides and his wife used to be in charge of the Baptist orphanage in the Jardim Olinda district of São Paulo. His wife was very active in the area of



Christian social action in São Paulo, but sadly, she was killed in a bus crash a couple of years ago. Pastor Alcides – with a family to support – moved on to a new ministry in San Miguel in the north part of São Paulo. It's not a



favela, but it is quite a poor area, although it does have structure, services, shops, hairdressers etc.

Pastor Alcides has built a church building at San Miguel; it's been up about two years now. It is also used for pre-school. But he's now moved on to the extension. It doesn't have a roof yet – he's waiting for a donation of materials. To add to the pharmacy, that is up and running and provides an income for him, he also wants to have a dentist and a First Aid Post here, so that it provides a real service for the community.

The Pastor is a dreamer, and he'd also like to have a house that is a refuge centre for people running away from home. Usually people leave home because they have been abused, but they have nowhere to go. So, in desperation they turn to the brothels or the drug barons who give them somewhere to stay – but at a price.

Stuart Christine (BMS missionary involved in church planting work in São Paulo, Brazil) as told to Jan Kendall

Photographs:

Above: Children at San Miguel Baptist Church

Left: Stuart Christine and Pastor Alcides

Below: San Miguel Baptist Church



Changes to BMS Co-ordinators

South Wales Goodbye to Gareth Hutchinson

Gareth was appointed BMS Co-ordinator for South Wales in 1987, having come from the Baptist ministry to take up the position, and he has now retired.



At the last General Committee Gareth spoke of how he had started working for BMS at the age of seven – collecting money for missionaries. He said: "BMS is my beloved Society. I'm one of the 'old school', and it's been my duty and privilege to preach the gospel, because if people don't know the Saviour, they are not going to be interested in overseas work."



Welcome to: Nick Bradshaw

Nick will join the Team as Co-ordinator for South and Central Wales as from 1 April 1999.

Nick is a Welshman, who went to school

in Penarth. After working for the DHSS in Cardiff, he trained at South Wales Baptist College before taking a pastoral role at London Road Baptist Church, Lowestoft. He then moved to become pastor of Christchurch Baptist Church, Welwyn Garden City about two years ago.

Nick says: "I am delighted at this opportunity to strengthen and encourage the missionary interest of churches in Wales. It is a passion for world mission that I want to get into the heart of the churches in Wales. Wales is a nation that I am passionate for. God has blessed this nation in the past. I sense that in calling upon God to bless this nation again there has to be a heart that cries out to God to bless the nations. I want to show how BMS provides for that passion to get out and achieve the purpose for which God put it there in the first place."

BMS news

Goodbye to David Martin

David was accepted by BMS as a candidate in 1965, and went to Brazil as a



missionary in 1968. Five years later he returned to the UK and became a General Committee member. He then came to work for BMS on the home staff as Assistant

Secretary for Children and Young People, then Promotion Co-ordinator, later an Assistant Overseas Secretary and Regional Representative for Central America, and finally, since 1994, Director of Operations.

As the new structures

come into place following the Management Review, David will stand down and seek other avenues of service.



SAT-7 launches new satellite

In the autumn of 1998 Eutelsat successfully launched a new satellite (W2), which replaced the former satellite (Eutelsat 2F3) used by SAT-7, the TV broadcasting service for Christians of the Middle East. The new satellite transmits programmes from the same orbital slot (16°E) and time every Friday and Sunday, but at a new frequency: 11.178 GHz. This change will have affected most of SAT-7's audience who watch their programmes via Eutelsat, and in fact has affected all channels, including six Arabic ones, which broadcast from Eutelsat 2F3. The viewers will have had to retune their satellite receivers, and for many this will have meant calling in an engineer.

BMS is a member of the SAT-7 Partnership Council.

