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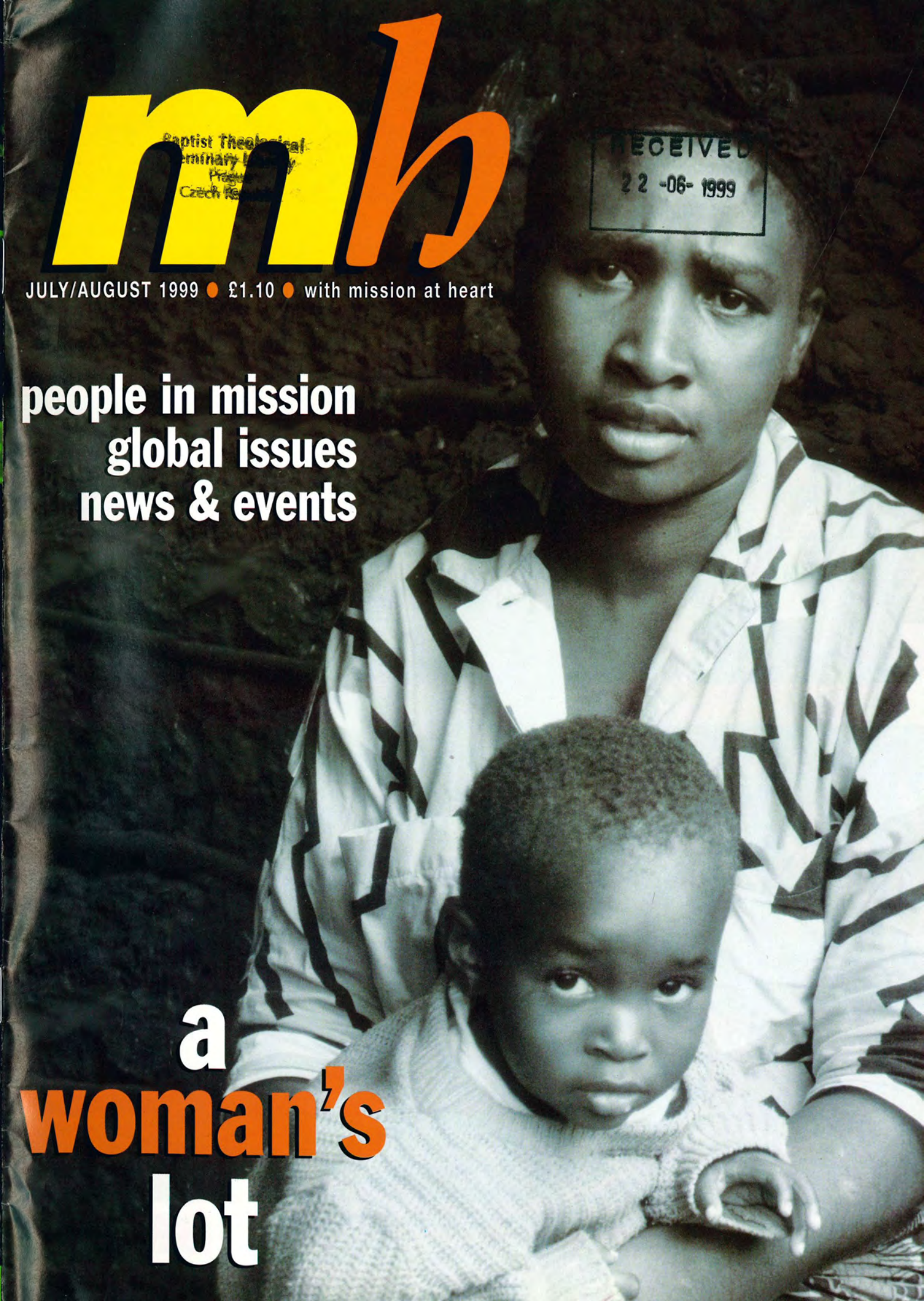
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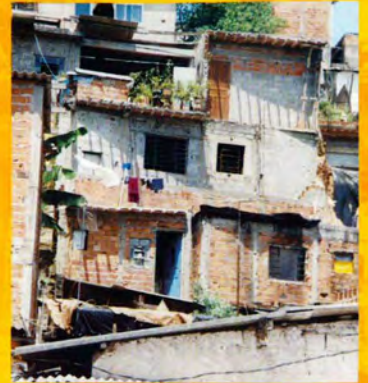
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COVER PICTURE: MUM IN NAIROBI SLUM, SOAPBOX

PICTURE LEFT: ASSOCIATED PRESS

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**BMS**  
Publications





products.

There are now sweets wrapped in paper that carry biblical texts with the slogan "The Word of God in every mouth" and others including Freegells Gospel sweets which depict biblical figures and cosmetics.

Another company offers perfumed oils for anointing.

One Evangelical leader, Pastor Alcebiades Fernandes Cavalcanti of the Evangelical



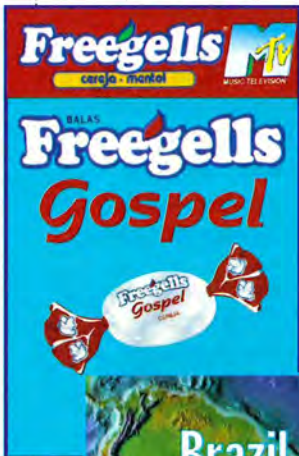
Methodist minister in Rio de Janeiro said. "A labour market has been opened." (LAP)

### Hong Kong Red light district sees light of gospel

A church founded by converts from Hong Kong's Temple Street red light district has just celebrated its tenth anniversary.

The Shepherd Community Fuk Lam Church (SCFLC) has a special outreach to drug users, prostitutes, and people into gambling and violent crime. The outreach programme was set up by Samuel Lai, who used to be a policeman in the area. Lai used his position to support his growing drug habit, and went to prison three times. He became a Christian through a drug rehabilitation programme, and then returned to the Temple Street area to share his new-found faith.

The outreach is twice a month, directly in front of the large temple that gives the district its name. It includes a fortune telling table, → CONT. PAGE 7



Christian Church of Belo Horizonte warned that the products could encourage vanity and called the campaigns "a new process of corrosion."

Other church leaders were less critical. "There are unemployed people selling these products," Carlos Alberto Tavares Alves, a

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

### Myanmar

Baptist World Alliance leaders who recently visited Myanmar (Burma) reported that Baptist numbers were continuing to grow, but believers were still facing political limitations, and in some areas, the threat of religious persecution. There are now more than one and a half million Baptist believers in Myanmar worshipping in 6,000 churches and mission points. Baptists make up about 85 per cent of the Protestant evangelical community. (BWA)

### Hungary

New legislation has been proposed to tighten church registration procedures after the current law on religions had come under attack for making it too easy for groups to receive legal recognition as a religion and avoid taxes. Approximately 100 new organisations have registered as churches in Hungary, including societies practising naturopathy or organised for business reasons. (EBPS)

### India

More than 2,000 people gave their names for baptism at the Diamond Jubilee of the Tripura Baptist Union, which was attended by over 3,000 delegates from all over Tripura – a state of North East India. Tripura tribal people have recently been overwhelmed by the majority non-tribal people and have been convinced that Christianity was the only way to preserve their culture and identity. (BWA)

### Bulgaria

A number of churches – Catholics, members of the Orthodox Church, as well as Evangelicals – have protested against plans by Sofia city council to introduce regulations which will restrict religious activity. Although these regulations have not officially been published yet, they are believed to refer to the participation of children under 16 in religious activities, the advertising of religious purposes. Foreign missionaries will also be discouraged from working in the capital city. (Keston)

### Peru

It is now believed that Peru's former clampdown on terrorism has led to many false imprisonments. An ad hoc Commission was formed to investigate cases of alleged unfair imprisonment, but even prisoners found innocent by this Commission – including Christians – are still waiting for release. (CSW/OD/TF)



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AS THIS REPORT IS BEING PREPARED, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF KOSOVAN REFUGEES HAVE FLED IN TERROR FROM THEIR HOMES, INTO MACEDONIA, ALBANIA, AND AS FAR AS HUNGARY, BULGARIA AND ITALY.

**What local Christians are doing to help**

In Macedonia local Baptists are caring for refugees in their homes. Churches with buildings are helping to accommodate needy refugee families – in church basements, sanctuary and upper floors, as well as under tarpaulin outside.

In Albania all the churches are totally mobilised and involved in helping the refugees. The Baptist Centre in Tirana is working with the Salvation Army in setting up a refugee camp, which it expects will eventually take 3,000 refugees.



**How BMS personnel in Albania are helping**

All BMS personnel have ceased their normal everyday activities to help with the refugees. In Durrës the Albanian Bible Institute, where BMS missionary Paul Towlson teaches, is now a centre for refugees. Elisabeth Towlson is heading up the feeding programme there.

David Wheeler – more used to building roads in remote mountain villages – has been asked to build a kitchen at the Tirana Baptist Centre. He is also trying to rent a warehouse to house the clothes that are arriving in Albania by the tonne. Half of it will be used for sorting the clothes into size, age, sex etc. Families will be able to come along to the other section and select what they want.

Former BMS Director of Operations, David Martin, went to Albania mid-April to head up an Emergency Task Force, accompanied by Glyn and Gill Jones, former BMS missionaries in Albania.

**How your giving to the BMS Relief Fund has helped**

So far £60,000 has been given from the BMS Relief Fund to help these refugees. The money has been used to help in the feeding programme at Durrës, assisting with the transport costs of getting food and clothing aid to Albania, and with David Wheeler's warehouse project.

One thousand pounds was given to assist the four Baptist churches in Macedonia with their relief programme.

You can still give to the BMS Relief Fund to help the Kosovan refugees.

