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global issues
news & events

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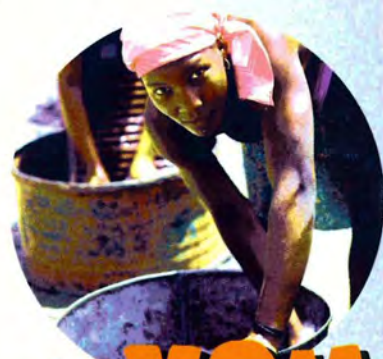
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**It was frightening.
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COVER PICTURE BANGKOK SHOPPING CENTRE/KAREN WOMEN
MONTAGE BY SARAH PRENTICE
ABOVE PICTURE KAREN WOMEN

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BMS
Publications



World

What would you like for Christmas? New clothes, CD player, PC? Or something less materialistic like peace on earth?

The world is accumulating more and more consumer goods: there are 2,122 radios per 1,000 people in the USA; two people for every main telephone line in the UK; 23 per cent of households with dishwashers in Slovenia – that's higher than the UK – and 71 per cent of households with microwaves in Finland.

Third World countries are emulating this, and although their consumer goods ownership figures are nothing like as high as the West's, they are climbing up. That's why you can't get away from personal computers, satellite dishes, luxury four-wheel drive vehicles or designer clothes wherever you are in the world – be it Far Eastern city, desert tent or tribal hut.

This issue of *mb* is looking at the effect of globalisation on mission. That is, how technological and societal changes have impacted the whole world. As Simon Jones points out in his article 'Chips with Everything', you're just as likely to watch Arsenal in a Thai village as in your own living room. It's also looking at how the world is fragmenting and reaffirming its tribal, sectarian roots in a desperate effort to count, to belong, to matter. These shifts in what is happening beyond us and within our own domain affect the way we do things. These particular changes cause us to re-evaluate the way we do mission. And as well as being reactive, we need to be proactive in setting the pace, and reading the signs of the times.

Who better than Christians to tell people of the all encompassing knowledge and love of God, not just in a wishy-washy sense, but specifically? Everyone matters in the schemes of God; everyone has their place and purpose and can have a relationship with their Creator because of what Jesus did for us, while we were still alienated from him, by his dying and resurrection. That truth doesn't change, though just about everything else might in the next 20 years! With best wishes to you as we come to the end of this millennium.

Looking forward to your partnership in the gospel as we enter the next one!

Jan



editorial ○ editorial ○ editorial ○ editorial ○ editorial ○ editorial ○ editorial ○ editorial ○ editorial ○ editorial



OLA SHEYIN

Nigeria New President is man on a mission

"Fellow Nigerians, everything created by God has its destiny, and it is the destiny of all of us to see this day. You the good people of Nigeria elected me, as your President, to head the democratic civilian administration. I believe this

is what God Almighty has ordained for me and for my beloved country..."

So began the inauguration speech of Olusegun Obasanjo, the new President of Nigeria, who sees himself as a man on a mission to win back the heart and soul of a broken country. He is a devout Christian, and in his augural speech mentioned "God Almighty" eight times. The task ahead of Obasanjo is enormous, and many commentators

have remarked that he is going to need all the help he can get, from whatever source.

Obasanjo was elected President following the sudden and unexpected death of General Abdulsalam Abubakar, appointed by the military junta in June 1998.

In his first week as President, Obasanjo suspended all the contracts signed by the Abubakar regime between 1 January and 28 May and appointed a seven-member panel headed up by Dr Christopher

news

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

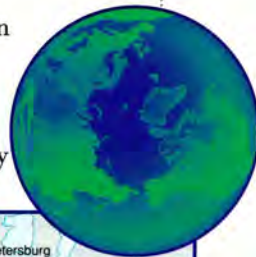
Kolade, an astute Christian and ex-chairman of Cadbury, Nigeria to review the suspended contracts. He appointed a human rights committee to investigate abuses, and has established a panel to investigate persecution of Christians from 1983 to the present. He retired the heads of the central bank, and police, and in his second week he retired 100 top military officers who had held political appointments between 1985 and 1999.

Obasanjo also plans to return mission schools to the churches, a move that has generated Muslim opposition, with Muslims fearing their children will be denied access to the schools. The Christians have said, in reply, that they have an open-admission policy. Revd S Ola Fadeji, the General Secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, has been quoted as saying, "The Baptist Church wholeheartedly accepts the decision and is fully prepared to take over the schools." (New African/BWA)



in Russia, including Smolensk, Tver, Nizhny, Novgorod, Tula, Krasnoyarsk and Rostov-on-Don. In Tver alone, the co-ordinator of Alpha in Russia, Marina Savilyeva reported that there were 13 Alpha groups, including one composed entirely of teenagers, while in Moscow the course was even spreading among the higher ranks of the army. There is also a course running within the British Embassy. It is believed that there are about 80 Alpha courses running in Russia altogether.

Unlike Britain, where the course has been taken up by a variety of denominations, in Russia Alpha appears to have been adopted almost exclusively



Russia Alpha just beginning

The Alpha course is now operating in 60 countries worldwide, among them Russia. Courses are currently operating in 40 towns



Kuwait

Amanuel Ghareeb, the first Kuwaiti to enter the full-time Christian ministry, according to United Bible Societies, has been ordained as pastor of the National Evangelical Church in Kuwait City, Kuwait. The new pastor had been involved in the oil business for 25 years, and underwent his theological training in Cairo, Egypt. He is one of an estimated 250 indigenous believers in Kuwait, a predominantly Muslim country. (EBPS)

Kosovo

In response to an e-mail bombardment from its employees as to how the world's largest information supplier was going to help the Kosovan refugees, Microsoft gave both staff and technology to set up a database of the 800,000 people that were being dealt with by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Refugees were registered on the database, given identity documents and matched with members of their families and communities in other – possibly distant – camps. (B Collett)

Lebanon

The Bible Society in Lebanon has dedicated a new centre in Beirut, designed to meet the needs of the Middle East area. Eighteen athletes undertook a triathlon to celebrate its opening. They began with a run near the oldest inhabited city in the world, Byblos, from which the world 'Bible' came; then swam a course in the Mediterranean Sea and finished with a cycle ride to the Centre. (EBPS)

Cuba

An American Christian leader asked thousands of Cuban Protestants to pardon the US people for their government's embargo against the island nation. "For people of faith there are no embargoes" said Revd Joan Brown Campbell, Secretary General of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. "We ask you to forgive the suffering that has come to you by the actions of the United States." (LAP)

Namibia

A new political party - the Christian Movement Namibia Action Party - was recently launched in the country's capital, Windhoek. Jeremy Kasume, its president and founder said the party's goal was to transform the country's political, social and spiritual landscape. Kasume said Namibia needed leaders who were accountable to God and bound by the Bible and the national constitution. (New African)

by charismatic churches. However there are pockets where this is not true. The Catholics originally thought Alpha was not for them but have gradually discovered its value. The real desire by those who wish to see Alpha grow in Russia is for it to be adopted by the Russian Orthodox Church. Robert Minney, advisor on religious education in the Department of Education of the Moscow Patriarchate thought the main objection from the Orthodox point of view was that "a sense of sacred time and sacred space is totally absent."

Alpha is the product of Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) Anglican church in London, and was first introduced into Russia in 1994 by a member of HTB, Roland Dunford-Slater, who was working as an independent missionary in Yoshkar-Ola. (Keston)

Hong Kong Noah's Ark to be part of theme park



A biblically-based Noah's Ark containing a creation science museum will be part of a unique theme park on Ma Wan island in Hong Kong harbour.

The project is being funded by the largest

property development company in Hong Kong, and a team of Christian experts on theme parks and World Expositions have been brought together to develop the proposal. The expected date for opening is April 2002.

Stage one of the project will be a 55,000 square foot garden called the "Heavenly Blessings Garden". It will be a quiet, meditative garden, displaying biblically-based arts and sculptures, encouraging thoughtful reflection and fellowship with God.

Next will come Noah's Ark, which will be partially buried in rocks and sediment. Inside the Ark will be the creation science museum, a Bible theme restaurant, an experiential theatre and other multi-purpose function halls. There will also be an aquatic research centre, an archaeological museum and a solar observatory.

When the developer's advisors and consultants heard about the Noah's Ark proposal from the Christian team, the master planner, who himself is not a believer, said he would approve the proposal if the Christians would adhere to three conditions: 1) to preach the gospel; 2) to base everything on the Bible and 3) to make sure that everyone who visits the park will have a shout in their heart which says "Praise the Lord".

Dr David Wang, leader of Asian Outreach and Executive Director for this project said he felt a clear sense of being "mandated from heaven."

On being asked as to why a successful developer in ultra-materialistic Hong

Kong would want to do a project like this, Dr Wang replied, "There was a significant amount of intensive praying by Christians - both locally and from around the world - prior to Hong Kong's 1997 take-over. God has a habit of answering prayers in unique ways."

Disneyland is also being planned for Hong Kong on a neighbouring island. "Now that our neighbours are Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, our anticipated attendance has grown tremendously," said Dr Wang. "At first we thought it would be two million visitors a year. Now it could be three times higher." (Assist)

Bulgaria Concern over new law

All the leading minority faiths in Bulgaria including the Evangelical Alliance, which is made up of Pentecostals, Methodists, the Church of God, Baptists and Congregationalists have expressed concern over aspects of a proposed draft law on religion that has been put forward by two parliamentary deputies of the ruling coalition.

They have also criticised the speed at which the draft was rushed through, allowing only one week for comments and feedback.

The main concerns are: 1) that religious groups will remain under the supervision of the executive power. Groups which, officially are not allowed to exist are subject to heavy fines. 2) Only one religious system is allowed per system



of belief. This means, for example, that it would not be possible to establish a second Baptist Church in the country, if so desired, because such a church was already established. 3) Local authorities will take on new tasks, which could have repercussions on local religious groups if local rules are deemed to have been violated. 4) Although the draft says that all religious institutions are equal, the Orthodox Church has been given special preferences, and 5) it will be impossible for new religious groups to enter the country and conduct activities.

Emil Cohen, who heads up the Tolerance Foundation, a religious liberty group, based in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, is concerned about the outcome of these draft proposals. "The speed

under which discussion of the draft is proceeding provokes anxiety among a lot of the leaders of minority religious groups as well as among human rights activists. This draft shows us that although the present administration has done a lot to improve the situation over religious human rights in Bulgaria, the desire of the State to dominate religious groups is still alive.” (Keston)

Myanmar Terror squads use new tactics

New atrocities have been waged against the Karen people, many of whom are Christians, in

Myanmar (Burma).

A special military intelligence unit called the Sa Sa Sa has been set up, claiming a licence to kill ten villagers a month. Members underwent special indoctrination and training and came under the direct control of General Khin Nyunt, the first secretary of Myanmar’s military junta. Their aim: to clamp down on the pro-democracy movement. Operating in groups of up to seven, they entered villages, ordering villagers to kill their dogs. If the villagers refused, they shot the dogs themselves and charged the villagers for the bullets. This was to allow the terrorists to operate at night, undetected



by barking dogs.

Up to 100,000 Karen people have already been forced out of Myanmar and are living in camps in Thailand, near to the border. These camps are often raided or burnt to the ground by the Myanmar soldiers.

One Sa Sa Sa unit arrested two men in a relocation camp, killed them and after beheading them, displayed their heads at the entrance to the

Alistair Brown



Reflects....

Dresden can never forget the bombing of 13 February, 1945 which reduced much of the city to rubble. Thousands perished in the fire storm. Photos from the time show survivors heaping corpses in large mounds among ruins no longer recognisable as buildings.

Among the devastated buildings was the Frauenkirche (Church of our Lady), one of the most inspired works of European architecture. Its 95 metre dome – a ‘bell of stone’ – was awesome. Massive and magnificent, the church had towered over the city for 200 years. Then came 1945. Nothing but a few stumps survived the bombing.

Now it’s being rebuilt in time for Dresden’s 800th anniversary celebrations in 2006. More than the rebuilding of rubble is happening. At a recent Baptist World Alliance gathering people from many nations met to worship in the crypt, the one part of the Frauenkirche already useable. We sang; we prayed; we listened to God’s word.

And people who might have been enemies, coming from some of the world’s worst war-torn nations, stood in a circle at the front and pledged their oneness in Christ – from Croatia, Rwanda, Serbia, Albania, Germany, Liberia, Indonesia.