Check Out

March/April 1999

March

Arrivals

None

Departures

Betsy Guarna-Moore and Saverio Guarna to Tirana, Albania

April

Arrivals

Sue Headlam from Chandraghona, Bangladesh

Ann Bothamley from Vellore, India

Carole Whitmee from Balangir, India

Alex and Irene Black from Chiang Rai, Thailand

Joyce and Stuart Filby from Ostende, Belgium

Gerry and Johan Myhill, from Curitiba, Brazil

Departures

Iain and Karen Gordon to Kathmandu, Nepal

Kate and Simon Harry to Kathmandu, Nepal

Judy Cook to Chiang Mai, Thailand

Sheila Loader to Kathmandu, Nepal

Grace Penney to Kathmandu, Nepal

AP PHOTO/LUIS ROMERO



Photograph above: Reina Guadalupe Iraheta, 23, washes her clothes in the flood waters from the Rio Lempa. Hurricane Mitch wreaked havoc across Central America, causing the death of over 6,000 people. In the background is the remains of the Gold Bridge.

Relief Fund grants

Central America £16,014

BMS has sent £16,014 from its Relief Fund to help the international relief effort in the wake of Hurricane Mitch, the money to be divided between El Salvador and Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua it is estimated that over 2,000 people died in this disaster, with 970 missing. Nearly 900,000 people were displaced from their homes.

In neighbouring Honduras the Central Baptist Church in Tegucigalpa, the capital, is reported to have collapsed. The church was a centre for relief work and medical care

for the poor at their clinic. Many people around the church were made homeless and are now living at a university.

El Salvador also suffered. BMS missionary David Quinney Mee, who had returned to the UK last October for Home Assignment, has gone back out to El Salvador, and is assessing the best use of financial support, with the help of a Salvadorean team.

Ukraine/Hungary £5,000

Severe flooding also hit the Transcarpathian region of the Ukraine and eastern Hungary at the end of 1998. The BMS Relief Fund responded immediately, and £5,000 was sent to provide help for the flood victims.

Changes to BMS Co-ordinators



Central and East England Goodbye to: Jim Clarke

Jim Clarke, Co-ordinator for Central and East England, took early retirement at the end of January on health grounds.

Jim was appointed as a BMS missionary to Brazil in 1962, and he arrived there in 1963. He came back to the UK in 1970, and became BMS Co-ordinator for Central and East England in 1986.

Tribute was paid to Jim at his farewell at the last General Committee. Sheila Bull from Cambridge spoke of his "passion for world mission." Jim said his years as Co-ordinator had been "the best 13 years of my life."

Welcome to: John Smith

John steps into Jim's shoes as the new Co-ordinator for Central and East England. John grew up in SE London and was converted at the age



of 17. He worked as a local government Personnel Officer before training for pastoral ministry at London Bible College, and in 1988 moved to the Cotswold town of Minchinhampton. Here he pastored the local Baptist church during a period of lively growth and development. For the past four years, John has been the senior pastor at London Road Baptist Church, Lowestoft. He is also a member of the Leading Edge committee.

He says, "I am delighted to have the opportunity of encouraging churches to develop their support of world mission. Developing Christian communities committed to mission has been at the heart of my ministry for many years. For me, world mission begins with those we work and live with, and then extends to the many exciting programmes and projects in which BMS and others are involved all around the world. Together, I hope that Baptist Christians in the Central and Eastern Area will continue to make a significant impact in sharing the good news of Jesus and promoting care and justice for those most in need."

John can be contacted on 01502 567686.

world

mission link



a plane journey with a difference



Photographs: below, recycling game

Flying High

People of all ages from St Mary's Baptist Church, Norwich recently took off on a plane journey with a difference; to discover more about BMS and its work.

BMS videos formed the in-flight entertainment, and catering was supplied courtesy of BMS recipes from around the world. Colouring packs and games also helped pass the time for the children.

Most of the in-flight information and ideas came from the BMS Power Pack material.