Please make cheques payable to **'BMS'** and indicate you wish your money to be used for 'Balkan relief work'. Please send to **BMS**, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA. Or, for further ways of giving, call our donation hotline: 01235 517641.

"It is five years ago this month that the Rwandan genocide occurred and we are still at work in that situation. We have no idea how long the ethnic cleansing and NATO action will continue, but the needs will be there for a long, long time"

**Paul Montacute, Director of Baptist World Aid**

"The crisis situation in Kosovo is a mission field for the Albanian church. Since January 1998 the Albanian church has adopted Kosovo as another country to pray for. We as a church have been praying for Kosovo but have never had the opportunity to go to them. Now the Lord is using this situation and has brought them to us. Now is the time the Lord has opened the doors for Kosovo. Of course, our goal is not to take advantage of their situation. We recognise we can show them the gospel by serving them, by caring for them, by listening to them, by living the gospel in front of their eyes."

**Geni Begu, General Secretary of the Albanian Evangelical Alliance.**

CONT. FROM PAGE 5



OMF



at which enquirers get more than they expected. Instead of having their palms read, they have hands laid upon them and are prayed for.

Volunteers also visit the area twice a week giving free meals to many of those who sleep rough – people left homeless because of drugs, alcohol or having been abandoned by their families. The food is donated by Christian restaurant owners.

“God has been very merciful to the people of Temple Street,” said Lai. “Not only did he (God) pull me out of my mess, he has also saved many in and through the Temple Street ministry. Most of those who were converted, and who have stayed behind have now become leaders and pastors at SCFLC, and God has blessed them with partners and children.” (YWAM)

## Turkmenistan Baptist sent to labour camp

An ethnic Turkmen member of a Baptist congregation in the port city of Turkmenbashi (formerly Krasnovodsk) has been sentenced to two years imprisonment in a labour camp.

Shagily Atakov, a driver and car dealer, was arrested in December 1998 shortly after being visited by an official of the National Security Committee (the successor to the KGB), who threatened to charge him “on an old case” if he did not stop his participation in the church.

Atakov went on trial in

CONT. PAGE 8

## Alistair Brown



Reflects.....

The picture shows no ordinary bunch of friends showing off pictures in a book. They're a team operating out of Chiang Mai in north Thailand, doing all they can to try to halt the dreadful advance of AIDS.

Like many, maybe most societies, Thai people don't like discussing sexual practices, and don't want to be told what to do. But ignorance is killing thousands. So the team goes to community groups in cities, and makes long journeys to remote hill villages to pass on their health education message. Their materials are simple – mostly pictures and stories to illustrate their lessons – but the people who listen are grateful. Especially the women who are infected with AIDS because of the promiscuous behaviour of their husbands.

And the tragedy and triumph for one member of this team is how personal all this is. The young woman on the right is Suporn whose story was told in a recent BMS video. Not long after she married, her husband got sick. By the time they found out he had AIDS, she was pregnant and infected too. Her husband died, and eventually so did her baby. Suporn could have been bitter and depressed. Instead she found Christ, and for these last several years has dedicated her life to spreading good advice about AIDS and good news about Jesus Christ. Out of pain and sadness has come mission that is changing lives.

Suporn is now very sick, and she's recently been in hospital. Her body's resistance is breaking down, and won't last. But her spirit is strong, and she knows her real life is secure in Christ's grip. I pray for Suporn. And I pray all of us learn how to accept what's past, good or bad, and turn it to service for Christ's kingdom. ●

Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS





PEOPLE INTERNATIONAL

March, where he was found guilty of swindling, apparently in connection with his car sales. As well as his labour camp sentence, he was reported to have been fined the equivalent of \$12,000, a huge sum in Turkmen terms.

Pastor V V Chernov of the Ashgabad Baptist Church wrote at the time of the arrest: "If Brother Shagildy Atakov had agreed to stop preaching, and become unfaithful to the call of Christ to preach the good news, then he would not have been arrested."

A Russian human rights activist commented: "This is a common practice of the Turkmen authorities, who try not to use political charges against prisoners of conscience but send them to prison for ordinary criminal offences." (Keston)

### Apology

We received an objection to the heading – though not the story – of the "Hope for gender-benders" item in World News in May/June *mb*. We regret if this unintentionally caused offence.

# action

# card



## Environment - Trees

Trees form the very basic stuff of life all over the world. The UK was once heavily forested, though now we have only a few fragments left. The trees were cut down for house and ship building, barrel and furniture making, for firewood and to open up land for farming and pasture. There was relatively little replanting until recently as people began to appreciate again the importance of trees to our ecosystem.

In more extreme or arid climates, trees are even more vital. In addition to the raw materials that they provide for the people, they act as a windbreak, help slow erosion by slowing down the water run off, and generally contribute to the health of the land. In Cameroon, tree planting forms an important means of improving food production and income generation. At the Rural Training Centre in Kumba, agricultural extension workers provide training, technical and material assistance in tree planting to local groups. They produce a range of trees – fruit trees, oil palms and cocoa seedlings. Another important aim is fostering awareness of the importance of trees within the community and especially in schools. By June 1998, eleven farming groups had raised almost 6,000 tree seedlings in their nurseries. Please write a note of encouragement to the Principal, Presbyterian Rural Training Centre, PO Box 34, Kumba, South West Province, Cameroon. ●

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

## BMS WOMEN'S MISSIONARY AUXILIARY WALES ANNUAL BILINGUAL CONFERENCE

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## daily grind



### HELEN JOHNSTON TALKED TO JAN KENDALL ABOUT WHAT LIFE IS LIKE IF YOU'RE BORN A WOMAN IN NEPAL

**T**he women in the household are up at 5.30am each day. Firstly, they have to clean the house, and carry out puja (Hindu worship), which, to the uninitiated eye, looks like flicking a lot of water and rice around. On some days they will need to re-surface the mud floor. Every day they will need to go out, collect water, cut the grass and leaves for the animals, collect firewood, and then cook their staple diet of dahl baat or thick corn porridge for the first meal of the day.

The grandfather eats first; then the boys and other children; then the mother-in-law; and lastly, the daughters-in-law. Mother-in-law can reign supreme in a Nepali household; the daughter-in-law is definitely the lowest in the pecking order. (The husband has probably gone out by now to the local tea shop to watch the world go by.)

For the women then it's back to the fields to do more weeding and planting. The water – grass and leaves – firewood – cooking cycle of chores is repeated in the evening. If the women are fortunate enough to live in an area which holds a non-formal education class, that happens later on in the evening.

It's the men in Nepali society who make the decisions. Imagine a hospital outpatients clinic. A sick woman has been brought by another woman. She needs an operation, but she can't have it because it needs a man to decide if he thinks she needs it or not, and whether he can afford to pay for it. Sometimes a woman's husband will be away working in India for months at a time, perhaps coming back home once

or twice a year. So she has to continue in her ill-health and try to persuade him of her need when he returns.

To go to the hospital means someone else has to do your chores. At busy times like harvest the women just don't come, or, if they do, they come very late at night. Even after childbirth or a serious antenatal problem, they still say they can't stay.

Many women in Nepal are severely underweight. It's quite usual for a fully-grown woman to weigh between 26 and 35kg (that's between four and five-and-a-half stone). Forty nine per cent of all children are moderately to severely underweight. So it's no wonder that underweight girls, who have been married off by the time they reach

puberty, then have obstetric problems. Nepal is high on the list for the world's highest infant mortality rates.

In this male-dominated society women worry about whether they will give birth to boys or girls. The husbands want boys. One woman said it came as a great revelation and relief to her when she learned at a community health class that it was the man who determined the sex of the unborn baby, and that having a girl was not her fault. Wives giving birth to girls is one reason why men take a second (or third, or fourth...) wife. Women often won't consider family planning until they've had a boy.

Women come to Amp Pipal Hospital with many diseases and



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# women in nepal

WOMEN IN NEPAL WOMEN IN NEPAL WOMEN IN NEPAL

daily grind

WOMEN IN NEPAL WOMEN IN NEPAL



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## Case Studies

### Sunita

Sunita is a low caste lady who, today, makes pencil cases for a living. Her husband was working in India and she was left at home with their three daughters. On his return to Nepal, bringing money to her, her husband was murdered. Sunita was blamed for this, and put out of her village. In desperation she returned to her family's home. In Nepal you don't do that.

Today she lives in a small hut that doesn't even have a proper door.

She married off one of her daughters, Phulmaya, who was aged about 16, to a boy of similar age, so that she would have one less mouth to

feed. But the boy's family neglected to tell her that he had a heart problem, and was unable to do physical work. Within months of the marriage he nearly died. Her family's reaction to this? It was Sunita's fault.

So now she tries to have some sort of existence, living with her other two daughters, aged 14 and eight, making pencil cases. She is so poor, she has nothing to offer anyone.

### Putali

Putali's name means Butterfly or Doll. Her husband - who had divorced his previous six wives because they had not produced sons - does not work. Putali had a son by him, but he still took another wife - his eighth. Putali went to live in the house next door to her former home. The last wife left too. Putali's husband regained an interest in her, wanted sex with her, and beat her up when she said 'no'. She left her home, and went to live in another house in the village. She has no land, and is really poor. Her son has grown up now, and married, but he does not look after her.

Helen Johnston is a doctor working with BMS/UMN in Nepal

complaints, including a collection of symptoms often referred to locally as "Amp Pipal syndrome" - heartburn, burning eyes, tingling fingers and difficulty sleeping. Abdominal pain might mean worms. Nothing serious, but it's an acceptable way of coming to the doctor. They often have minor psychiatric illnesses, but just need a listening ear. ●



Heads Apart

## ALTERNATIVE CHILDBIRTH BY **ANDREA HOTCHKIN**

**I**'m going across the ocean to find a new baby, but the journey is long and dangerous and perhaps I will never return." So says the African woman to her children at the time she expects to deliver her baby: a little dramatic you may think, but spend some time looking at the situation in the West African country of Guinea and you may just begin to understand.