The pain of what all of us have done to our own countrymen and others wounded our hearts. Yet the reconciliation of the gospel was wonderful. Nothing the evils of this world has done has destroyed the family of God, sister and brother standing shoulder to shoulder pledging peace, love and forgiveness. May God’s peace be the inheritance of our children. ●

Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS



village, forcing everyone to look at them. Other atrocities include abduction, the burning of villages with families still in their homes, extortion of money, stealing food, forcing villagers to act as unpaid porters, and forcing Christian villagers to pay for the construction of Buddhist temples, with the fear that once they are completed, the villagers will be forced to worship there.

There are around seven million Karen people in this area, 40 per cent of whom are Christians. (CSI)

Germany Have the wells run dry?



Dresden, capital of the German State of Saxony, recently hosted a General Council where world Baptist leaders reported on many and diverse aspects of ministry.

For German Baptists the meeting was most welcome, and attention was drawn to

the huge physical and spiritual needs in Europe.

"Here, where the great reformer Martin Luther brought us the Bible in our own language, we are living in a Christian museum," said Eckhard Schaefer, General Secretary of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany. "We need an infusion of the Holy Spirit." He appealed to those present: "Dear brothers and sisters from the Third World, to whom we sent the gospel, please bring us the spreading fire of the Holy Spirit. We need to learn evangelism is not an option but a necessity."

Schaefer continued: "In Germany and other countries of the West, we have stopped scooping water from the life-giving well. Instead we have made our own wells which are dry. Men and women demand security, peace, hope and meaning in life, but how is it possible to find these things without God?"

Theo Lehmann, pastor and youth evangelist during the communist period,



said the former East Germany had lost something with freedom. Ten years after the fall of Communism, he said, most people "have forgotten what it is like and are unthankful." (BWA)

action

card



Burmese Border Refugees

The photograph for this month shows a group of Burmese children. So many children and their mothers and fathers live a very precarious existence in Burma (Myanmar), and many live under such fear and harassment that they are forced to flee from their homes. This is especially true of the ethnic minority groups who live close to the border with Thailand - groups such as the Karen, Karenni and Shan.

The Burmese army has forced these people to do unpaid labour and to leave their traditional lands. People who are forcibly removed from their villages in this way are supposed to re-establish themselves within tightly controlled fenced communities inside army-held territory. There is not shelter or any other facility provided at the new location. Meanwhile, everything in their village is ruined, houses are burned down, livestock killed and crops destroyed. It is not surprising therefore, that many people from this area flee across the border into Thailand, although that itself is a very dangerous step to take.

The Burma Border Consortium (BBC) is an independent Christian-based organisation. It operates a refugee relief programme for displaced people resident in camps along the Thai/Burma border. The refugee population in Thailand is well over one million and the BBC provides assistance to some people outside the camps as well as those within camps. The BBC has a philosophy of maximising refugee input and minimising aid dependency as much as possible in the situation.

Please write a message of encouragement to:

The Director
Burmese Border Consortium
125 Convent Road
Siloam
Bangkok 10500
Thailand
BMS, Baptist Union, Christians Aware, Church of Scotland,
Methodist Church, United Reformed Church. ●



a
man
of
faith

john lihamba

OWEN CLARK
CONCLUDES HIS
SERIES ON PRESENT
AND FUTURE
CHURCH LEADER-
SHIP IN THE
DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF
CONGO (FORMERLY
ZAIRE)

Who did the new baby take after John wondered. Himself or his wife? In August 1998 he had left Lingungu for six months' development studies in Cameroon and should have been back for the birth, but the rebellion in Eastern Congo had split the country. Back in Kinshasa he only got occasional news by radio of Aline and the children, now in Kisangani.

August again, and he was on his way home, albeit via Nairobi and Kampala,

eager to see his family, including the newcomer. Alas, at Kampala, his hopes were abruptly squashed. Flights into Kisangani were off due to fighting between rival rebel groups.

Fortunately, John is a man of faith. He'd learnt to discern the hand of God in unexpected changes of plan. He'd never intended to make a career of development. Rather his vocation was pastoral. What happened?

Born the son of a pastor at Yabaondo, west of Kisangani, in 1965, John Lihamba did his early schooling locally. Only during commercial studies did he move, to Kisangani and then to Kinshasa, getting his State Diploma in 1985. The door opened to study commercial engineering.

When his college moved to Kisantu, in Lower Congo, John attended a CBFC church where he met Aline. He researched a cement factory project and, when he qualified in 1992, this led to work on development projects.

Back in Kinshasa with his brother, an army officer, he helped in the Protestant chaplaincy and planted new causes. This reinforced the pastoral vocation he'd felt

since his baptism at the age of 12. He joined a CBFC church, became a deacon and obtained their backing for theological studies.

Away from home for ten years, he needed to go and talk to his parents about his vocation, studies and marriage to Aline. He found them ill and decided to stay until they were better. Within a week he had been asked to manage the sale of produce from the TOMIBIKISA development project.

Months later, during a two week visit to Kinshasa, he contrived, astonishingly, to marry Aline and their first baby was born at Lingungu a year later. In April 1998, John became the TOMIBIKISA manager and development programmes co-ordinator and subsequently came the opportunity for a study visit to Cameroon.

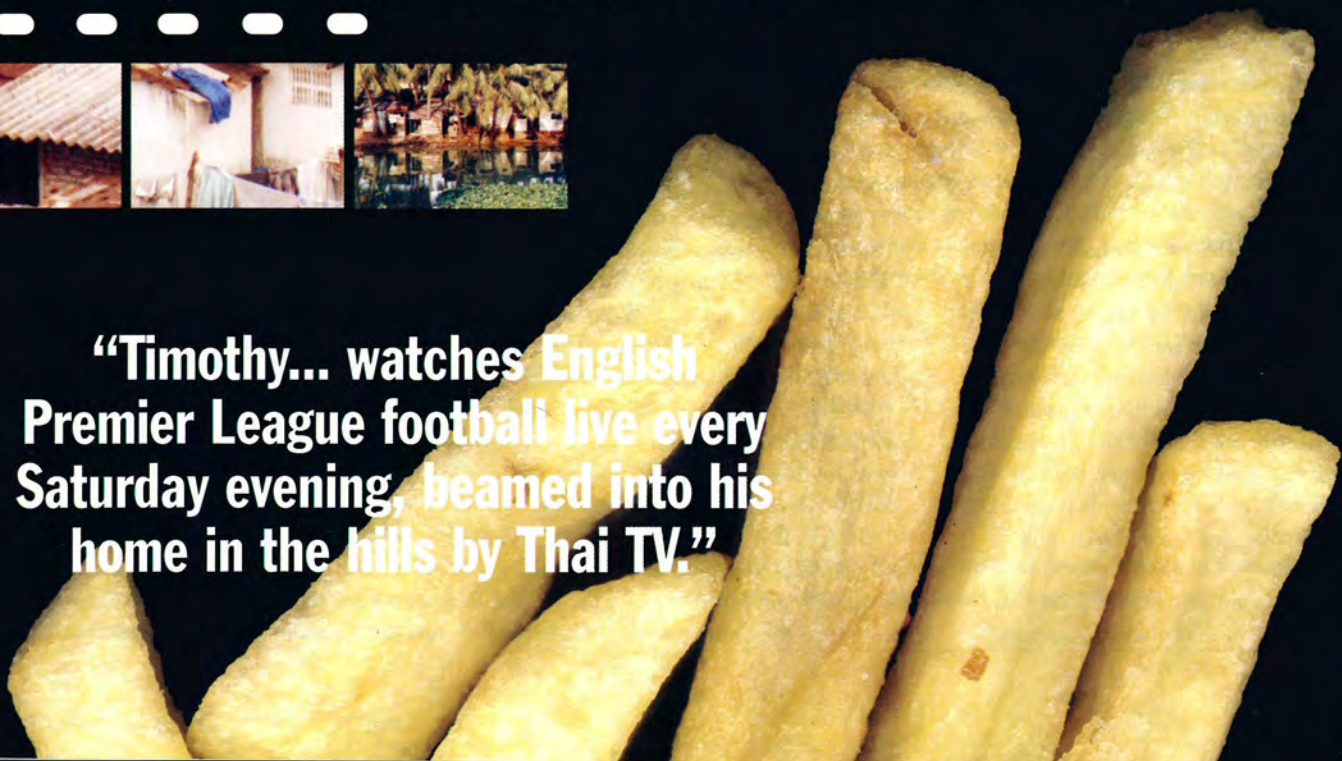
So, has John lost his pastoral vocation? No. As a man of faith, he says it is on the back burner while he awaits God's leading. Once back in Kisangani, he'll take it from there ●

Owen Clark is a church worker with BMS in DRC

big world, small world

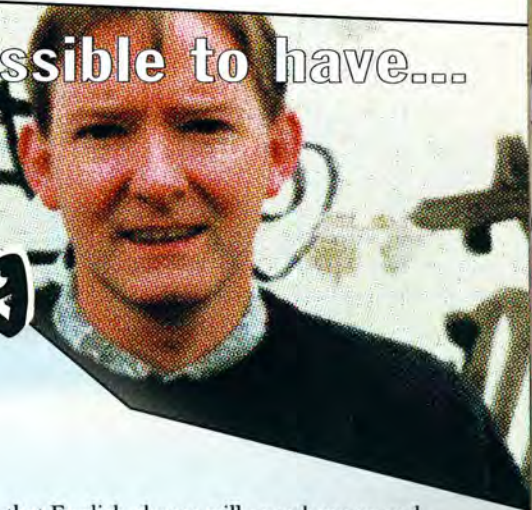


“Timothy... watches English Premier League football live every Saturday evening, beamed into his home in the hills by Thai TV.”



SIMON JONES asks if it's now possible to have...

chips with everything chips with everything



Easter Saturday. Southampton versus Arsenal live on satellite TV. Timothy, Jacqui and I put our feet up in front of the box with a bottle of Seven-Up each, buzzing about the form of the teams and the prospects for the match and its bearing on the outcome of the championship. Timothy's almost-teenage son argues with his Dad about which team is the best and who's going to win.

A typical British suburban scene? No. We're in Karen country, 150km north of Chiang Mai in Thailand, five hours beyond the end of the tarmac. We're in a typical Karen house, built on stilts in a village of 50 such homes carved out of the forest, clinging to the hillside. Outside the cicadas have begun their nightly chorus.

Timothy is a Karen pastor who doesn't speak the language of the teams he knows so much about. He watches English Premier League football live every Saturday evening of the season, beamed into his home in the hills by Thai TV – courtesy of a deal with Sky.

The broadcast is sponsored by Nike, Castrol and Sharp electronics. The ads that interrupt the soccer are for British fashions, German cars, Japanese computers, overseas holidays in places even more exotic and expensive than Thailand. All products way beyond Timothy's reach. Thai TV aims its coverage of British football at a cosmopolitan minority of the Thai population enjoying the same level of consumer choice that the average Brit Arsenal or Southampton fan does.

There is something gloriously surreal about this scene. Here's a little bit of a quintessentially English Saturday afternoon served up on steamy Saturday evening in a Karen village 7,000 miles from Highbury. And Timothy knows more about these teams than I do – I reckon he'd give Alan Hansen a run for his money!

But just an hour before, we had sat in the kitchen of one of Timothy's neighbours, watching the family light a wood fire to cook the rice that will form the bulk of their meal that evening as it does every evening. While mum prepares

the rice, her daughter cuts up pieces of sugarcane, a luxury snack for their visitors.

Everywhere you go in Asia you see evidence of globalisation. The billboards urging you to buy Coca Cola and Benson and Hedges cigarettes, the shops proudly declaring that they take Visa, the prosperous young in Adidas training shoes and Yves Saint Laurent shirts. And in every capital and second city, a McDonalds, a Burger King, a Pizza Hut and a Svensons – home from home for every western visitor!

You see it in the obvious places, like airliners. Every carrier offers the same diet of bland, westernised food, Hollywood movies and MTV music. You see it in the hotel complexes on the edge of the business districts, like the Criscat shopping centre in Colombo – designer clothes stores, smart cafés offering cappuccinos and chocolate chip cookies to shoppers in need of a break, conversations constantly interrupted by the chirruping of mobile phones. You see it in the satellite dishes that adorn suburban homes. You see it on the faces of young people keen to learn English.

Strolling in the midday sun in Karachi, looking for an air-conditioned café to get some respite from the heat, I'm accosted by two young Pakistanis – one in traditional shalwar chemise, the other in Wranglers and Ralph Lauren polo shirt – who ask if I'm American. 'English,' I reply. 'Will you talk to us to help with our English conversation,' they ask eagerly. Both are studying and keen to pass exams in spoken English that will open up job opportunities in the multi-national companies based in Pakistan's second city.