Albania

Return Visit

Haydn Davies, minister at Maesyrrhelem Baptist Church, has made several trips to Albania over the years, but it was on his last visit in 1996 that he had the idea of arranging a return

trip for Mirlinda and Pavlina, two Albanian girls he



had met in the course of his visits. He says, as their English was not much better than his Albanian, he suggested that they bring a translator with them; so Eva, who spoke English, came as well.

Whilst they were in Wales they spoke in several Baptist churches, (both Baptist Union of Wales and Baptist Union of Great Britain). Haydn says, "Those of us who shared with them that period of three weeks soon realised how poor they were in this world's things, but how rich they were in their desire to do God's will. They belong to a church that in the Communist period had gone down to three old men, who met secretly. But now the church is up to about 150."

Himalayan Ceilidh

Arranged by Cummertrees, Dumfries and Annan Baptist churches, with special input from former BMS missionary in Nepal, Isobel Strang, the event was billed as a Himalayan Ceilidh. The Nepali style refreshments available included Nepali tea (made with sweet, boiled milky tea and spices), but also tuna fish sandwiches. (Tinned tuna used to be the only tinned fish readily available in Nepal, and so was a somewhat over-used ingredient in many a dish.) The cola, however, was made with non-mountain spring water!



Fifty or so people began the evening with an opening quiz, asking for such poignant and varied information as "Why did the Yetis die out?" to "When did Hinduism become the state religion of Nepal?" The live ceilidh band ensured the atmosphere was carried on into the dance of the Dashing White Sergeant.

The combination of music, slides and Nepali crafts and literature meant that everyone enjoyed the evening. £121 was raised for a health and development project financed by BMS in the Nepali district of Gorkha.

ZAIRE/CONGO REUNION Sat 8 May 1999



An all day event, starting around 10.00am, at Egerton-Rothesay School, Durrants Lane, Berkhamsted for anyone interested in Zaire/Congo. For more details contact Ruth Montacute MBE, tel 01442 384610 or e-mail her at ruth@egerton2.u-net.com



Simon Jones introduces

Vinoth Ramachandra to *mb* readers

Vinoth Ramachandra is one of the most original and provocative mission thinkers active in today's world. A Sri Lankan nuclear scientist, he is currently South Asia Regional Secretary for the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. He is the author of two chunky books of mission theology 'The Recovery of Mission' and 'Gods that Fail: Modern Idolatry and Christian Mission' (both published by Paternoster) and last year he gave the London Lectures on Christian mission in a multi-faith world.

There seems no one better placed to speak on such a sensitive and vital topic. Nurtured in a culture influenced by all the world's major religions, Ramachandra brings fresh insight and a searing clarity to his discussion of Jesus and his mission.

He reminds us that for the early Christians, 'The impetus to mission sprang from the very heart of the gospel itself. Missionary outreach...was not an activity tagged on to a faith that was basically about something else; rather it flowed from the very logic of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The truth that the early Christians believed had been disclosed in Jesus was for the world because it was about the world.' (The Recovery of Mission p 224)

And what was this truth? Simply that through the story of Jesus we are able 'to discern signs of God's new order, inaugurated in Jesus, in all human struggles against fear, greed, violence, sickness, oppression and injustice.' And 'it is this story, alone among all stories, which gives human beings the firm assurance, rooted in historical event, that their struggles are not ultimately futile...because death, sin and evil have been overcome.'

Ramachandra says that we engage in mission because Jesus was raised from the dead and is alive and active in the world today. Mission, he says, is only possible because of the resurrection. It alone gives meaning to every act of love and service in a sinful world. The resurrection, he continues, is God's 'yes!' to the world. So if we believe in the resurrection, we should be a world-affirming people – as the first Christians were.

If this doesn't give us confidence to go into the world and make Jesus known through word and deed, then nothing will! ●

Simon Jones is BMS Co-ordinator for London and the South East of England.

Vinoth Ramachandra is South Asia
Regional Secretary of IFES



"No, I'm not going into the clown ministry.
These are just the clothes that my home church had in their missions cupboard".

CARTOON BY DIK LAPINE

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