The British Medical journal (5.2.94) reported "No condition other than pregnancy shows such a large differential in mortality between the developed and the developing world". Maternal mortality has recently been estimated as 2,906 per 100,000 in Guinea; in the UK it is 10 per 100,000. This means that in our town and surrounding villages there will be at least one maternal death a day.

But what does this really mean to the average Guinean woman pregnant for the first of maybe seven times?

Aissata Conde was newly married and pregnant for the first time. At 15 she was young and fit and healthy and her pregnancy went well. At the suggestion of her husband's other wife she went to the health centre to be vaccinated against tetanus, and eliminate one of the risks for her unborn baby.

As the moment drew near for delivery she wondered if she should deliver at the centre as they had suggested, but was reassured that births should normally take place at the house with the traditional attendant used by the family.

The pains began early one morning and all the women of the family gathered round to offer encouragement; the hours slipped by

and the pains got stronger but there was still no sign of the baby. As the sun rose on a new day her husband began to wonder what was happening, but his enquiries were met only by a demand to buy a vial of oxytocin to help the contractions. This was hastily dispatched and given but to no avail; finally Aissata was half carried, half dragged to the health centre where it was thought another vial of oxytocin would do the trick.

Unbelievably to those of us who have been through labour it was on the morning of the third day that she was taken to the hospital; it wasn't far away – just across the other side of the town – but this time a taxi was needed. There the relatives were sent to find the on-call doctor and a Caesarean section was arranged but only after the relatives had again been sent into town to buy the drugs unavailable at the hospital and some gloves for the doctor to operate.

The baby was already dead but Aissata, although weak, was saved; her husband was relieved, although considerably out of pocket; that was until five days after the operation when Aissata started to leak urine all the time. At first the doctors dismissed it as an infection but it gradually became clear that this problem was here to stay. She was discharged home – now unable because of her disability to go to the mosque or to play an active part in her family's life.

By looking at one woman's story many of the reasons for the 300-fold difference in maternal mortality between Guinea and the United Kingdom are explained.

- Child bearing starts at an early age, the pelvis is not fully developed and can easily lead to the baby being too big for the mother.

- Old traditions die hard and the health centre is not seen as the right place to deliver, even if you attend for some ante-natal care.

- Traditional methods are mixed with new ideas, the better the midwife the quicker the delivery, so why not

**"Lifetime risk  
of death in  
childbirth for  
a Guinean  
woman –  
15%"**



use some oxytocin.

● Hospitals can be far away along difficult roads little more than dirt tracks or paths in the forest.

● Sadly even when hospital care is opted for, provision is poor and costly to the patient so people are not keen to use the facilities.

Aissata was saved. Many are not, dying of ruptured uteri, anaemia and acute blood loss before or after reaching the hospital. She was saved, but to what? A life of misery, with urine constantly dripping from her, and no baby to hold. All these difficulties are accepted by Muslim and Christian alike as the will of God.

So what is our response to this situation? It's not easy when so many factors play a role. We are trying to make the health facilities more acceptable by improving the level of care, decreasing the infection rate and introducing general anaesthesia. Traditional midwives are being trained to identify the cases with problems and send them to the hospital. A new maternity unit is being built capable of doing Caesarean sections so decreasing the distance necessary to travel by 120km. The staff in the health centres are undergoing more training so that they can refer more quickly the problem cases. We also have begun repairing vesico-vaginal fistulas, the cause of the leaking urine after the delivery.

And why do we wish to do this?

Isaiah 64 say: "I am making a new earth and new heavens... There will be no weeping there, no calling for help. Babies will no longer die in infancy, and all people will live out their life span."

Jesus said "He has chosen me to bring good news to the poor." We believe this is part of the good news for the poor of Guinea. We want to show that it is not the will of God that so many women and children die in childbirth. ●

#### OXYTOCIN

A hormone used in minute doses over several hours to increase contractions of the uterus which, when used as a single injection, can lead to serious complications.

#### RUPTURED UTERUS

A tear of the uterus which leaves the baby dead and lying free in the abdomen and can cause severe bleeding. Often caused by incorrect use of oxytocin.

#### VESICO-VAGINAL FISTULA

A hole between the vagina and the bladder caused by the pressure of the babies head after a long labour. It has to be repaired surgically to stop the constant leakage of urine.

#### MATERNAL MORTALITY

The number of mothers dying during and just after a pregnancy. Risk of death for a pregnant woman in Guinea 3%. Lifetime risk of death in childbirth for a Guinean woman 15%.





**DR CAROL MACNEILL**  
TELLS A STORY FROM  
HER CASE BOOK

# no chemists here

It was a warm, sticky morning in the consulting room of the Kwai River Christian Hospital. Opposite me sat a handsome, taller-than-average Karen woman with, what seemed to me the very appropriate name of Ladyrose. Her complaints were vague – tiredness, no energy, headaches. She looked as though she was suffering from some depression. She was convinced that she had high blood pressure, and it was no easy task trying to convince her that her blood pressure was satisfactory “And that’s normal, is it?” she said, checking it out again just to be sure. “Yes,” I said. “Quite normal for someone of your age.”

Her son is one of our neighbours. One day he mentioned to us that he

would be away for a day or two. He was going to look for his parents. He had heard that they had crossed from Burma into Thailand, and that they were somewhere in the hills to the west of us. Being the oldest in a family of nine he felt that it was his responsibility to find his parents and youngest siblings and do what he could for them. As he spoke I imagined his mother to be a little old wizened lady. I certainly did not have a picture in my mind of the tall, rather elegant woman now sitting opposite me asking intelligently about her blood pressure.

“For someone aged 56, your blood pressure is normal,” I said. “Perhaps then I’m anaemic or have chronic malaria or something,” she suggested,

hoping as folk do the world over, that her tiredness and lethargy might have a treatable cause.

She lives now in one of the many refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border. Her simple needs are catered for – basic shelter, salt, rice and cooking oil. She has little to do, little to fill up her time, and little to stimulate her lively brain. The camp where she is has church services on a Sunday, and sometimes there are Bible studies during the week. Apart from that, there is not much else to do but worry about herself, her slightly-more-elderly husband and her nine children scattered all over the Thai-Burma border.

“Well,” I said, clutching at the straw

**“If you live in a refugee camp, it is better to be really seriously ill,... that way you get your expenses paid for you.”**



handed to me, “let’s get your blood examined.” Doing this would help in the reassuring process, as well as giving me time for a little more thought about how best to help her! Not long afterwards the blood results lay before me on the desk. Everything was normal, and the patient looked a bit happier. I prescribed some multi-vitamin tablets – not necessary in this case, but always appreciated – and a few sleeping tablets to use occasionally when sleep evaded her for nights on end. I also gave her some paracetamol tablets. There are no chemist shops in a refugee camp, so it is a luxury to have a few tablets of one’s own.

Before she left I asked her, “Can you come back and see me in six month’s time?” “Yes,” she replied, “If you can give me an appointment card so that they will let me out of the camp.” “Fine,” I said. “Will it mean that – and here I named the Non-Government-

Organisation supervising medical care and emergency expenses in this camp – will pay your bills for you?” (The answer to this question was quite important for me, as I had already realised that the medical expenses of a poor neighbour’s poor mother would automatically fall back on me!) “No, they won’t pay,” said my patient. Then she said something that has stuck with me ever since. She went on, “If you live in a refugee camp, it is better to be really seriously ill, rather than just a bit unwell. That way, you get your expenses paid for you.”

I realised many times since, how true was her remark. In the two refugee camps in our area, there are small bamboo-built hospitals. Basic illnesses, such as malaria, intestinal worms, coughs and colds are diagnosed and treated. The more seriously ill will be referred to the visiting doctor with whatever NGO looks after the general

needs of the camp. Only a few will be sent to the main referral hospital, the Kwai River Christian Hospital. My patient, Ladyrose, understood the system, and the dilemma of the ‘vaguely unwell’. As she left me to make her way back to the camp, I remembered the advice, during medical training of one of our Professors: “When you treat patients, you want them to become healthy in body, mind and spirit.”

Later as I paid the bill for Ladyrose – not very much really – I took some comfort from the fact that although her physical condition was just the same as it was when she came to see me, she was at least going back to the camp better in mind and spirit.

**Dr Carol MacNeill is a BMS missionary working in Sangklaburi, Western Thailand.**



# going against the ← flow



## RYDER AND HEATHER ROGERS TALK ABOUT WOMEN (AND MEN) IN ALBANIA

**R**yder used to have a t-shirt that showed a Christian fish going in the opposite direction to the sharks and predators.

Underneath it had the statement "Go against the flow" (Romans 12:1-2).

For Albanian Christians – particularly girls – of marriageable age to go against the flow is certainly an issue as they stand out against the background of their Muslim culture. The same is true for women in oppressive male-dominated relationships.

We have an 18-year-old church member in our congregation. Her uncle has arranged a marriage for her, not only without her consent, but diametrically opposed to her constantly expressed wish. Her father and mother have said she can choose what she wants, but still went ahead with all the arrangements despite her saying daily that she believes God does not want her to get married yet, and when she does,

she would like to marry a Christian.

We introduced the parents to a lovely young Christian man – the right age for her, with similar interests – but they still objected. He wasn't tall enough and did not come from their birthplace down south. It seems the qualities the 'groom', who is 11 years older than her, is looking for, is someone who speaks English so that he can emigrate.

In another family, a younger sister who had little to do apart from housework, and whose greatest joy was in coming to church, was told by her older brother that she was at church too much and should be at home. He also objected to her praying with her cousin on a daily basis.