They're all for fixing up an appointment there and then for their first conversation class. But I explain that I'm leaving the following day. 'How can we get better English,' they plead. 'Keep accosting tourists on the road,' I tell them.

In Sri Lanka, I stood in Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church talking with the pastor and a deacon about what goes on in the church during the week. They showed me the place where they hope

that English classes will soon happen and the room where eager young Sri Lankans learn computer skills. Why? Because employment for third world young people in third world cities requires first world skills – especially English and computerese.

This is globalisation.

Nepal is not noted for its cuisine. Dal baht – rice and curried vegetables – is what most Nepalese eat two or three times a day every day. After five days of this diet, I was ready for chips. As we headed back from the South of the country to Kathmandu, we were planning our evening. The bus bumped along the road that clung to the side of the mountain, through ramshackle hamlets of makeshift homes, past barely-clothed kids and their parents scraping a living out of the forbidding landscape.

We were dreaming of showers and a change of clothes, an ice-cold lemon Fanta and chips.

Twenty years ago chips wouldn't have been an option. Now Kathmandu has a selection of restaurants offering varieties of western food – pizzas, burgers, ice cream, chips. There is no McDonalds in Kathmandu – but is that only a matter of time? The restaurants have sprung up in the midst of one of the poorest cities in the world to meet the needs of growing numbers of tourists en route to trekking in the Himalayas, the tiny urban elite who run the government service or work with western organisations and the large number of expats working in the country.

Globalisation has all sorts of complex consequences for countries like Thailand, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal – the promise of wealth, educational advance, loss of control over their culture and development. For me, it meant I could have chips with a view over Kathmandu – all twinkling lights, bustling activity and possibility for a better future. ●

Simon Jones is BMS Co-ordinator for London and south east England.

Alex Black asks

Is there a future for the

In the tourist markets of the towns and at the roadside by waterfalls and other attractions, local artefacts are offered for sale.

Tourists, from far and near, enjoy haggling over the price of souvenirs with the women who set up their stalls selling a wide range of village handicrafts. Musical pipes alongside bows and arrows and hand-woven cloth at one stall. Next to it, women less than five feet tall sell ornate head-dresses decorated with silver discs. Their distinctive striped shirts with long fringes can be bought at another. There are wood carvings and basket work, long steel knives, model elephants and necklaces of various designs and materials.

In some ways the setting could be anywhere. In fact, I'm describing a typical scene from the border country of Thailand – an area where the hilltribe people live.

They are definitely not Thai people, but they have lived within Thailand's borders for centuries. People such as the Karen, Lahu and Akha have their own very distinctive cultures; different languages; varied traditions; and respective styles of dress, but they do not have a recognised country of their own.

Their origins vary too.

Some have migrated from southern parts of China, while others have crossed from Myanmar (Burma). Some lived in the area before the modern borders of Thailand were fixed, others have arrived within the past few years as either economic migrants or as refugees. Today there are about ten distinct 'tribes' represented, with a number of subdivisions of tribal groups.

Most of the hilltribe people still live in small villages in the mountainous areas of the north and west of Thailand. Their

lifestyle is traditional, based on shifting agriculture, that is, they farmed an area of land for two or three years and then moved on to 'slash-and-burn' another clearing in the forest. This ensured that their crops produced a high enough yield to feed the village families, with the downside that the forest needed years to recover. With both a growing population and a growing economy in Thailand, demand for forest products has risen and there is more and more pressure on the land. Deforestation is a major problem and the traditional hilltribe farming

"What legal rights does a family have if they don't hold citizenship papers?"

methods cannot be sustained.

In order to take advantage of the developing Thai economy, with its spreading road and telephone networks, electricity and water supplies and medical facilities, villages have to remain static, and it is necessary to grow a cash crop or produce goods for sale in order to earn money to pay for these services. The old way of life can no more be sustained in the mountain forests of Thailand than it can be here in the UK as we enter the new millennium.

Modern Thailand is a democratic monarchy. Freedoms and rights, very like those in Britain, are formulated in the law and all citizens are entitled to fair treatment. But the hilltribe people suffer the plight of second-class citizens. For

example, the law requires that all citizens have correct papers. But in a culture that is based in remote villages, few births are registered and papers for land ownership are often non-existent. What legal rights does a family have if they don't hold citizenship papers? How are their children to be educated? How are their young people to get work outside the village?

Children growing up in a hilltribe village learn to speak the traditional language of their parents. If they learn any Thai at all, it isn't sufficient even for primary education. Five-year-olds need to go to school if they are to fit into modern Thai society – or even to trade successfully with the rest of the country in which they were born. But it is difficult to get teachers to move into the remote areas, so there is either no school, or only a part-time school in or near many villages.

There is a background of poverty – in many cases great poverty and considerable deprivation. That is why some will supplement their income selling traditional products. Some feel that the tourists are being exploited – and others that the hilltribe people are being exploited.

But who is being exploited when an opium-addicted Akha father is persuaded to sell his daughter for the equivalent of well under £50? There is no doubt as to the exploitation when she is then 'employed' in the sex trade.

In an attempt to help hilltribe people out of the cycle of poverty and exploitation, Christians from around the world support the work of schools like Sahasartsuksa School in Chiang Rai. There, over 1,000 children from nine different hill tribes receive an education. The school is registered with the

hilltribe peoples of Thailand?

Education Ministry and the full Thai curriculum is taught. But first, most of the children have to learn Thai!

Educated young people are less likely to be caught up in the illegal drugs trade and the growing of opium as a cash crop. They are more likely to be able to get a fair price for the crops they grow and the goods they sell. They are more likely to be able to cope with the intricacies of Thai bureaucracy. They will understand better the modern Thai culture and economic system. They will be more likely to recognise the true intent of those middlemen who offer work in 'hotels' in the growing cities and tourist resorts. In short, they will be able to stand alongside those of Thai descent and help to build a better future for their children. ●

Alex Black, until recently, was a teacher in Thailand with BMS

English as she is Sp

**SIMON JONES AND
JAN KENDALL**
INVESTIGATE THE
PLACE OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE IN
MISSION

A demonstration like a thousand others? Where did it take place? London, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Dublin, Brussels, Sydney, New York?

In fact it happened in Pristina in Kosovo.

Why did the other cities come immediately to mind?

Because the banners were in English.

English is the world's leading international language. About 350 million people speak English as their first language. The total number of English speakers in the world is estimated to be 460 million, second only to Mandarin Chinese. It is the language of commerce, of business, of diplomacy and of tourism. It is the language of the media, hence, the placards above. The BBC and CNN would not have looked at the demonstrators if they had used their mother tongue.

"The global culture speaks English - or better, American. American English has become the world's primary national language in culture and the arts as well as in science, technology, commerce, transportation and banking. The debate over whether America or Japan has seized global leadership is conducted in English. Music television sings, shouts and raps in English. French cinema ads are now frequently in English." So says Benjamin Barber, an American professor of political science.

Stuart Christine, BMS Training Coordinator in São Paulo, Brazil, speaks of



young people in Third World cities needing to learn first world skills - and top of that list is English.



BMS currently has five volunteers working worldwide, teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). Phil Rigotti is in Albania,

filling in for Roger and Nikki Pearce, while they are back in the UK. He left the Royal Marines in June, and immediately started work straight away teaching English, having previously done a TEFL course.

"I became a TEFL teacher because God showed me how valuable it can be in spreading the message of Christ. Every time I step into the classroom I expect my students to tell me about their families, their hobbies, interests, beliefs, to express themselves in new ways.

"In the classroom the opportunities arise to talk about things that would often be difficult to bring into conversation otherwise. Each day I teach is another day of friendship evangelism. The chances to share my faith are many. I believe that by enabling people throughout the world to speak English I am also increasing their opportunities to learn more about Christ and to see his love in action."

Nick Cady has recently gone to Sri Lanka to teach English for



a year. There are a huge number of opportunities there including teaching English and computer skills to young Sri Lankans keen to work for multinationals in finance, import-export or communications.

Then there's Margaret Pitt, Stan Hornsby and Jenny Smith teaching

**"Each day
I teach is
another day
of friendship
evangelism"**

ooke



PHOTOGRAPH: ASSOCIATED PRESS

English at theological institutions in Hungary. Students need to know English to be able to read their text books.

You want to serve God overseas, but don't see what you could do? You could use what you already have – your knowledge of English – and teach it to people hungry to learn. The list of opportunities for people to use this as a springboard to draw alongside people and share the love of God with them is almost endless. TEFL teachers are needed in Hungary, Poland, Nepal, China, Sri Lanka, Albania, Thailand and some closed countries. Want to know more – ring BMS Volunteers department 01235 517654. ●

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

Jan Kendall is BMS Editorial Co-ordinator.

This article is named after the title of a Portuguese-English conversational guide.



Above:

Margaret Pitt,
Stan Hornsby,
Jenny Smith

big world, small world

get a grip...

GERARD KELLY TALKS ABOUT GLOBALISATION AND FRAGMENTATION

A lot of what is going on in technological change is being echoed and reinforced by historical change across the planet. The Berlin wall was the last – for the time being – great empire to collapse and it has introduced a new way of nations and people relating to each other. A post-imperial world order is one in which the old order of colonies and empires is gone, including the Communist empire, and in its place a new world order is shaped by the twin forces of globalisation and fragmentation.

Globalisation and fragmentation is what we saw in the former Yugoslavia – globalisation brought the outdoor fences down, fragmentation pulled in the indoor fences, and suddenly we get bloodbath. Globalisation and fragmentation is also what we wrestle with when we are planning Spring Harvest – do you bring everybody together or do you let them fragment? It's what every church planter in the country wrestles with – do we have one congregation for everybody to express unity or do we allow people to fragment into cultural groups? It's a major tension at the heart of our society.

A Canadian journalist who lives in London called Michael Ignatieff expressed it brilliantly a few years ago now. "The more evident our common needs as a species become, the more brutal becomes the human insistence on the clothes of difference." He said, "The centripetal forces of need, labour and science which are pulling us

together are counterbalanced by centrifugal forces – the claims of tribe, race, class, section, region and nation – pulling us apart." Do you get this picture of two forces? People are being pulled into this global economy, this global network of information, but at the same time because they sense their identities being lost, they are insisting on fighting for smaller and smaller pieces of identity. It's the end of the nation state and it goes in two directions – upwards to the global thing but downwards to the local and regional conflict.