Then there's a new wife whose husband stopped working soon after their marriage. Now he stays in bed while she goes off from 6.00 to 8.00am, and then goes off to drink with his mates. She, then, has to stay at home doing the housework. He insists that when they go out she wears ankle length dresses with long sleeves and high neck lines. Her sister has also been banned from coming to their house by him because she came in tight jeans.

Or again, a girl of 17, the youngest in a family of three boys and two girls, has been told by her brother – the youngest of the three, aged 20, and unemployed –

that she should not come to our school. He's also told their mother she should not go to church. The older sister had a dental appointment, and this same brother objected to accompanying her. The mother in the family is ordered about by him. Meanwhile he does no work in the house and gives his considered opinion that "a girl's place is in the home".

In another family a sick and elderly woman asks for help from her son. He gives her nothing; instead, he yells at her, and also demands work from us, yells outside the church about us making a noise during our service, and drinks all the household money away in raki (stronger than gin). When she dares to cross his wants, he beats her with his fists and a stick.

In Albania wives get beaten by their husbands for daring to stop off at a friend's house for coffee after doing the shopping. And so we could go on.

But there is a brighter side for Christian girls. There are lads at church who are real 'gentle' men. Beni, who is going in for the Albanian national weight-lifting contest, is gracious and polite, and his friend Soni, for instance. Both are so polite and intense about following Jesus.

There's Skënder who went to 'drink coffee' – the formalisation of an





Two members of Bregu-i-Lumit church with Ryder (far left) Enjoying worship at Bregu church (above).

## “In Albania wives get beaten for daring to stop off at a friend’s house for coffee.”

engagement, which is equivalent to a marriage contract – with a Christian girl from up north. He helps his widowed mother with cleaning, some cooking and washing some of his clothes. He talks about his marriage being a shared responsibility.

There’s Fredi, who is an Albanian pastor in Tirana. He has just got engaged and has a Christian view of marriage as an equal partnership. He is both patient and gentle, and an example of living a Christ-like life.

We thank God there are those who are wanting to show that there is a different way, even if it is an uphill struggle for them. ●

Ryder and Heather Rogers are BMS missionaries involved in a church planting ministry in Albania.



## The Mad Hatter’s Tea Party

### STEVE FLASHMAN

I stood up in front of 500 inquisitive women who had come to hear me speak on the subject of feminism! My wife had been booked to speak but was taken ill and I offered to go in her place – a kind of vicarious suffering! I had read all the books, talked to a lot of people and felt I was reasonably prepared for this challenging event. I later wondered whatever possessed me to imagine that I could ever fully understand the issues facing women today. One positive thing came out of the whole event for me – I learnt more about hats!

I’m not being disrespectful here! There were many interesting, adventurous and bold creations represented in that gathering, but I’m not referring to ‘hats’ in a literal sense, but rather in terms of the many roles women play.

Women in Western cultures are having an identity crisis because they have to be so many things to so many people. Perhaps the search for ‘equal rights’ there has become a confusion with ‘equal roles’ for men and women in our culture. In many Developing World cultures, women also wear different hats: they are the bread winners, the manual labourers, the child bearers, the home makers and the play things. In these largely male dominated societies, women are stepped on, disregarded and often abused. While we debate the role of women in the workplace, equal rights and pay structures, female leaders in the church, the balance of responsibilities in family life and home making – cultures in Africa and India still use women to carry bricks on a building site, fetch water from the well, feed and clothe the family and be at the beck and call of the man in her life.

In those communities of the world where the gospel of Jesus is being lived out, women are finding their dignity and worth in the eyes of God and their fellow man. Through education and opportunity, they are discovering latent gifts and abilities that could turn them into brain surgeons, home makers, politicians, shop keepers, dress makers and chiefs of industry. This is nothing to do with imported, civilised Western cultural forms – in many ways we are still lost in a fractured and blurred view of God’s intentions for us. It has everything to do with biblical standards of behaviour, Christ-like attitudes to others and being obedient to God’s will for your life.

Wearing many hats is no ‘tea party’! But we can certainly join the real celebration of life when we wear the right hat for the right occasion – and that’s down to believing that we all have a unique and special part to play in God’s scheme of things, whether you live in the slums of Calcutta or the semis in suburbia. ●



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

# a bond for life and b

## ANDREW & MICHELLE FURBER TALK ABOUT WHAT MARRIAGE MEANS FOR WOMEN IN NEPAL

Imagine a system of bonded labour for a child that begins before puberty is reached. Imagine that system continuing throughout the child's life with no way of escape. Imagine that the bondage continues after the death of the one the child has been bonded to. You have been imagining a situation that is a reality for thousands of women in Nepal. You have been imagining a Nepali marriage.

### Blissful marriage?

Divorce rates in western countries give us no room for complacency, but marriage in Nepal is something different. Most marriages are still arranged and marriage between people of different castes still causes much

commotion, sometimes even death threats. Marriage for most women involves leaving their parents' home and moving in with the in-laws. The woman is then socially isolated, worked hard and expected to produce lots of (preferably male) children. It is not surprising, then, that depression is one of the commonest diagnoses at the female out-patient clinic of Tansen Mission Hospital.

### Happy ever after?

Mental health problems are only one of the many health issues facing married Nepali women. Nepal also has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. Michelle recently surveyed 30 local women. Half of them were married before the age of 16, 30 per cent of them before they were 14. Two-thirds of these women had their babies delivered by an untrained attendant. And these are women who live near a modern hospital! These figures become much worse as you move away from district centres. It is not surprising that these women get into difficulties in

pregnancy and labour. One in eight Nepali women will suffer a death related to pregnancy or childbirth.

### Ritual impurity

Social pressure does not stop with childbirth. It penetrates every aspect of women's lives. During her monthly period a woman is considered to be ritually unclean. In families that follow this strictly (of which there are quite a few), this means that the woman cannot enter the kitchen, should eat alone, and some even have to move into an outhouse the size of a dog kennel. In a recent report from a district where this attitude is especially problematic, a female development worker found it impossible to rent a room. Despite offering well over the market rate, villagers refused to rent her a room because she refused to go to stay in the outhouse during her monthly period! It took the intervention of the Member of Parliament before she was able to find anywhere to stay!

We have a Nepali friend who has been asking us a lot of questions about

nepal



eyond

nepal

Christianity. We were amazed when she asked recently if she could still read the Bible when she was having her monthly period! These ideas of ritual impurity penetrate into everything and add to the burden Nepali women carry.

### Food for thought

Eating is another area where women are treated differently. They are expected to eat after the men of the family have eaten. Girls are given less to eat than their brothers. Iron-deficiency anaemia is more common in this area than any other area of the world, despite similar poverty rates and similar access to food. This puzzled researchers for a while, but the conclusion now is that it relates to society's treatment of women, particularly in the area of feeding practices.

### Until death do us part?

The discrimination continues even after the woman is widowed. Tulasi is a Nepali lady who does some work for us. Her husband died recently and we found the bereavement process deeply

## “Girls are given less to eat than their brothers”

shocking. Tulasi was made to sit in a dark corner of the house for two weeks with her husband's other wife. Taking second (or third or fourth) wives, despite being illegal, is not uncommon in Nepal. She was forbidden to wear red, her favourite colour, meaning she had virtually no clothes to wear until we bought her a couple of new saris. We tried hard to understand that this was a ritualised way of coping with death, but it seemed that again the women got the rough end of the deal. Tulasi's husband used to abuse her physically and emotionally during life, and it seems that he was able to continue this beyond the grave.

### New life in Christ

We get annoyed when we read articles that are very negative about Nepal and her people. The Nepalese

are amazing people and the country is extraordinary. But there is something about Hinduism as practised in the hills of Nepal that seems at times, frankly, evil. Although the Christian church has also not treated women well over the centuries, at the moment Christianity is offering Nepali women a dilemma. It is offering them great freedom from the oppression they have endured for too long. But this comes at a price of even more persecution from their families. We know several Nepali women who would call themselves secret believers. Jesus made it clear that part of his good news was freedom for the oppressed. Nepali women need and deserve at least that. ●

Andrew & Michelle Furber are BMS personnel, currently on Home Assignment.

Until recently they were working with the United Mission to Nepal's Palpa Community Health and Development Project.



our town: Bossangoa

# Bossangoa

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



## **Background**

Bossangoa is a fairly large town for the Central African Republic, having a population of 38,000. It is situated halfway between the capital Bangui and the Chadian border. The climate is a comfortable dry heat, although the temperatures are in the range of 30° to 40°C depending on the time of year.

Bossangoa lies on a central plateau which is the watershed between Lake Chad in the north and the Congo River (via the Ubangi river) in the south. The River Ouham runs through the town and eventually flows into Lake Chad. It's good for fishing, and for hippos if you are watching them, that is, and not in a canoe.



Above : The eye clinic at Bossangoa, Central African Republic

### First Impressions

by Lisa DeCatur

People are very friendly; everyone greets each other whether by both shaking hands whilst saying 'hello' or just saying 'hello'.

CAR is a very poor country which is still trying to re-establish normal commercial life after the war in 1996. Women play a very minor role, and seem to do most of the work.

There are some who are well-to-do, but most people just have a house made of mud bricks with no electricity. They have a couple of rooms, and go out to their large

gardens every day.

All the Central Africans have to care for each other. All the members of the family take care of each other, whether they want to or not. One family may have five to seven children of their own, and then have three to five nieces, nephews and grandchildren on top. It's a hard life.

### People

There is an ethnic mix as a lot of civil servants live here; the population is quite mobile as they get moved from job to job. The locals are Gbaya mixed with Fulanis, who have come from countries in the north and west. Arabs from the north control the majority of the commercial life in the markets and kiosks, and Fulani are nomads who look for grazing for their cattle. They are well tolerated, but there is a general dislike of Chadian people.

### Health

The only hospital functions fairly well considering the state of the economy, although there is often a lack of medicines and the nurses are not very motivated at the moment due to non-payment of salaries. There are two doctors assigned to the hospital, but as one is also responsible for the health region, the hospital runs with only one doctor as well as occasional medical students. When drugs are in short supply patients have to buy all the necessary treatment at one of the local pharmacies. There are also several clinics around town which deal with minor ailments.

The average age of the population is 15, with a life expectancy of 49, but that is gradually decreasing because of the effects of AIDS.

### Religion

There are quite a few churches in town of varying persuasions – the saddest thing is that there are many offshoots of the main denominations. Services are usually in Sango, the commercial language,

## our town: Bossangoa



which most people speak in addition to their mother tongue. There are two or three services in French that begin at 7.00am. The Catholics have a cathedral with a national bishop. The diocese also runs a large secondary school.

Because there is a large Fulani and Arab presence in town, there is a small mosque, and all the Islamic celebrations are observed.

### Schools

Schooling has to be paid for. In the primary schools it is not too much, and most of the children attend. Secondary school is more expensive. As is usual in most Central African educational establishments, there is a general lack of materials and overcrowded classes (70 to 80+). At the moment education is a hit and miss affair, as teachers also have not been paid regularly for some time. The French education curriculum has been imposed, and all lessons are taught in French from secondary school

through to university.

The rate of unemployment amongst young people is high after they have left school. A lot try to find casual work in order to have a little cash, or sell items by the roadside, or work in the family fields, or they 'just sits'.

### Housing

Housing in town is variable; tin roofs and cement bricks, thatch roof with mud bricks. Some houses have just a cleared area around them; others have built fences. A lot of people try to build their own house for their old age. It is possible to buy land, and not build on it for several years, so long as the plot is kept tidy. The toilet facilities also vary from the flushable to squatting plate with a bucket or the pit latrine (the most common).

### Markets

There are two major markets selling food, cloth, hardware and other useful commodities. The morning one sells

mostly fresh food with some clothing, while the evening market sells tinned goods and hardware as well; this is mostly run by the Arabs and is opposite the mosque.

### Food

The staple food is manioc prepared a little differently to their neighbours in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but it is still heavy and glutinous. Green leaves with a peanut sauce in which there is occasionally fish or meat is quite a tasty meal. The more exotic fried ants and caterpillars are seasonal, as are sugared peanuts and sesame cakes. There is plenty of fruit especially mangoes and citrus fruits. Folk also grow salad foods to sell in the markets; fresh herbs can also be bought.

Everyone, including the people who should earn salaries, has a large field of produce for home consumption, as well as a little for sale.



Above: Pastor Youfei and family

Above left: A classroom in Sylvia Hopkins school, with a thatched roof and no window

Left: 'Coffee break' during an eye course

### Leisure

Leisure time is spent chatting, strolling around town, window shopping in the markets and dancing in the bars.

People come and visit, often without warning – no telephones in the houses! They come with a gift if they are going to stay for a week or two, usually soap, salt or rice. If the stay is longer they are expected to work in the fields or contribute more to the family economy.

The only telephone is at the small local post office; there is also a fax machine, but this cannot be used at the same time as the telephone – so there is no such thing as a quick call.

### Social Services and Utilities

There are all the usual offices for taxes, social security (a lot of money is paid on behalf of the workers, but it's more difficult to have money paid out), water and electricity, which has to be paid for, as in the UK. The town hall deals with public affairs such as certificates for births, marriages and deaths. There is also the local court, prison and police station.

Provision for the blind and physically

handicapped is most frequently financed by private organisations, mostly from Europe; there are very few social services. There is a large financial input for AIDS prevention and education.

### Transport

Transport is frequent between towns, with overcrowded minibuses or lorries, but they often break down. There are a lot of private cars, mopeds and motorbikes, but the majority of people cycle or walk. There is one petrol station which usually has fuel.

### Profile

#### Pastor Thomas Youfei

Pastor Youfei qualified with a Theology degree in 1988, and completed his Master's degree in 1990. At the moment he is working on a thesis entitled: "Theory of Mission in the Churches in Central Africa – A Strategy for Mission in the Central African Republic."

He is studying with the Grace Brethren College in the USA, and he spent three months there last autumn, returning home to his wife and four

children to spend four months researching his material locally, and writing up his thesis, before returning to the States to complete his doctoral thesis.

As well as studying, Pastor Youfei works as full-time pastor and director of the local Bible School. The church at present has 580 members spread over two congregations (French speaking and local language). There is also an all churches Bible study every Monday morning.

The Bible School has 25 students in two different years, but the course is for a total of four years. Once they have qualified, most of the pastors will work in small country churches. The student wives also attend classes in order to train others, lead services and take women's conferences.

Pastor Youfei also gives Sango lessons to ex-patriates, and has learnt most of his English from them. He asks for prayer as he tries to encourage the national Christians to deepen their personal commitment, and also to decide on their Mission for Evangelisation, especially among the nomadic tribes. ●

# volunteers



MOORLANDS BIBLE COLLEGE STUDENT, **MICHELLE WILLSON**, RELATES HER EXPERIENCES WORKING WITH BMS PERSONNEL IN BRAZIL FOR EIGHT WEEKS AS A BMS VOLUNTEER.

**A**s the plane touched down on the runway of Fortaleza, I felt excited and apprehensive about my next two months in Brazil. The vast difference between rich and poor made an immediate impact on me. On Christmas Eve I went with John and Norma Clark and members of their church, to take meals to those living in the poorest parts of the city. It was a very humbling experience. I remember at one point during the evening, standing still and looking up at a row of cardboard houses, struggling with my emotions as I witnessed sheer poverty first hand.

Tuesday evenings were spent with Andy Eaves and the Brazil Action Team working with the street children in the city centre. This work was overwhelming; the first week I went I didn't know how to react, watching the street children inhaling their bottles of glue. All the street children needed lots of hugs which I didn't find difficult to give, even when they smelt of stale urine and glue. I was particularly challenged about material possessions when I saw two men fighting over a cardboard box to sleep in that night.

I sponsor a little girl in south Brazil, and saw a similar project in operation at the church I attended with Mary Parsons. I visited the children in their classes at school and looked at how the sponsorship programme operates. It challenged me to write to my sponsored child more frequently.

I went with Mary to the antenatal clinic she works at, and talked to the mothers about their poor living



standards and the times they have to be at the hospital to queue for a blood test - 4.00am!

The work that impacted my life the most was at a Christian-run rehabilitation home for ex-street boys called Minha Casa, which means My House. The love for God that the boys have was so evident from the time I spent with them. Within three hours of arriving at the home, I sat outside on the wall and knew I had found what God wants me to do in the future.

From my time in Brazil, God challenged and changed me. I saw how much we have in the West, but learnt that this is nothing when we measure it to the confidence and security God gives us. It reinforced my need to put my security in God a lot more.

As the plane took off from Fortaleza, I looked out of the window watching the city get further away. I knew I had left something deep inside my heart behind and that God will take me back in the future. ●



# action teams

IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1999, TWO GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE MET FOR THE FIRST TIME AT 28:19 ACTION TEAM PRE-SELECTION WEEKENDS IN YORKSHIRE AND HEREFORDSHIRE. **ANDREW COOPER** WAS LATER SELECTED FOR THE 1999/2000 THAILAND TEAM.



**H**aving arrived at Gorsley Baptist Church, Herefordshire, I was pleasantly surprised when I was greeted by the smiling and somewhat excited Carolyn Cole, BMS Volunteers Co-ordinator. Somehow she seemed to know everyone's name, even though she had only seen most of us in small passport photos.

Once the introductions were over we were set our first task for the weekend. Wait for it – we were put into groups and told to go on a little walk around the countryside, using instructions that we had been given. All well and good, but it had been raining and there was the minor matter of it being pitch black (I suddenly realised that maybe it wasn't a good idea to try and be clever by not bothering to bring a torch, as was suggested). However we managed it, and were then told that the object of the exercise was to get us to talk to one

another. Some would say that could also be done in the warmth and the dry, but oh no, not Carolyn Cole!

There were various games that followed which gave us a real chance to get to know each other. The night was then spent by some in sleep, but others found the true meaning to life by staying awake for the best part of it, and keeping themselves entertained by playing table tennis, singing songs, chatting to people and eating – well I did anyway!

This was all well and good, but we were then dragged out of bed on Saturday morning at some shocking hour – but for a purpose. It was to give us time to take our Bible, find a quiet corner and spend some quality time in God's presence. For me this was great

because I was led to a really relevant Bible verse, which resulted in a lot of thought and talk between God and myself. It definitely made getting up early worthwhile.

During the morning we had various talks and presentations, which were brilliant. I learnt so much about BMS and Action Teams. After lunch it was our turn. We were given various tasks to do, which involved drama, and preparing and leading services. This gave us a chance to work in teams, and also face the daunting task of performing on stage.

In the evening, the PARTY, (that's what it said on the programme) started. In reality an evening meal, and then various games, followed by an interesting session of dancing that was quickly terminated due to lack of tunes – although several DJs were available.

Sunday morning came, and after a morning in church, we had some lunch and lastly had a short talk and debrief. It was then time to say our goodbyes and get back to our normal lives... until September, when the Action Team year begins... ●

## RAPE

There is a higher incidence of rape in militarised countries, where there is a great difference in the status of men and women, according to anthropologist Peggy Reeve Sanday who has collected data from more than 100 cultures. (LAP)

Sexual violence touches one in four girls worldwide, in most cases the aggressor is known by the victim/is often a family member.

## FOCUS ON BRAZIL

75% of 11-15 year old girls, of any class, will not tell anyone they have been raped. The estimated figure for sexual abuse including rape, is 15-17,000 in girls under the age of 18 years. In Brazil prostitution is a legal profession. And on TV, every soap has its local prostitutes! This may have some influence on the difficulties women encounter when they attempt to take a case of rape through the courts.