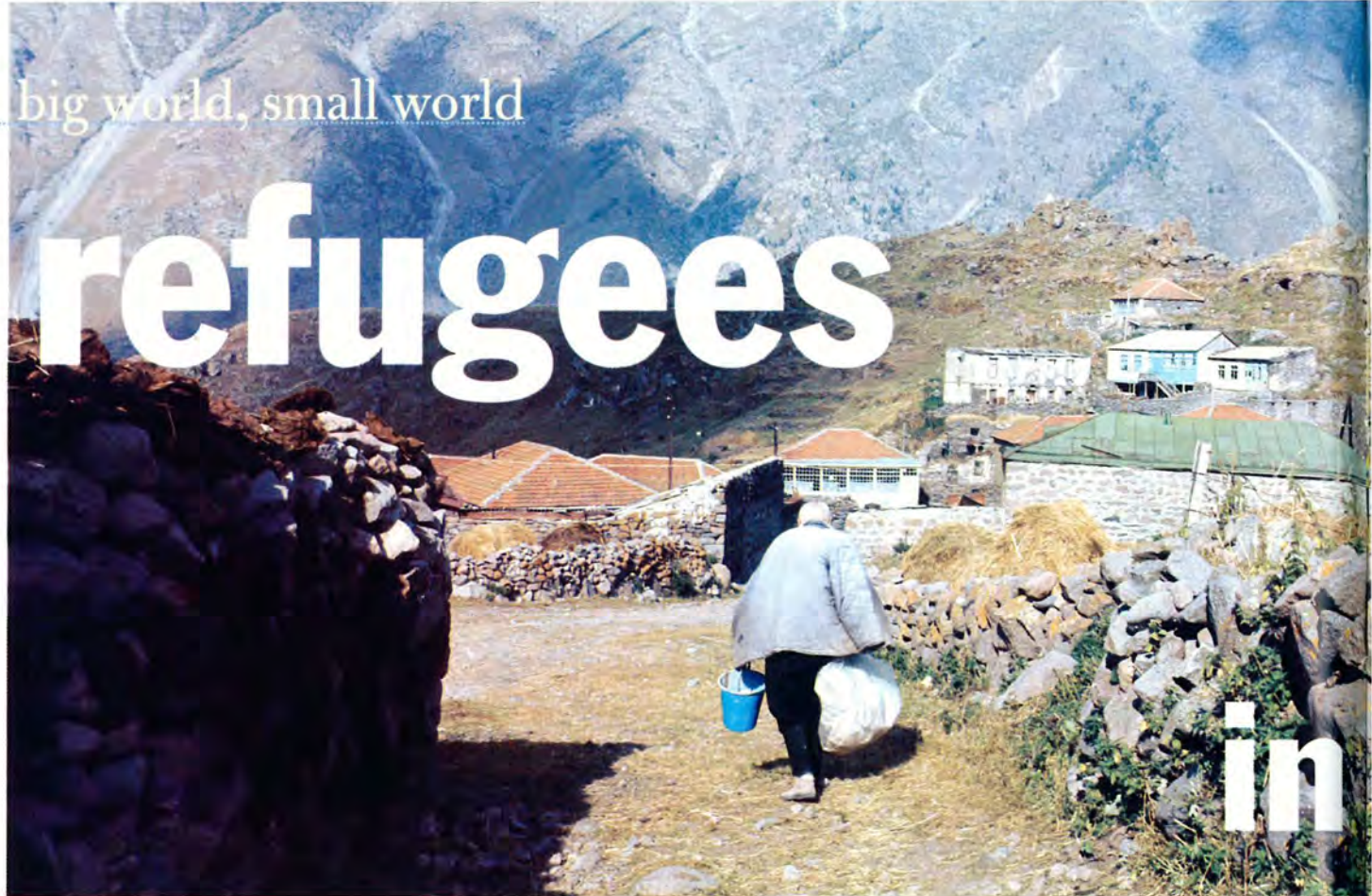
It has massive implications. People cannot live as global citizens; it's too big to give meaning, so as the world globalises more and more and as markets meld into one – so kids all over the world wear American sneakers and American jeans – it creates this turmoil inside with a desire to dissolve. We get this tension in our cities, this tension in our lives and it's going to shape a lot of what happens to us over the next ten years, these twin forces of globalisation pulling us together and fragmentation tearing us apart. ●

The above was taken from a presentation given by Gerard Kelly at a recent EMA conference. It is a theme of his new book, Get a Grip on the Future without losing your Hold on the Past, published by Monarch, price £7.99



big world, small world

refugees



WE SEE TOO OFTEN THE VICTIMS OF FRAGMENTATION ON OUR TV SCREENS. HERE ARE TWO SHORT STORIES BY **KARL HEINZ WALTER** ABOUT LIFE AFTER REGIONAL CONFLICT IN GEORGIA.

A refugee's fate

I waited the whole time for him to look at me. I kept the camera ready, even though it isn't really my cup of tea to take this kind of picture. I never got a photo of his face.

It was a cold evening in November. The sun had set and only its last gleam gave a clearness to the sky. Driving through a 'road hole alley' we reached the refugee camp. Earlier on, Russian officers with their families lived in these buildings. How many refugees from Abchasia may live there now? I couldn't find out. We were looking for a pastor and his wife. At last we found them in front of a self-made stable. In this stable

they keep a few healthy-looking goats. Selling goats provides part of their living. The man gets up a few times every night to make sure the stable is unharmed and the goats still in place.

"He thinks he has betrayed his church by leaving the country"

But his real problem lies much deeper. He thinks he has betrayed his church by leaving the country. But everybody had to leave! "I have a call and now I am sitting here with my goats!" Why doesn't he start a work among the refugees? I asked. He cannot because his dialect is different from most of the others. He may tend goats in the refugee camp, but his 'sheep' as a pastor are back in the mountains where he came from. But who has got the money to help him?

While the two interpreters spoke

back and forth, I had time to observe him and his wife. She looked at us with a deep sadness on her face. Later on I got to know that she was ill. But a thorough check-up is not possible: "Where shall I get the money from?"

A senseless fight for Abchasia had taken a couple's strength to live on. Two people lost their inner dignity through their lives as refugees and also the strength to handle the situation even though they are Christians. Who will condemn them? ●

The children of Batumi

Batumi is a port town on the Black Sea in the Republic of Georgia, formerly in the Soviet Union. Many beautiful buildings from the time of the tsars recall when this was a popular and beautiful resort. But life is no longer happy in Batumi, and few visitors come here to find out how people are living.

Since unrest and local outbreaks of regional conflict, a lot of people are suffering in Batumi. Gas and electricity for heating and cooking are not provided consistently.

On a recent visit there, I sat in a small room in the prayer house (meeting place) of the little Baptist church. It is almost bare of furniture or provisions. A local doctor looks after



Steve Flashman giving out tooth brushes at Kibera slum, Nairobi

PHOTOGRAPH: D. C. WILLIAMSON, LONDON

Georgia

Village in Caucasian mountains, Georgia

the sick, working out of this little room. He has almost no medicine; he gives it to members and friends of the church without charge.

He pours out his discouragement to me. He is a paediatrician, and he is most burdened for the children of Batumi. This is the fourth winter when there has been no heat. Children less than four years old have never known a warm home in winter. High humidity even in the summer causes the walls and ceilings in the houses to stay moist; that attracts mould or mildew. The homes never dry out. I, especially, felt the wet cold coming from the walls because I wasn't used to it.

Children here show typical deficiency symptoms from lack of good nutrition. Many of them suffer from vitamin deficiency diseases such as rickets. The dampness brings bronchial asthma. Pneumonia appears regularly. Low immunity brings neurodermatitis and other illnesses. ●

Editor's Note: £5,000 was subsequently given from the BMS Relief Fund to help with the feeding programme in Batumi.

Karl Heinz Walter is former General Secretary of the European Baptist Federation.



"There's a place for us" STEVE FLASHMAN

Walk down the alleyway between the Jets and the Sharks and you're on the set of one of the most successful musicals of all time – West Side Story. As Tony and Maria get caught in the crossfire of gang warfare, this modern adaptation of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet has an uncanny resemblance to events happening now on the world stage. The effect of globalisation has created a small world where the boundaries of travel and experience have been smashed and where the cross-fertilisation of ideas has destroyed any concept of absolute truth. So it's not surprising that in every part of the world people are struggling to find their cultural identity, which has been blurred by a confusing mix of ideologies, beliefs and lifestyles, all vying for attention, but lost in the whole.

This can have dangerous repercussions when the search for cultural identity becomes an introspective form of tribalism. In January 1993 one eminent observer of European history said: "there are potential Yugoslavias all across Europe as racial and cultural groupings replace the political lines on the map." A quick glance at recent European history tells the story – Hungarians living in Romania were prominent in the overthrow of Ceausescu, and have been blamed for post revolution troubles; the crisis in the Balkans has been in the headlines for two decades; Basque nationalism has been on the rise in Spain; Northern Ireland struggles to find peace between opposing factions; and the beautiful island of Cyprus aches with the pain of conflict. The picture is repeated around the world where indigenous peoples fight for survival against oppressive regimes, and deep-rooted tribal feuds bring hatred and death to innocent people.

Even within the church there have been struggles with a form of tribalism called 'denominationalism' which has given both a positive identity to people wanting to express their faith in different ways and caused external confusion as onlookers have puzzled at the credibility of a God reflected in fractious people!

Unfortunately, we can never seem to get it right! For although cultural identity is important because it provides a framework for understanding who we are, God's bigger picture takes us into another dimension of living that transcends a merely human perspective. Perhaps that is what Bernstein and Sondheim were trying to communicate in such song lyrics as "all the best sounds of the world in a single word, Maria..." and "there's a place for us, somewhere a place for us..." because the fundamental yearning of the human heart can never be satisfied when we retreat into a tiny world of self indulgence. By God's grace we must discover how our world can meet someone else's world, however far on the other side of the street they live. ●

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



evangelism in the 21st century

JOHN FINNEY TALKS OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Why does New Labour studiously avoid using the 'S' word - socialism? Why are Alpha and Emmaus groups the most successful forms of evangelism today?

Why is history regarded as suspect in many universities?

Why is the Holy Spirit popular?

Why can't people answer Pilate's question, 'What is truth?'?

We live in a weird world - the contents of the entire British Library could be sent to Japan in 42 seconds, but half the world's population have never used a phone.

Evangelism in the next century has to come to terms with the change of thinking which has taken place in the last few years. The Christian faith has always been good at adapting to different contexts - the Jewish world... the Greek... the Roman... the Germanic... the medieval... Africa... India...

Now it faces a double challenge in the Western world - to adapt to both modernism and post-modernism. The first we are familiar with - the world of science and logic and rationality. We have spent the last 200 years coming to terms with a prevailing culture which thought that faith was foolish because it was irrational, the Bible was just another old book and the Church a

gathering of the deluded. But people these days feel that modernism has led us astray into a mechanised wilderness, that it cannot explain human feelings and behaviour, promises a progress which it cannot deliver and leads to a

"You have been abducted by aliens? - fascinating, tell us all about it."

world choking on its own waste products.

Post-modernism we are only just getting to grips with, not least because there is no book or electronic aid which tells you exactly what it is. It believes in fuzziness and is itself fuzzy. It is a world of relativism, where there is no such thing as 'truth', people's experiences are more important than their reason, everything is fun and laid-back and nothing is to be taken seriously except the cardinal sin of intolerance.

Evangelism has to swim in this new world. What can we do about it?

1 Spirituality is in. But what a spirituality! People have rejected the rationality of modernism in favour of a riot of 'anything goes' - crystals, Gaia, star-signs, Mystic Meg and all the rest of it. Sixty per cent of people say they pray. The evangelist will say, as Paul said in Athens when he saw them worshipping the altar to an 'Unknown God', 'he is not far from any one of us'. The good evangelist does not say, 'You are wrong', he or she starts where people are. And they are fascinated by God - who he is, how he may be found, how he can be fitted into their lives. Few of the present generation know much about God since they did not go to Sunday school. But people know there is a great universe out there, and they want to know about the Creator. People seem ready to tackle the big issues: recently I have found people fascinated by the doctrine of the Trinity and all that it says of relationships, movement, mystery and community.

2 People are frightened by people who think they have all the answers - whether it is an advertiser, a politician or a preacher. We are all suspicious of the 'expert' who tells us what is right for our health or

our wealth. People want things to be human, and faith if it is presented as glory all the way is rejected as unreal. They want to travel at their own pace – hence the popularity of Emmaus and Alpha where discussion and time enables unhurried commitments to be made.

3 Story is in. Even the most bizarre stories are accepted as worth listening to. You have been abducted by aliens? – fascinating, tell us all about it. This means people are interested in what happened to you: you have found Christ? – how interesting. Testimony is one of the main ways of communicating the reality of God these days. The same is true of the Bible – the Book of Stories. Tell its stories vividly, accurately and imaginatively and see their effect on a generation who have never heard them before. Remember that doctrine is story interpreted: before a theory of atonement there has to be a crucifixion. Preachers too often assume that people know the stories and leap to the interpretation. Jesus loved stories and so should we.

4 In universities history is out. As one post-modernist historian said 'history is about winners not losers... history is deeply male; history is about the rich and famous, not the poor'. Nevertheless, outside academic circles history is seen as the recovery of roots – and the history of the Bible and the church still interests many, as you can see when strange interpretations gain a few days' notoriety. In particular show the story from the point of view of the ordinary Christian: what was it like being a member of the congregation in Corinth, what did it feel like being led out to death before 50,000 people in the Coliseum, what happens today to Christians in Pakistan or the Sudan or Korea?

So what?

We are living in a curious two-headed and unstable world. Half of our thinking is modernist – for it is that world which produces our washing

machines and cars, and also a sense that things are out of our control. The other half is post-modernist – laid back, distrustful of claims about truth, uneasy about progress and concerned for the poor and the marginalised. Culture is difficult to define for it is the very air we breathe.

Evangelism in the future has to take account of the new ways that people think and believe, difficult as it is to get hold of something as ill defined as post-modernism. It gives us great opportunities, but bewilders us because the old landmarks are taken away. ●

Rt Revd John Finney is the former Bishop of Pontefract

This article has been re-written from the paper given by Bishop Finney at the Lausanne International Consultation on Nominalism, and is reproduced here with permission.



Bolangir



Introduction

Bolangir is a district headquarters town in Orissa, India, from where the whole district of Bolangir is administered. It was the headquarters of the Superintendent of Patna State, the administrative head of that area, during the time of the British Raj. Many of the buildings erected during that time are still the official offices and residences today. The last man to hold the Superintendent's post is buried in the Church of North India cemetery in Bolangir. He died from complications arising from injuries received when he went to look at a tiger he had shot and

thought was dead, only to have it attack him. Bolangir was also the home of the Singh Deo family – the Maharajas – whose palace still stands as a reminder of days gone by.

Bolangir has grown considerably in recent years, as many people have moved in from the villages – mostly in the hope of finding work – but now there is no more land to purchase. Bolangir, as a town, is not large and it takes only minutes to pass through. Within minutes of leaving it, one is surrounded on all sides by rice fields, hills and villages. There is no irrigation in this area and the farmers are

dependant on an erratic rainfall. The area is very drought prone and it is recognised as being one of the most backward districts in the nation. At the most, there will be only one rice crop per year and there is no industry in the area. These are just two of the reasons contributing to the poverty of this area. Unemployment is very high, particularly amongst the educated youth, and a lack of education amongst the older folk means they are only able to do labouring jobs, and these are often hard to find for the vast number of people looking for them.



One main street of Bolangir town

Sunday Market

Bride arriving for her wedding at Bolangir Church

First Impressions

by Maureen Anthony and Janet Holdaway

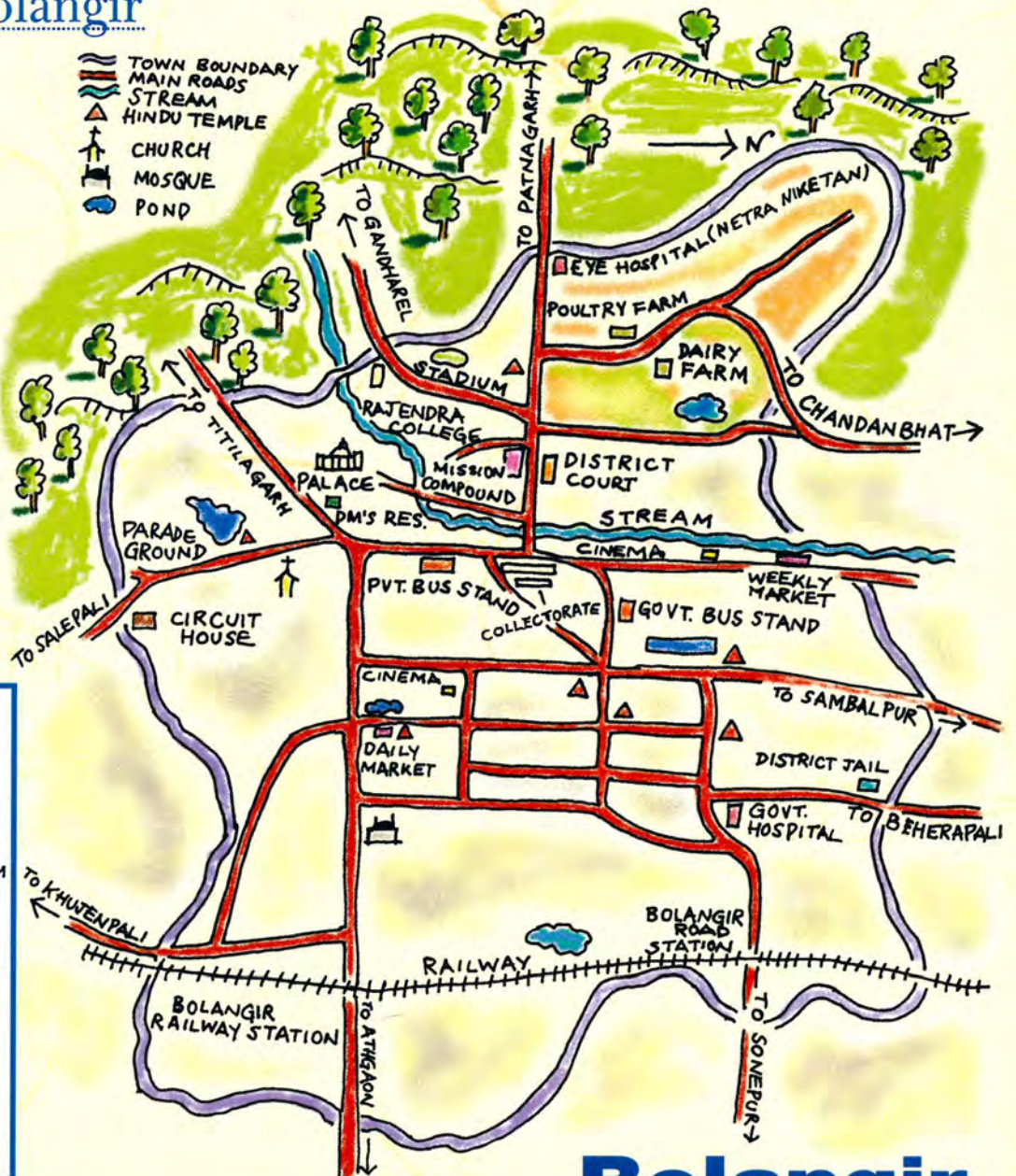
- Everywhere was very dusty and became muddy when it rained.
- The people were very friendly – we were invited to a lot of meals and even weddings!
- Shops were only like huts, but sold very nice material, towels and clothes.
- In the shops, chairs were supplied and coffee given while being served. Purchases were packed neatly into bags.
- There's a very big gap between the poor and the better off.
- Men wearing dhotis and men wearing western clothes all walking around together.

Roads and rail

There are four main roads leading into Bolangir town. Sambalpur, Sonepur, Titlagarh and Patnagarh. Daily people arrive in town, travelling in buses, trucks, jeeps, cars, motorbikes, scooters, cycles, rickshaws and on foot. During the day the town is swarming with people. Some come for shopping, but most come for the various government offices and official work. Yet, even until 1970, the only cars and jeeps seen were official ones or vehicles owned by the missionaries. Most people had never seen a motorbike or scooter. Now these things are in great abundance. Traffic on the roads has increased so much that it is a slow ride through the town in the daytime.



our town: Bolangir



Bolangir

The railway station is on the outskirts of town. There is one train daily going down to Calcutta and one train a day going to South India. These have sleeper facilities. There are also a few local passenger trains.

Shops and markets

In the daily market, various kinds of vegetables, fruits, cereals, pulses, fish and other daily needs can be purchased. The weekly market is very much larger and is held on Sundays. People come from miles around to buy and sell, bartering for a good price. Many goods are available at the weekly

market which are not available at any other time. Sunday is a holiday for schools and offices and there is also a cattle market on Sundays where cows, bullocks and goats are bought and sold.

Where once there were only a handful of shops, they now line many streets. There are quite a number of Gujerati businessmen who own some of the larger shops. Favourite shops for many are those that sell the famous tie and dye weaving known as Sambalpuri, for which the people of this area are rightly very proud. On Saturdays, all these larger shops are required by law

to be closed.

At the Sunday market holy men come with all the rituals and attire of their profession, sometimes mahouts with their elephants call in on their pilgrimages, snake charmers with their snakes in baskets never fail to get an audience and then there are monkeys that also entertain. Not surprisingly, the Sunday market is always very crowded.

Law and order

Opposite the Mission Compound is the District Court. This too brings a large number of people daily who come to



Far left: Bolangir Central Church, Easter Sunday service

Bolangir Church, Church of North India

have their cases dealt with in the court. Many of these will be land disputes, while those who have committed crimes will have to make regular appearances. Prisoners kept in the jail are also brought for hearing their cases. In the past, prisoners could be seen handcuffed to a police officer and walking from the jail. Or, if there were many, roped together and paraded on the streets. Nowadays they are usually brought in police vans.

Sickness and health

Bolangir has a hospital which caters for the whole district, but with minimal facilities. The hospital area swarms daily with the patients and their relatives. Seeing the doctor there does not cost money, but all tests, treatments and medicines do, even for the patients admitted to the hospital. Then also, relatives have to stay with the patients, sleeping on the floor. They bring all they need to cook their meals outside and to take care of the daily needs of the patient. Some more serious cases have to go to the Medical College at Burla, some 60 miles away. There are a number of private doctors and a private hospital – all of whom charge. The number of medicine shops probably outnumber any other.

Just outside the town there are several colonies where people affected by leprosy live. Leprosy is very common in this area. Each week on a Monday, sufferers come into town to visit the shops. Many of these people are very badly disfigured. They are not allowed inside, but the shopkeepers keep their small coins in a dish and will throw a few to the leprosy sufferers when they call out as they pass.

Religion

The majority of people in the town are Hindus and there are a number of temples there. Quite often processions with bands and music for various festivals and functions take place through the town to the temples, which people stop to watch. The Dassahara is the longest festival for the Hindus, when the town takes on a very festive air with streets and temples lit up for many days. This is followed shortly afterwards with Diwali – the Festival of Lights – when houses are lit up and fireworks light up the night sky.

There are a number of churches in Bolangir Town, the Church of North India being the largest. In fact, so large is the membership that the church building is nowhere near large enough to accommodate everyone. On special occasions, when more people want to attend – like Easter and Christmas – arrangements to hold the services out of doors have to be made. The Roman Catholic church has the largest English school, known as 'Little Flower'. They have a number of nuns who have come from other areas of India. From time to time the churches have joint activities and a good relationship exists between most of them.

Profile Bilhan Sagar

Bilhan is a young Christian man who lives on the Mission Compound. He has studied in college and has a BSc degree with Botany as his honours subject. He has also taken a course in journalism and holds a Diploma in Tax and Financial Management. He is a good artist and from time to time designs posters for companies and



botany charts for universities. A few years ago he started an organisation called 'Friends for Human Development' with whom he works voluntarily, helping children through providing help with education, and giving training to parents and others involved in child care work. As a result, many children living at home have had help in areas where they needed it, enabling them to be educated and find their potential in life. He is assisted by a number of other Christian young people and supporters.



Alaka Jena

Alaka and her family have a long history of involvement in Christian work. She is a retired high school headmistress and school inspector. In retirement she has given time to helping with the translation of letters for girls in the sponsorship programme. She is also involved in proof reading the books of the Oriya Bible for Compass Braille so that the Bible can be made available to blind people in Orissa. ●

mission
hi-tech



PHOTOGRAPH: SAT-7

AS **JOHN AND JEAN ROGERS** MOVED TOWARDS RETIREMENT, THEY DECIDED NOW WAS NOT THE TIME TO SIT BACK AND RELAX, BUT TO OFFER THEIR SKILLS AND NEWLY-AVAILABLE TIME IN OVERSEAS SERVICE. HERE THEY TALK ABOUT LIFE AT THE HI-TECH END OF MISSION.

“they dare to have vision and dream the unthinkable”

For more information on volunteering possibilities for anyone aged 18+, call the volunteers department on 01235 517654.

Forty multi-national Christians spread throughout Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Cyprus spend their days (and nights) sitting behind desks operating computers, designing virtual studios, commissioning and reviewing new scripts, translating into Arabic, purchasing hi-tech equipment, manning the counselling telephones, assembling the broadcasts, discipling converts... Together as a team they produce the SAT-7 Christian TV broadcasts and keep the show rolling.

SAT-7 Christian TV broadcasts are deeply valued by millions of viewers in the Middle East and North Africa. The programmes are written, presented and filmed by Arabs, for an Arabic-speaking audience, presenting the gospel through children's and teaching programmes, dramas, music, and live events. Christians in this area need encouragement and SAT-7 gives them

the opportunity of knowing they are part of a wider Christian community in the region.

We staff the Chief Operations office. Our job has been to design, purchase and install a new, three-camera studio in Lebanon, plus a non-linear editing and virtual studio suite in Egypt. These are staffed by Christian Arabs and form the bedrock on which SAT-7 programmes are made. We also manage the satellite transmissions through the UK satellite operators, prepare budgets and monthly management accounts, prepare staffing and quality plans, arrange on-air promotions, plan the big Millennium event and help raise finance. Sounds like the job we left!

Is this work any different from managing a hi-tech factory, which we did before joining SAT-7? We have the same computer programmes, financial problems, hi-tech equipment, suppliers and personnel, same satellite operators and same shortages of qualified staff. Deep-down, of course, the change is much greater. Christian workers in the Middle East and North Africa are deeply spiritual and work urgently for long hours with total dedication. They are experiencing miracles in their lives every day as they witness within an atmosphere of opposition, yet they dare to have vision and dream the unthinkable.