90% of the people who report rape are from the lower class sector of society: generally a person from the professional and middle classes is too ashamed/afraid to go to the police.

## ABORTION

Illegal abortions account for an estimated 20 to 25 per cent of maternal mortality worldwide. More than 200 women die every day from unsafe abortions. (New Internationalist, July 1998/WHO)

In Latin America, only Cuba permits abortion on demand. In other Latin American countries, such as Brazil, Mexico and Guatemala, abortions are allowed in the case of exceptional or therapeutic circumstances, for example, if the pregnancy resulted from rape, or if the mother's life was threatened. In Brazil, legal abortion is not common only in cases of rape of an underage girl or if the woman is HIV positive. Illegal back street abortions number 1,433,350. In Chile, abortion is forbidden under any circumstances; yet 35 per cent of all pregnancies in Chile end in abortion.

## PREGNANCIES THAT END IN ABORTION IN LATIN AMERICA

Chile	35%
Brazil	31%
Peru	30%
Dominican Rep	28%
Colombia	26%
Mexico	17%

(LAP)

## IN SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL:

In one year 1873 cases of rape were reported. Of the 1104 cases reported to the womens refuge police dept, the aggressor was: 41% the father; 21% the step-father; 14% an uncle; and altogether 85% were part of the family

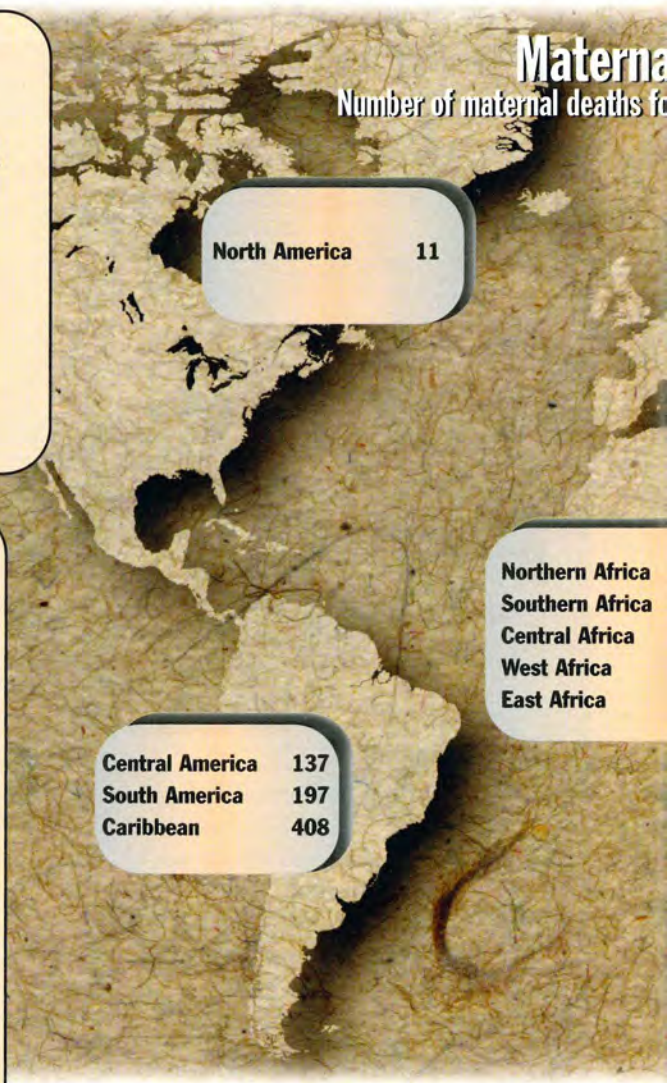
## IN FORTALEZA, BRAZIL:

492 cases of rape were reported, ten of whom were children of two years old. 44 cases of rape were against children and adolescents 82 women died as a result of domestic violence, and there were 10,402 emergency calls to the police relating to violence towards women.

(All figures refer to 1997)

Most research suggests much of the physical aggression is committed under the influence of alcohol while rape is not.

## Maternal Number of maternal deaths for



take



A basket of food for one of the families whose child attends the Compassion International project, Fortaleza, Brazil



**ANTENATAL CARE & DIET**

**Fortaleza, Brazil**

BMS nurse Mary Parsons did a survey in 1998 of 192 pregnant women at the Fortaleza Baptist Hospital involved in the Save the Child antenatal care project.

44 of the women had a weight of 8% lower than normal for their height and weeks of gestation.

135 had routine blood tests: of these 37 were anaemic.

A woman with poor nourishment during pregnancy is more likely to produce a low birth weight baby. Research in Brazil has shown a low birth weight baby faces an 11 times greater risk of death in the first year of life.

The Save the Child project has, for ten years, helped pregnant women in the high risk group by giving them basic foods: rice, beans, oil, cornmeal, powdered milk, iron and vitamins as well as multifort. The Multifort project was set up by BMS missionaries Mark and Suzana Greenwood both to provide a natural source of essential vitamins and minerals to pregnant women and to provide a few hours' employment to women living in the favela area. Multifort is a mixture made from bran, dried manioc leaves, ground melon, sesame seeds, and powdered egg shells. It can be added to soup, beans, fruit drinks or cake mixes.

**mortality**  
every 100,000 live births (1990)



**PREGNANCY**

A woman in Africa is 500 times more likely to die of pregnancy-related causes than a woman in Scandinavia.

(New Internationalist, July 1998)

**Pregnancies in Latin America:**

Of the 16.4 million pregnancies in Latin America in 1994:

- 28% were aborted
- 34% were unwanted/mistimed
- 38% were wanted births (LAP)

**MARRIAGE**

One in four women in Asia and Africa is married before the age of 16.

(New Internationalist, July 1998)

The risk of AIDS contamination from rape is thought to be 20 times higher than illicit voluntary sex.

HIV/AIDS has become a major cause of death among Brazilian women. Currently there are 45,000 people with AIDS in Brazil, 22% of them women.



All Brazil information came from Mary Parsons, BMS missionary and nurse

# Projects Prayer People

PROJECTS  
UPDATE 



## Project 9036

To support an evangelist and church planter  
in the Italian Baptist Union. Cost £9,000

# Italy

Churches in the Italian Baptist Union have had contact with people who have emigrated to Italy from many ethnic backgrounds. Some have formed their own separate congregations which worship in Baptist churches, whilst others have integrated into Italian churches. Tayo Taiwo Martins (known as T T), a Nigerian Baptist, has been employed by the Union as an evangelist and church planter, to work with people who are themselves new to Italy; principally Ghanaians, Nigerians, Filipinos, Chinese and Koreans. The Union provides the accommodation and ministry costs, and BMS shares in the support of this new and exciting project.

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



# PRAYER FOCUS

## Please pray for **Kosovo**

**P** **Pray for :**

- 1** Peace in Kosovo, that the Lord will keep pouring his Spirit on the leaders of Kosovo, Serbia and NATO nations, and bring long term solutions for all parts.
- 2** The hundreds of thousands of Kosovar refugees that are in Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro, that the Lord will keep watch over them and send his angels over these unprotected people.
- 3** For the efforts of the Evangelical Churches all over Albania to help the refugees. Pray for strength and resources for them.
- 4** Pray for volunteers from the churches that are involved in the humanitarian work. Pray for supernatural strength, and physical strength for all volunteers, young and old because they are all working too hard.
- 5** Most of the churches have put down their agendas and programmes and are focussing totally on the refugee work. Please pray for all the pastors and spiritual leaders of the churches, that the Lord will keep them strong spiritually.
- 6** Pray for Geni Begu as he feels the Lord has put him in a very strategic

place with his job as General Secretary of the Albanian Evangelical Alliance. Pray that the Lord will give him wisdom and strength to lead in a way that fulfils his will.

**7** Pray for the Kosovar church. There are seven evangelical churches in Kosovo. For the people from these churches, wherever they are now, pray for protection of their lives, their faith and their families. Pray that wherever they are they can meet with other Christians, and be part of the Body.

**8** Give thanks to the Lord in all circumstances. (from Geni Begu, General Secretary of the Albanian Evangelical Alliance)

**To add to this we would ask for prayer for BMS personnel working in Albania, all of whom have put aside their normal activities, to help with the refugee effort.**

**Pray for:** strength and stamina as they carry on this ministry day-in day-out. Pray that their health will be good and that they won't succumb to illnesses. Pray that God will be very real to them in this situation when time alone with God will be minimal.

**P** *Margaret Gibbs, teaching the children of missionaries in Durres*

**P** *Betsy & Saverio Guarna, church workers in Tirana*

**P** *Nikki & Roger Pearce working in education and medical work near Tirana*

**P** *Anne Roberts, supporting the church in Bregu-i-Lumit*

**P** *Heather & Ryder Rogers, church planting in the village of Bregu-i-Lumit*

**P** *John & Lynne Thompson and Jane Waites, volunteer teachers at GDQ school in Tirana*

**P** *David Clarke, a consultant civil engineer involved in renovating Vlova Hospital*

**P** *Elisabeth & Paul Towlson, involved in theological education and medical work in Durres*

**P** *David & Yvonne Wheeler, involved in engineering and nursing in Tirana*

Kosovar refugees climb uphill to board buses leaving a temporary refugee camp in Blace, Tuesday April 6, 1999, on the border of Macedonia and Kosovo. The United Nations refugee agency has estimated that hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanian refugees have fled the conflict in Kosovo, bringing stories of terror and forced expulsion at the hands of Serbian paramilitary forces.