There is a life beyond retirement in our local churches and particularly on the mission field. We are grateful that the BMS offers a path to voluntary service. Having sold our own hi-tech business and retired in May 1999 at the age of 61, SAT-7 offers an experience and challenge equal to industry.

If God has equipped you with a profession or skill, then offer it. We knew we were in God's place in industry, and when we were working in young peoples and pastoral work at VRS Baptist Church, Chelmsford, and we now know we are in God's place on the mission field. If you have a pension, why not use it and offer your services

free in recognition of all that God has done for you and in you. ●



from passion to action

SAM GIBSON
EXPLORES WHAT IT
TAKES TO BE A
MEMBER OF A BMS
ACTION TEAM.



"If you're up for an experience that will push you to your limits and change you forever... then go for it." *(Mel Baxter, Brazil)*

"I have learnt so much more than I could have imagined about myself, a different culture, the world and everything. Most importantly, my relationship with God has been strengthened a huge amount. Definitely worth taking a year out for!"

(Hannah Pendrill, Nepal)



"I went away concentrating on how much I could give, and came back realising how much I had received."

(Jo Shobbrook, Albania)



These are the words of three young people whose lives and outlooks were radically altered by God through their year on the BMS 28:19 Action Team programme. Action Teams mobilise 18 to 25 year-olds into overseas mission service working with BMS church partners across the world.

Can you see yourself teaching Albanian young people how to play the guitar and so equipping young churches with the worship leaders of the future? What about playing games with Brazilian street children, showing them that there is a God who loves them and wants a better future for

them? Could you help to teach academic and vocational skills to blind girls in Dhaka, Bangladesh, so giving them hope of a future under their own control rather than to be sidelined forever by an uncaring society? Action Teams do all of this and much more.

Do you have what it takes? The list of vital skills is not long: passion for God and a desire to share that with others, faith in him to do mighty things through you, flexibility and a willingness to be trained and to have a go at anything. Year Teams are ideal for people wanting to take a year out either before or after university, but previous team members have also included a nurse seeking God's will for a career change and a nanny using her experience with children in Zimbabwe. Summer Teams are ideal if you have only a short time in July/August to give or if you would like a 'taster' before committing to a longer period of time.

Sound impelling? Why not find out more. Call, write to or email us at:
28:19 Action Teams, BMS, PO Box 49, Baptist House, Didcot, OX11 8XA
Tel 01235 517654
Email actionteams@bms.org.uk



"It's not JUST a year out, it's a fantastic life-changing experience, both in your relationship with God, and outlook on life."

(Rachel Lambourne, Nepal)



"Challenging, trying and testing, but great fun and the best thing I have ever done."

(David Edge, Thailand)



"A challenging year full of new experiences. My relationship with God has been strengthened and I will continue to draw upon the experiences that I've had. The scheme is really well-organised. It's hard work and tiring at times, but great fun and a terrific experience. Go for it!"

(Jo Munro, France)



"It's a fantastic opportunity to open your eyes to a wider world that is crying out to hear the word of God and for someone to show they care. We may not all be preachers but all people wanted was love. That was something we could all give."

(Hannah Black, Albania)





Babel reversed?

Estimates (in millions) for mother-tongue speakers of the 20 most widely used languages.

1	Chinese	1,000
2	English	350
3	Spanish	250
4	Hindi	200
5	Arabic	150
5	Bengali	150
5	Russian	150
8	Portuguese	135
9	Japanese	120
10	German	100
11	French	70
11	Punjabi	70
13	Javanese	65
13	Bihari	65
15	Italian	60
15	Korean	60
17	Telugu	55
17	Tamil	55
19	Marathi	50
19	Vietnamese	50

Estimates (in millions) of the total population of all countries where the language has official or semi-official status.

1	English	1,400
2	Chinese	1,000
3	Hindi	700
4	Spanish	280
5	Russian	270
6	French	220
7	Arabic	170
8	Portuguese	160
8	Malay	160
10	Bengali	150
11	Japanese	120
12	German	100
13	Urdu	85
14	Italian	60
14	Korean	60
14	Vietnamese	60
17	Persian	55
18	Tagalog	50
18	Thai	50
18	Turkish	50

NB These totals are often over-estimates, as only a minority of people in countries where a second language is recognised may actually be fluent in it.

(Chambers Book of Facts 1997)

If we could shrink the Earth's population to a village of 100 people, it would look something like this:

- 57 Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 from the Western hemisphere (north & south), 8 Africans.
- 52 would be female, 48 would be male.
- 70 would be non-white, 30 would be white.
- 70 would be non-Christian, 30 would be Christian.
- 89 would be heterosexual, 11 would be homosexual.
- 6 people would possess 59% of the village's wealth, and all 6 would be from the United States.
- 80 would live in sub-standard housing.
- 70 would be unable to read.
- 50 would suffer from malnutrition.
- 1 would be near death, 1 would be near birth.
- 1 (yes, only 1) would have a college education.
- 1 would own a computer.

(Taken from CND Today, August 1999)



take 2

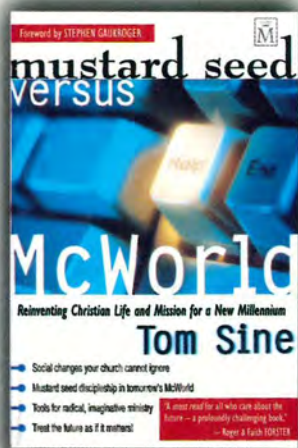


Number of Christians up to 2,000 million by year 2000

According to religious statisticians David B Barrett and Todd M Johnson, based in Richmond, Virginia USA, the number of Christian people in the world will pass the 2,000 million mark in the year 2000. Christians already number 1,990 million, which means that one in three of the 6,000 million people in the world are Christians. ('Christian' covers Protestants, Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans, Charismatics and Pentecostals.) Muslims are the second-largest world religion with 1,190 million adherents, followed by Hindus 774 million; non-religious 768 million; Buddhists 359 million; tribal religions 252 million; atheists 151 million; new religions 101 million; Sikhs 22.7 million and Jews 14.2 million.

As a continent Europe has the largest number of church members: 536 million. Latin America is second with 463 million followed by Africa 333 million; Asia 295 million; North America 224 million and Oceania 20 million.

(EBPS August 1999)



Book Title: Mustard Seed vs McWorld
Author: Tom Sine
Publisher: Monarch Books (ISBN 1 85424 435 3)
Reviewer: Kevin G Brown, minister of Downs Baptist Church, Hackney
No of pages: 348
Price: £8.99

Tom Sine announced himself as something of a prophet with *The Mustard Seed Conspiracy* (Word Books, 1981). He continues in the same vein in his new one.

He sees much of the race into the next millennium as a cry for help and asserts that despite these cries, God has not lost control. However Christians must wake up to the global realities or sink without trace. This is Christ's mustard seed verses a McDonalds-style take-over – a global contest, not against so-called 'free-market economics', but rather between very different value systems. How do we do battle in the new global order? How can we become part of God's 'breaking in'?

Sine develops his view that there exists a Crisis of Foresight and that Christian leaders in particular have to take the future seriously. He offers practical ways that churches and local communities can anticipate likely changes that will affect them.

He shows how Western Christians and church organisations have historically allowed modern culture to define their life-direction and structures, and challenges us all to begin to think why we do what we do, inviting us to reflect more biblically on the alternatives to the 'Western dream.'

One of the most exciting and enticing features of Sine's book is that it's practical. He makes real his recognition of the busy-ness and stress of modern life-styles by dividing the book for easy reading, using design-icons for easy reference.

Sine concludes that there is a future coming whether we like it or not, and much of it can be anticipated. But much of it can also be envisioned – and Christians can help to shape that future. Finally, God's Spirit is creatively working the future out through our imagination and genius, and that is precisely how he will address the challenges the future holds.

There's some very good juicy fruit to be found here. But be warned, if those who read it take it seriously, it could be dangerous – there is risk of a spiritual-contamination and who knows where that might end?

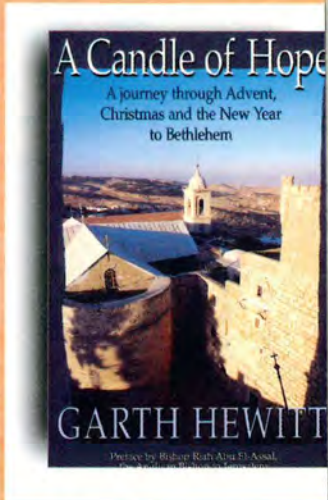
Book Title: A Candle of Hope
Author: Garth Hewitt
Publisher: The Bible Reading Fellowship (ISBN 1 84101 041 3)
Reviewer: John Smith, BMS Co-ordinator for Central & Eastern England
No of pages: 192
Price: £6.99

If you just want to settle down in an armchair with a good book, to welcome in the Millennium, an ideal choice is Garth Hewitt's *A Candle of Hope*, daily Bible readings for this Advent, Christmas and the New Year.

Hewitt draws on his personal contact with middle-Eastern Christians, Jews and Muslims, to give a powerful picture of daily life in the Holy Land. Holy, that is, for all three religions. And so the stories of suffering and injustice are drawn from each community, and sometimes, more confusingly, from elsewhere in the world. Hewitt biblically reflects on the issues like Israel's nuclear stockpile, land for peace, West Bank settlements, the tourist industry, and much else.

These are no Sewlynesque daily notes. Each day will require much more of the reader than a few rushed minutes before the day's activities. Hewitt includes disturbing personal accounts of injustice, frequently to Palestinian people, Christian and Muslim. The daily portion also includes a Bible reading and some fascinating extra-biblical material about the history of the region. The book is worth the price for these insights alone. Hewitt allows some of his Palestinian contacts to speak directly to the reader in their own words. Suggested prayers and ideas of things to do complete many days. This is not a tidy book of blessed thoughts, but it pressed me to try and evaluate for myself a few more of the multitude of issues that is the Middle East.

Many Christians fervently pray for a lasting peace in a region that has seen two millennia of conflict. Others pray with passion for an apocalyptic crisis that will herald another kind of millennium. This book, uncomfortable as it is, helps the reader to better understand the grown-up issues of the real people who live in hope of justice and peace.



projects prayer people



avoid the water. Soon after the disaster struck, BMS sent a grant to the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha (Union) providing emergency kits for those who had lost their homes. These kits contained a candle, cigarette lighter, towel, rehydration solution, a sari and a lungi. In the autumn of 1998 the rains stopped, and the water levels started to go down. Just when people thought they were getting back to

PRAYER FOCUS



**Reuben and Katie Martin:
Zagreb, Croatia**

Katie and Reuben completed six months training at Spurgeon's College at the end of 1998 and headed to Croatia, as the first BMS long-term workers in that country, in January 1999. Croatia is a land of contrasts. They write, "The bits we have seen of Croatia have been absolutely breathtaking. The sea is as blue as in the tourist brochures and the coast is dominated by 8,000 ft mountains and the 1,000 islands of the Dalmatian Adriatic. Yet set against this beauty is the terrible destruction of recent war. We have seen villages where every house has either been destroyed by shells or riddled with bullet holes from the conflict of 1991-1995. We have heard stories of murder, wounding, rape, and genocide and can't begin to imagine the horrors that many people here have been through. Croatia is now peaceful and looking to the future but the emotional and

PROJECTS UPDATE

WOW Project: Hook, Line & Sinker
To help the people of Bangladesh to rebuild their lives after serious flooding and cyclone damage in 1998. Target £10,000



So far
£5,334

has been received towards Hook, Line & Sinker. Sunday schools, in particular, have been raising money to help the people of Bangladesh so that fishing boats, nets and more fish could be provided. In this way, those who had their livelihoods destroyed by the longest-ever floods in Bangladesh's history can begin to rebuild their lives. About 60 per cent of the population spent some time living in trees or on roof tops to

some sort of normality again, a cyclone struck, killing 150,000 fishermen in one night. Once again bridges, roads and houses have been rebuilt and fish pens repaired and stocked with fish.

Donations for Hook, Line & Sinker can be made until the end of December 1999. If your Sunday school or group is collecting for Hook, Line & Sinker, make sure they get their money in on time!



economic effects of war are taking their toll.”

The main focus of the couple’s time so far has been to learn the very difficult language but they have also been ‘thrown in at the deep end’ with preaching assignments and leading an evangelistic English language course. Reuben has preached, through a translator, at two new churches south of Zagreb. These churches are part of the Croatian Baptist Union but are ethnically Serb. The majority of worshippers were women because the men had either been killed in the war or had fled the country. Reuben says, “It was terrific to see people who had obviously gone through so much so committed to following Jesus.”

Please pray:

- P** for good progress in language study.
- P** for more openings to use their teaching and pastoral skills to support the churches whilst they are still learning the language.
- P** for the Baptist churches of Croatia, many of which have been newly formed in recent years - that the Lord would protect them, give them growth and help them to reach out to a people devastated by civil war.

Stanley and Nancy Hornsby: Budapest, Hungary



The Hornsby's are BMS volunteers who headed out to Hungary in September to spend an academic year at the Baptist Theological Academy in Budapest. It is not the couple’s first trip to Budapest, as they both taught English there in 1991 to 1992. Here they tell us how this latest term of service came about.

“The thing about praying is that often unexpected answers come along.

We know that each summer there are exciting opportunities for young people with various organisations. It was arranged for Stanley to advertise these opportunities one Saturday, enticing the young people along with hot dogs and coke. Then, Stanley noticed that BMS was asking for teachers of English to fill some vacancies in Budapest. Yes, you’ve guessed! There was much prayer and heart-searching - and here we are! Separation is painful: to leave our friends, our house and little garden, the church housegroup and the people at OASIS club, visits from relations and the comfort and assurance of neighbours and people we know. But we hope that there are benefits for us all in this enterprise. God is able to give us all new opportunities, new freedoms. We hope that people from the UK will visit us and see God at work in a different culture and get some new insights into the depth of his providence. We know there will be all sorts of problems and difficulties waiting for us in the days ahead and we know we will get tired and lonely. So we covet your prayers for ourselves, for Stanley’s students, for the churches and Christians in Budapest, for the people we are leaving.”

Please pray:

- P** as Nancy and Stanley have asked above and for God’s strength, guidance and abiding presence in times of tiredness and loneliness.
- P** pray for the strengthening of friendships made when last in Budapest and for new friendships to develop quickly.

Paul and Elisabeth Towlson: Durrës, Albania



Paul and Elisabeth came to the end of their service with BMS in September, but just before that, they were involved

in supporting Kosovan refugees. At the height of the crisis, there were 60,000 refugees in the port town of Durrës. Paul, along with some OM missionaries, set up a food distribution service and Elisabeth, along with some Kosovan medical personnel, set up Emanuel Clinic to help meet some of their needs. Paul says, “It quickly became clear to us that the question of God, faith and the connection with the tragic events in Kosovo was fairly near the surface. In response to the questions of two Kosovans concerning Christian faith, I gave an invitation to a meeting for prayer and an explanation of one of the gospels. One of the two didn’t turn up, but the one that did brought 20 others.” Larger numbers of Kosovans began attending Sunday services too and were able to feel some comfort from Christians praying for them and their country.

As the war ended, no one was prepared for the incredible drive of the Kosovan people to return home and the expected gradual repatriation became a flood of people hiring transport to take them back. Paul joined a convoy taking food and other supplies into the country. Of the country, Paul says, “The amount of damage that has been done is incredible. There is much rebuilding and renewed hope... but the damage done to these people will not be put right by a few years of Balkan investment.” But what of it’s neighbour where the Towlsons have spent the past four-and-a-half years? “In many ways Kosovo has more hope than Albania. There is more initiative, and a stronger moral and spiritual tradition amongst Kosovans. In contrast, under the communist regime of Albania, initiative was driven out and corruption established as a way of life. These are some of the reasons that work in Albania is so challenging. But as we leave, one of the things that encourages us is that there are individual Albanians who are trying to work with integrity in a very difficult system.”



Please pray:

- P** for peace in Kosovo between Serbs and ethnic Albanians. Only God can bring this.
- P** for Christians in Kosovo and in Albania, reaching out to families who have been ripped apart by civil war and loss. Pray the churches would grow strong in faith, maturity and in numbers.
- P** for Emanuel Clinic which is continuing to function for Albanian families in a poor area of Durres. A young Albanian doctor and an administrator are now heading up this work.
- P** for Paul, Elisabeth and family who will be living in Switzerland near relatives whilst they explore the future ministry God has for them.



Hilary and Paul Drinkwater

Hilary and Paul returned to Nepal in June following a four-month break in the UK for medical treatment. Upon their return, Paul was pleased to find that the Electrical and Electronic Engineering Department of the Kathmandu University, which he heads up, had continued to run fairly smoothly in his absence. Hilary's work had not continued so well, however, and the income generating cross-stitch group which she led had come to a complete halt without her. This has clearly demonstrated that the ladies are not yet in a position to take on the work for themselves but Hilary is moving slowly towards this aim by giving certain individuals



specific responsibilities and praying about the way forward.

Please pray:

- P** for God's guidance over the cross-stitch group as the ladies move towards the aim of self-sufficiency.
- P** for the many new members of staff beginning work in Paul's department at the university, many have no previous experience of teaching
- P** for continued good health and that Paul in particular will continue to grow stronger daily.

PEOPLE WORLDWIDE



Expanding Prayer Focus. In this series BMS personnel introduce friends and acquaintances whom they meet from day to day



Anun, Baw Kaew, Thailand

Born into a Karen Christian family, Anun lived in an area of Thailand where it was easy to buy drugs, and as he grew up he started drinking, then smoking marijuana. At 15 he went south to find work, and there he started glue-sniffing – and couldn't stop. From there he went on to heroin, a habit he became addicted to, and which cost him between 50 and 100 Thai baht (£1 to £2) a day, which was all he was earning as a daily labourer.

Anun continued going to church. He realised the drugs were controlling his life and he longed to be set free. He heard about the Drug Rehabilitation Centre at Baw Kaew, and despite many questions in his mind as to whether this could really help him, he went to



Baw Kaew. He said how difficult it was to come off heroin, yet all the while his new friends there were always there to help him; there was always someone praying for him.

At Baw Kaew the day started with Bible study. Anun came back to God, re-committing his life to him. His love for God deepened and his faith in him was real. He was baptised at Baw Kaew, and this for him was a sign and an opportunity to witness that his life had changed.

Since then he has studied at the Karen Bible School in Chiang Mai for three years. Now he works as an extension worker at Baw Kaew, leading Bible studies and teaching about agriculture. Most of all he enjoys giving his testimony, challenging the addicts as to what life was like when he was taking drugs, and what it's like now. He says: "I've been completely changed! I couldn't have done it by myself. It is all by God's power."

Anun is now looking forward to getting married and having his own family. Most of all he wants to serve the Lord, and wants God to use him to help other addicts.

Jacqui Wells, BMS worker in Thailand

Anna Eldorado do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil

Anna was born in the state of Santa Catarina. She was 22 when she came to Porto Alegre, and she's 57 now. She moved there because her sister had already moved there, and she felt it was a good place





to live. After she arrived she met a man, dated him, and became pregnant. This man did not want to know about the pregnancy, so her mother came and got her, and took her back to Santa Catarina. When Anna's son was six months old, she moved back to Porto Alegre – and this time her whole family came with her. The father of her son tried to find her, but this time she didn't want to know.

She said, – “I was a Catholic then. When they were building the church here (at Eldorado do Sul), they advertised it by putting leaflets in houses, and I decided to go to church then. I used to go to the Catholic church quite a lot but never felt God was touching my heart. The first time I came here I felt God touching my heart. Everything fitted together. It's something I love. This is the church that is right for me. I am at peace.”

Her son Santo (Holy) came to church for a while, but then stopped coming, and has gone back to his previous life, making a living from drugs.

In church she sings in the choir and is in charge of the kitchen. Once a month the church has a lunch together, and there are other events involving food. When it was the church anniversary she made a big cake.

Anna comes to every service; she never fails. She's been unemployed for a number of months, having left her previous job looking after children because it got too much for her. Now she is looking for work.

Colin & Marcia Pavitt church pastoral workers with BMS in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

**Puri
Kathmandu, Nepal**



Puri is a *peon*. On the hierarchical ladder of Kathmandu University, a peon is on the bottom rung. He makes the tea, does the photo-copying, takes messages and vacuums the laboratories. Puri is a very pleasant young man. He is bright, intelligent, smartly dressed and has an amiable personality. To risk a cliché, he is the sort of young man that you would be pleased to have as a son-in-law. When he brings my tea and I am not too busy, we have a chat about this and that. His English is about as good as my Nepali, but we usually manage some sort of communication and help each other with our language. But due to an accident of birth Puri will probably always be a *peon*. He comes from a small village near the university, and considers himself fortunate to have a job there. The university students are from much better-off families. It is a private university, and, although by western standards the fees are low, they are beyond the reach of most Nepali families – families like Puri's. I often wonder what he really feels about those students – of a similar age and intelligence – but who can afford to study for a degree, while he remains a *peon*.

Paul & Hilary Drinkwater, BMS workers in Nepal



**PEOPLE
WORLDWIDE**



Baptist House News



Welcome to: Brian English
Brian joins the Communications Department to fill the newly-created position of Marketing Assistant. Brian comes from

Aldershot in Hampshire, and starts his new job fresh from completing a three year degree in Media and Business Studies at Warrington University.

Action Cards

Thank you to all who have taken up the Action card scheme, and have used the information published in *mb* and elsewhere. However this scheme has not generally had a wide appeal, and so this is the last issue of *mb* in which these cards will appear. We feel the issues they are concerned with can be better taken up by the BMS Justice and Peace Advisory Group. If you still wish to use them they can be obtained from Christians Aware, 10 Springfield Road, Leicester, LE2 3BD.

BMS Stamp Bureau

David and his team have been working hard throughout the year, sorting more than nine million stamps, weighing a total of 1,300 kg. After trimming, the stamps are then sold or transferred to the Great Britain department, (run by Richard Camp in Telford) or the Foreign and Commonwealth department, (run by Douglas Neilson in Dundee.) Richard sells the stamps by attending stamp fairs, and through lists with stamps being supplied to order.

The sale of these and other collectables such as coins and cards raised £6,500 for BMS last year.

If you want to know more – about how you can help, contact Rob Vaines at BMS on 01235 517617 for a special leaflet.

IMC Update

We've now had official permission from the Charity Commissioners to go ahead with the purchase of St Andrew's Hall for £850,000. It will now be called BMS International Mission Centre. Completion took place on 31 August 1999.

BMS news



New Candidates accepted

The following have been accepted to serve with BMS in Nepal:

- Rachel Moss
- Rebecca Pearce
- Julie Russell

of the church. Rebecca says she's had a strong sense of a missionary call from an early age. She is a nurse, and as the elective part of her university course, she travelled to Nepal to work in Green Pastures Leprosy Hospital. Like Rachel, she too will spend time at Spurgeon's before beginning her orientation programme in Nepal in January 2000. She will take up the position of Clinic manager with INF's Tuberculosis Project.



Rachel is a member of Southcourt Baptist Church, Aylesbury. She became a Christian at the age of seven, and was baptised in Hong Kong in 1993 where she was spending time prior to university, working as a volunteer with missionaries caring for children and adults with disabilities. At university Rachel studied for a psychology degree and then did a PGCE; whilst there, she was very active in the local church and Christian activities. Rachel will teach in Pokhara and will undergo some initial training at Spurgeon's College, and then commence her orientation programme in Nepal in January 2000.



Julie is also a nurse, having recently completed a course in Tropical Medicine. She has lived in Indonesia, Malaysia, Denmark and Hong Kong, but now counts Swindon as her home! She became a Christian when she was 17, and was later baptised at Upper Stratton Baptist Church, Swindon. She will follow the same training and orientation route as Rachel, and it is envisaged that she too will become a Clinic Manager with INF's Tuberculosis Project.



Rebecca's parents were BMS missionaries, serving in Zaire. She became a Christian in 1987 and in 1992 went with a BMS Summer Team to Italy, where she helped repair a children's home. While at university she used her summer holidays to go on Taskforce in Devon where she helped in children's summer clubs and in the evangelistic work

Coming back for more:



Geoff & Mary Ida Timms

From 1994 to 1996 Geoff was a BMS Volunteer with BMS in Albania, engaged in agricultural work and agricultural education when in 1995 he met Mary Ida Buzhardt, a missionary with the Co-operative Baptist Fellowship, based in Atlanta, Georgia. Their work overlapped on complementary projects, with both sending organisations working out of the Baptist Centre in Tirana.

Geoff and Mary Ida married in October 1997, and in September this year they headed back to Albania as a married couple, sent by BMS. Their first three months will have been spent re-learning the Albanian language and then they will be assigned to a particular project.