FOTOGRAFIE ASSOCIATED PRESS AP



## Colin & Marcia Pavitt: Eldorado, Brazil

Colin and Marcia moved to Eldorado three years ago and planted a Baptist church there. Since then, the church has launched many social action initiatives, including a children's project offering education as well as fun to children who only go to school for part of the day. The couple are grateful to God for his provision in raising up someone to take over the running of the project, after its leader had to move away. While Marcia was at a conference relating to social action, she met up with a Bible college student who was hoping to do some work and training in the social action area. Everything fitted wonderfully into place and they have invited Mauro to do his college placement with Colin in the church work, and also to work with Marcia in the children's project. Some time ago their mother church bought a prefabricated house alongside the church building. This had stood almost empty, being used for storage and the children's library, so they transferred the books into one of the classrooms in the church building, and Mauro moved in. One of his talents is music, an area which Colin and Marcia have wanted to develop in the church, but have found difficult without qualified help. Now they say the church music group has improved 100 per cent!

### Please pray:

**P** For Mauro as he settles into his new work and gets to know the children at the project as well as the rest of the church members

**P** For continued growth in this young church which is reaching out so effectively



to its surrounding area

**P** for Colin and Marcia – for the continuation of good ideas for projects to implement, for health and strength

**P** for the right workers to be raised up to support each new endeavour

## Karen and Simon Collins: Luanda, Angola

It has been a long and bumpy road to Angola for Simon and Karen, including more than 18 months waiting for a visa to enter the country, concern that they would have to leave if a permanent visa was not issued and searching for months for suitable and permanent housing. Now all that appears to have come to an end as the couple finally entered the country at the end of November 1998 and have since been issued with residents' visas allowing them to begin their work, and they have moved into a new home which is situated just 15 minutes drive from their places of work. Their neighbours are a young American missionary couple, Mark and Kim, and their four year old daughter, Brianna, who are also recent arrivals in Angola. Throughout this difficult time, Simon and Karen have been aware of God's presence and are thankful for his goodness in providing these things and for the opportunity to form close friendships with some other missionaries who have proved to be a great source of comfort and support. Portuguese language study continues and their language skills have generally been holding up, although they did ask one of the street vendors for car shock absorbers instead of insect spray! Karen has begun teaching two English classes a week, two hours each. One is for complete beginners and the other an

elementary class and all her students are trainee pastors at the Bible seminary. She says: "I have to plan lessons to cover all eventualities as things rarely go to plan. At present there are only two Bibles in the seminary's library for the students to practice reading English." Simon, a GP, is involved in community health.

During the time the Collins' have been in Angola, the ongoing civil war has flared up to such an extent that the UN peacekeeping force has pulled out, claiming there is no longer any peace to keep. Several cities have fallen to the UNITA rebels and the Collins' have heard of church members being killed. Many more have come into Luanda as refugees, often having left all that they own and having walked for many miles.

### Please pray:

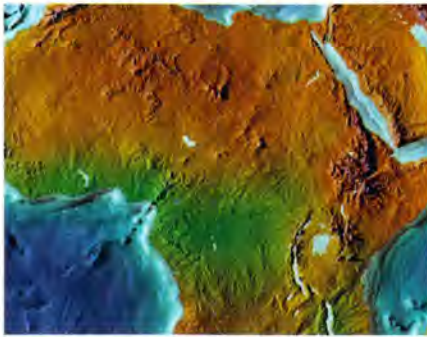
**P** for the safety of Simon, Karen and their colleagues and friends

**P** that they would settle quickly into their work and build good relationships with their colleagues – both national and expat

## Sarah and Sylvie, North Africa

Sarah and Sylvie both headed to North Africa on the same day in March after studying French together at a language school in Massy, France. Sarah is working as a nurse and Sylvie as a pre-school worker and both are also undergoing Arabic language studies.

Just prior to leaving the UK, Sarah wrote: "It has taken many years to reach this point, and although I have some niggling nervousness, I can witness to a tremendous sense of peace as I move into this next phase. The thought of



# PEOPLE WORLDWIDE



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

studying another language (never one of my strong points at school), I must confess, is at the moment causing me some anxiety. I do wonder why God has chosen me to serve him in this way but he knows that I will have to be utterly dependant on him. So I really do value your prayers.”

**Please pray:**

*That Sarah and Sylvie would settle quickly into their respective roles for good progress in language study, that they would quickly make good friends and settle into supportive churches*



## Simon and Kate Harry: Pokhara, Nepal

Primary school teachers Simon and Kate are members of Red Hill Baptist Church in Worcester. They went to Nepal in April where they will spend five months in language and orientation training before heading to the village of Syangja to share in a teacher training project for prospective teachers. This project will be linked to Gandaki Boarding School.

**Please pray for:**

*ability to learn the language well that they will make good Nepali friends that Kate and Simon will stay close to God and will let him use them*



## Viviane Kiri Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo



I met Christ in Congo’s western port city of Matadi in July 1992. A year later I began to feel a deep-down wish to speak of Jesus Christ to others, but I didn’t know where to start. God led me to come into contact with friends from Campus Crusade for Christ, and I did door-to-door work with them, and rejoiced to see souls come to Christ.

I realised God was calling me into his service – through a dream and through Scripture – but I closed my heart to this. It was a hard time, and people were praying for me. After three years of fighting, I said “Yes” to God.

But having said “Yes” I faced another problem. Where should I go to study? I came across a yellow-covered book entitled “Ton rôle pour faire arriver l’Evangile aux extrémités de la Terre” (Your role in getting the gospel to the ends of the earth,) edited by a Mr Bonkanya (BMS missionary John Mellor’s Congolese name). When I read it I discovered the existence of the International Centre for Missiology in Kinshasa. I knew immediately that this was where I should study. I was still at

Matadi (about 200 miles from Kinshasa), but the local Bas-Congo Scripture Union representative encouraged me to visit the Centre and gave me a letter of recommendation.

I am now in my third year of a five year course, and I bless the Lord for having directed me to the Centre by means of Mr Bonkanya’s book. May God bless him. It’s my prayer that more brothers and sisters will commit themselves to mission by means of this book.

John Mellor, BMS missionary in Congo.

## Uiratan and Neusa Fortaleza, Brazil



Uiratan works as a pastoral assistant with BMS missionaries Mark and Suzana Greenwood in Genibaú, Fortaleza. He was born in 1967 in Maranhão, north east Brazil, and moved to Fortaleza with his family when he was seven years old. He is married to Neusa, and together with their baby daughter Vitória, they live in a room at his parent’s home – seven others share the other two bedrooms:

Converted at the age of 18 at Jurema Baptist Church, close to Genibaú, Uiratan continued to worship there for the next twelve years. In 1994 he heard a powerful sermon on mission, and felt called to train for the ministry. He says he felt the need to learn more about God, and wanted to be better prepared to explain the deeper things of the faith, especially to friends involved in spiritist religions.

Uiratan believes he and Neusa participate together in his ministry, and they see their placement at Genibaú as valuable experience for future ministry. His prayer is that through their ministry they may help others to have a true encounter with God.

Mark and Suzana Greenwood (BMS church and community workers in Genibaú, Fortaleza).

## Baptist House News

### Welcome to:

#### David McLellan

David returns to the UK to take up the post of Manager for Mission Partnerships in the BMS Department for World Mission.

Since 1994 he has been working for BMS in Nepal as an information systems consultant for UMN, together with his wife Catherine. Before going overseas David worked with BP in Aberdeen and London, mainly in information technology and system areas.



information systems consultant for UMN, together with his wife Catherine. Before going overseas David worked with BP in Aberdeen and London, mainly in information technology and system areas.

#### Miriam Hadcocks



Miriam also joins the Department for World Mission team as a secretary. She has an art degree, and has also studied Biblical and Evangelistic

studies at Cliff College, and worked for USPG in Luton. She comes to Didcot having spent two years as the Ecumenical Chaplaincy Assistant at the University of Kent in Canterbury.

#### Keith Liddle

Keith joins BMS as a Senior Accounts Clerk in the Department of Finance and Administration, with particular responsibility for missionaries' allowances and pensions.



Previously he was headteacher at a school near Reading, but before entering the teaching profession he worked in the financial/accounting sector.

# BMS news



## New Vice-President



## New President

Andrew Green has taken over the presidency of the BMS following the AGM held at the Baptist Assembly in Bournemouth. Born to missionary parents in India, Andrew became a Christian just before he went to university. He is now senior pastor at Upton Vale Baptist Church, Torquay.

Andrew has travelled widely, leading missionary retreats, and visiting missionaries in Cameroon, Brazil, Asia and Europe.

This world perspective has led him to see that sadly, many Christians compartmentalise their lives. In his Presidential year Andrew will be visiting all areas of the UK covered by BMS Co-ordinators, and will be encouraging us all to make connections in our lives, especially between loving God and loving others too.

A former BMS missionary in Congo, Steve Mantle has served on the BMS General Committee since 1992, and on the BMS Board of Management since 1996. He was minister of Pear Tree Road Baptist Church, Derby, and is now minister at Chasewood Baptist Church, St Anns, Nottingham. He is grateful for all the people, who, at various stages of his life saw the potential in him that he was not able to see in himself.

Steve would like Baptists in the UK to have the opportunity to learn from, experience, and value faith experience of Christians from other nationalities. He says, "I would love us to explore cross-cultural and mission work, in the hope that it gives us both courage and humility to recognise we can learn from Christians all over the world, rather than thinking ours is the only and best way."



## New Candidates Accepted:

Kitty Brett along with Ken Robb and his wife Ruth are about to make the BMS history books as they have become the first BMS personnel accepted to work in South Central Asia.



### Kitty Brett

Kitty has a BA degree in History and Politics and an MTh in Pastoral Theology. She spent her teenage years in New Zealand and is currently in membership at Camberley Baptist Church. Kitty will work as Assistant to the Executive Director of IAM and will undertake language study as soon as possible.