Both are members of Camberley Baptist Church.

Philip & Vivienne Hatton

Philip and Vivienne previously served with BMS in the Congo – Philip from 1979 to 1982, and Vivienne from 1975 to 1983 – it was here they met and later married in 1983. Following on from this they both had a sense that one day they could serve overseas again.

They had a short spell as BMS Volunteers in Kinshasa from November 1996 to April 1997, and this confirmed to them that they should offer themselves for service again.

At present Philip is minister of Wotton-under-Edge Baptist Church, Gloucestershire and Vivienne is a teacher. They have two children, Ruth and Christopher.

Their service with BMS will commence on 1 January 2000 with them working in Belgium as a ministerial couple.



First for Roger!

BMS worker in Albania, Roger Pearce, has long been concerned about how antiquated the text books were for learning the Albanian language. Having an interest in language studies, he decided to write his own guide to learning Albanian.

It takes the form of an A4 book, with lots of photos and illustrations, drawing on real examples of speech used in everyday life. The book comes with a tape to complete the package. It is retailing at £11.00. Interested? Contact Rob Vaines at BMS on 01235 517617.



bms news

Iain Gordon in hospital

BMS worker Iain Gordon has been fighting for his life in a Singapore Hospital. Based in Kathmandu, involved in development and consulting services, Iain had a routine operation on his back, but he then suffered septicaemia and severe pneumonia.

He was airlifted to Singapore, and further complications followed. Iain's recovery was prayed for all around the world, and a week after the initial operation doctors were "cautiously optimistic" about Iain's recovery. He is continuing to make progress, and at the time of writing is eating normally, and building up his strength.

Iain is not out of the woods yet, and several aspects of his condition still give cause for concern.

Please remember Iain in your prayers – also his wife Karen and their three sons.

Relief Fund grant for earthquake victims

BMS has sent £25,000 from its Relief Fund to help alleviate the suffering and distress caused by the earthquakes in Turkey. This money is being channelled through Baptist World Aid, who are liaising with other Christian relief organisations and partner agencies to develop an assistance programme.

One such group had set up more than 1,000 tents for victims by early September and distributed supplies like nappies, toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, antiseptics and children's toys. They have also set up a mobile kitchen, and teams of volunteers have been organised to help with medical work. Turkey is a predominantly Muslim country. Protestants are very few – estimates are in the region of 660 national Christians for the whole country plus 2,000 or so foreign Protestants.

Check Out November/December 1999

November

Arrivals

Rosimar & Tim Deller from Goiânia, Brazil

Departures

Anne Roberts to Tirana, Albania

Gerry & Johan Myhill to Curitiba, Brazil

December

Arrivals

Angus & Carol MacNeill from Kachanaburi, Thailand

Caroline & Tim Trimble from Kathmandu, Nepal

Departures

None

world

mission link



Every year over 150,000 visitors and 6,000 competitors in various events flock to the biggest and oldest celebration of Welsh culture – the Royal National Eisteddfod.

BMS were there too, in the persons of Nick Bradshaw and Delyth Wyn Davies, BMS Co-ordinators for Wales. They were sharing a stall with the Baptist Union of Wales, helped by eight students from Georgia and Kentucky who had come to the end of their ten-week placement in Wales with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, (a bit like BMS Action Teams!)

Nick said, "Despite more than our fair share of rain, it was a marvellous festival. It was a good opportunity to meet all sorts of people and have fun practising my very limited Welsh, having only completed a one-week introductory course. At least I could ask for my pysgod a sglodion – fish and chips!

"It's a great opportunity to be involved in a secular festival, and my prayer is that every year we will have more and more to shout about what God is doing in the world."



Former missionaries still active

Former BMS missionaries in Asia met at Hothorpe Hall, Leicestershire, to renew friendships and hear about the ongoing work of mission. They were reminded in the opening address by BMS General Director Alistair Brown that whatever their situation, they were still missionaries, showing and telling of the love of God.

The group met together on the Sunday morning for worship at Arnesby Baptist Church. In the afternoon at a communion service they gave a total of £372 for the BMS Relief Fund.



Betty Marsh has a ward named after her

BMS stays in tune

Gorsley gobsmacked

Over 5,000 people visited the Wye Valley Christian Festival, held at Gorsley, near Ross-on-Wye over the August Bank Holiday period. Having grown out of the now famous Flower Festival, most of the visitors also browsed around the mission stands.

Speakers included Eddie Stobart, Jonathan Lamb, of IFES and Chairman of the Keswick Convention who spoke a "message for today", based on the life of Jeremiah, standing for God in tough times, and BMS General Director, Alistair Brown, unfolding Isaiah's vision of God. The evening concerts – including one by Helen Shapiro – drew 700 to 750 people, and combined teaching, ministry and outreach.

John Lewis, minister of Gorsley Baptist Church, said afterwards, "We've created a platform in which the Word of God has been opened up, and God has blessed it. It was amazing. I've never seen anything like it."

A lot of church groups are already putting next year's Festival, also to be held over the August Bank Holiday, into their diaries. If you would like more information contact Gorsley Baptist Church on 01989 720312.



The BMS stand at Gorsley

Success the world's way or God's?

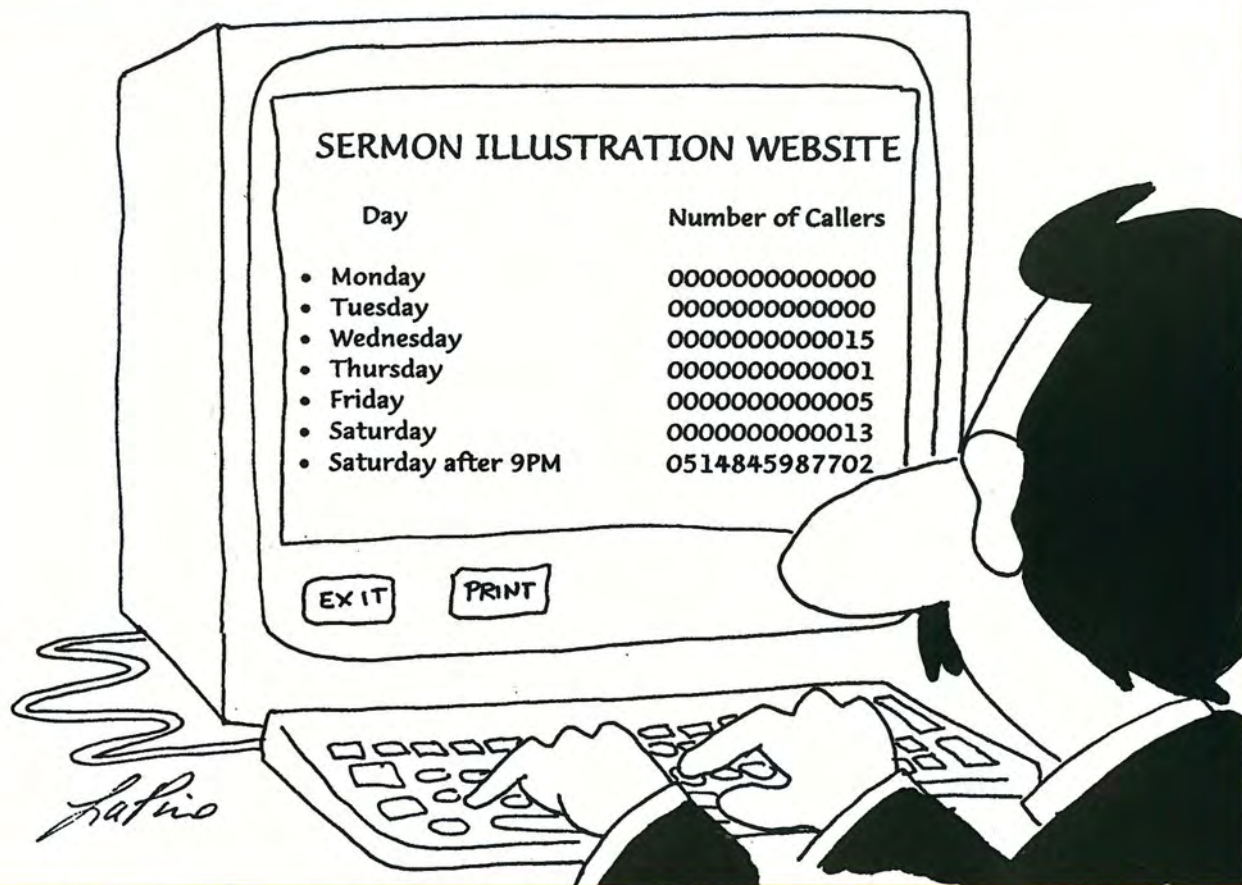
At the heart of Jesus' ministry lay a vigorous challenge to the powers of evil, whether in the disease that afflicts the body, the demons that torment the mind, the guilt and indignities that crush the person, or the idolatry and hypocrisy that destroy community. Yet it was a challenge that was made in utter vulnerability. It led to the agony in Gethsemene and the God-forsakenness of Golgotha. The cross itself was his supreme parable, expressing the paradox of his mission. In what seemed total defeat, the victory of God was accomplished. The weakness of God spells the conquest of evil. The crucified victim is the power of God and the wisdom of God (1Cor1:22-3).

Christian mission is not a success story in the way the world reckons success. The outstanding examples of vibrant Christian witness in this century have been in places where success in worldly terms has been denied the Church. For instance, in China, where the Church emerged from the horrors of the cultural revolution and the recent waves of repression, greatly renewed and strengthened; or, in Eastern Europe, where the courage and holiness of Christians kept hope in God alive, despite attempts by powerful governments to stamp it out; or, in Latin America, where countless believers have been imprisoned and killed for resisting tyranny, and where the Church continues to minister out of poverty and weakness.

Ever since the Church's first great conflict with the power of imperial Rome, the victory of the gospel has been won not by the efficiency of its mission strategists, the effectiveness of its fundraisers or even the cleverness of its preachers. But by the blood of its martyrs. ●



Vinoth Ramachandra is South Asia Regional Secretary of IFES



CARTOON BY DIK LAPINE

new for 1999 christmas cards

This Christmas support BMS and its work by buying BMS cards and calendars. All Christmas cards contain a Christmas greeting and Christian verses unless otherwise stated.

CC14 Fun Angel

Size: 116mm x 116mm
(one design)

£1.65 for 8



CC10 City of David

Size: 145mm x 145mm
(two designs)

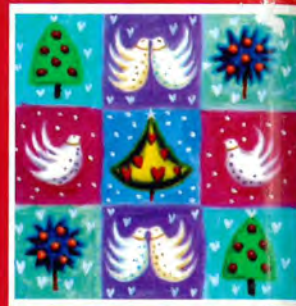
The purple design from this pack is available in Welsh (CC11)
£2.25 for 10



CC15 Christmas Trees/Doves

Size: 118mm x 118mm
(two designs)
(No verse)

£1.95 for 10



CC13 Brazil Dove

Exclusive to BMS

Hand made cards crafted by women from Fortaleza, Brazil. These cards guarantee further income for the women and their families.

Size: 150mm x 105mm (one design)
(No verse)

£3.95 for 5



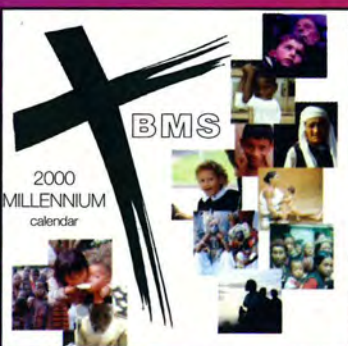
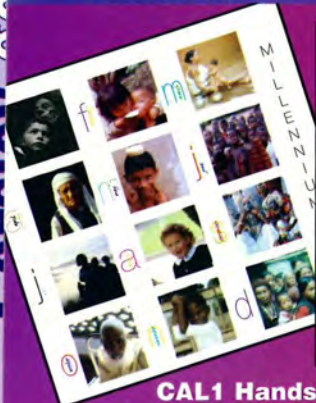
CC12 Star and Shepherds

Exclusive to BMS

Size: 210mm x 104mm (two designs)

£2.25 for 10

millennium calendars



CAL1 Hands around the world calendar

A vibrant, emotive calendar designed by Carolyn Tabor.

Size: 300mm x 300mm £4.99 (Price held from 1998)



CAL 2 Engagement Calendar

Wall calendar with beautiful illustrations by Sarah Prentice.

Size: 150mm x 370mm
£2.99 (Price held from 1998)