### Ken and Ruth Robb

Ken and Ruth Robb are in membership at Queens Park Baptist Church, Glasgow. While at Queens Park Ken was a Sunday School teacher, Alpha group leader, and leader of a prayer and action group which works for the people in South Central Asia. He has been to Chechnya with YWAM, visiting a Baptist church there, helping with

their youth group, preaching and doing street evangelism. He will take on the role of Finance Manager at IAM.

Ruth too has had varied experience in Christian ministry. She has led short-term evangelistic missions to Denmark and Ghana; ran a children's ministry at Ichthus Church, London and established a ministry with YWAM to reach prostitutes in inner-city London. She has also been involved in counselling women on issues of drug abuse, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS and sexual



abuse. It is anticipated Ruth will be able to use her creative skills and initiate work amongst the women in her designated country.

These appointments are subject to IAM approval.

## Congratulations BMS!



BMS has successfully achieved the Investors in People award. This is a major achievement for BMS, and thanks go to all those involved in preparing for the award, particularly Michael Quantick, Administration Manager.

## Other Relief Fund grants

As well as £60,000 given to help Kosovan refugees (see page 6), other grants have been made to alleviate suffering:

### Bangladesh £15,000

An additional £15,000 has been given to help with the post-flood relief programme.

### Brazil £1,500

£1,500 has been given to provide support in the favelas of São Paulo, following severe flooding. Intensive rain flooded some of the favelas where BMS missionary David Meikle is working. This money will help with moving some of the families at most risk and the rebuilding of homes.

### Sierra Leone £2,000

This grant has been given to help with the shipment of food, clothing and medical aid to Sierra Leone.

## Check Out

July/August 1999

### July

#### Arrivals

Catherine & Robert Atkins from Toulouse, France  
David & Sheila Brown from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
Margaret Gibbs from Durres, Albania  
Wayne & Wendy Hadley from La Talaudière, France  
Chris & Sarah Mattock from Carlentini, Italy  
Nicola & Roger Pearce from Tirana, Albania  
John & Lynne Thompson from Tirana, Albania  
John & Sue Wilson from Morsang-sur-Orge, France

#### Departures

Catherine & Robert Atkins to Toulouse, France  
Joyce & Stuart Filby to Ostende, Belgium  
Wayne & Wendy Hadley to La Talaudière, France  
Philip & Rosemary Halliday to Paris, France  
John & Lynne Thompson to Tirana, Albania

### August

#### Arrivals

Elizabeth & Stephen Allford from Kinshasa, Congo  
Catherine & David McLellan from Kathmandu, Nepal  
Claire & Mark Ord from Genova, Italy  
Anne Roberts from Tirana, Albania  
Margaret Swires from Natal, Brazil

#### Departures

Margaret Gibbs to Durres, Albania  
Sue Headlam to Chandraghona, Bangladesh  
Heather & Ryder Rogers to Tirana, Albania



## Paradise Mislaid

Howard Bradley and Jonny Anstead – aka Paradise Mislaid – met when they were part of the BMS Action Teams. Now they are both studying at university, and using their holidays to write and perform Christian drama all over Britain. They say they are aiming primarily at teenagers and young adults, but their Easter performances proved that all ages enjoyed their shows.

'Love 'n' chips' will be on tour in the UK from 10 to 23 July, comprising of one hour, 15 minutes of comedy mixed with serious drama, in which the gospel message is presented in a clear and challenging way.

If you would like Paradise Mislaid to come to your church or youth group in July, please telephone Jonny Anstead on 01892 525080.

## Bexhill Delight

Members at Beulah Baptist Church, Bexhill, had already collected £750 for the BMS Relief Fund Balkan Appeal, when they discovered, to their delight, that two



Muslim Kosovar refugees were present in their evening service. Mission treasurer Angela McCulloch said, "They hardly spoke any English, and obviously could not understand what was going on, but God had led them to us, to show them an expression of his love." At that same evening service members at Beulah were also hosting a small party from Emmanuel Baptist Church in Timisoura, Romania, led by Pastor Marius Birgeon.

## August Bank Holiday

### Wye Valley? - Wye not?

August Bank Holiday this year will see the launch of the Wye Valley Christian Festival to be held Thursday to Monday at Gorsley, near Ross-on-Wye.

Including the now famous Flower Festival, over 20 mission agencies are involved, and BMS's work will be highlighted in the missions display marquee.

**BMS General Director Alistair Brown will be taking part giving the evening message on Friday.** Others



giving input include Helen Shapiro, Eddie Stobart and Jonathan Lamb.

The Festival organisers hope that the event will attract Christians and seekers who may not be able to afford to stay at larger Christian conferences.



Photographs: Top: Howard Bradley and Jonny Anstead  
Far left: Romanian visitors and members of Bexhill Baptist Church  
Above: Alistair Brown, General Director BMS  
Left: Symonds Yat (photo by Steve Cooper)

## Power struggles

**S**omeone wrote of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, that he was like a Banyan tree-strong and firm, but nothing grew under its branches. Perhaps that comment is more apt for other leaders. Those perceived as 'strong' leaders are often insecure men, unable to learn from criticism and dissent, who surround themselves with sycophants. Little wonder they leave behind a leadership vacuum when they die.

Sadly, many churches and para-church ministries are run by similar men. Everything centres on them, no one who is different blossoms under their leadership. A cloak of self-sufficiency hides deep-seated insecurity. Like political dynasties, power stays within families. Some well-known missionary organisations are still being run by expatriates. Many Christian institutions go through painful leadership crises when the "strong" leader moves on.

Cross-cultural missionaries, whether Asian, American or African, should be aiming primarily to work themselves out of a job. When this does not seem to be happening, the excuse often heard is that there is no national Christian who has the 'maturity' to take over. But this is to ignore the way we reach maturity. If God has entrusted his world, and his mission, to sinful and weak men and women like us, how then can we not risk trusting others with 'our' work?

But leadership requires not only that we pass on 'our' vision to the next generation, grooming others to take over 'our' work. It is the more humbling task of listening to the visions of others, accompanying them in their spiritual journeys and enabling them to obey their callings. Sometimes 'our' projects may have to die, so that God's purposes may be fulfilled.

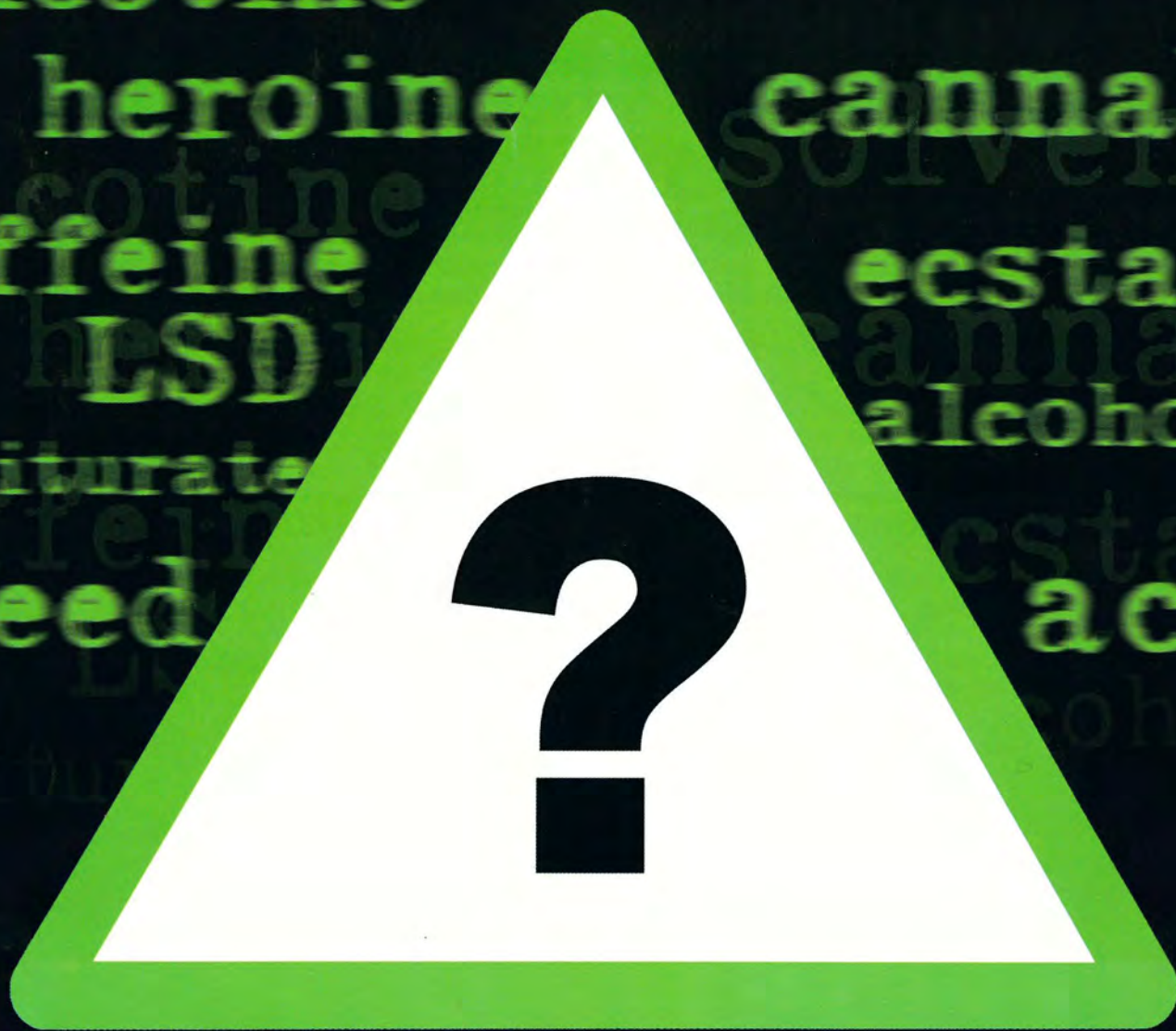


Vinoth Ramachandra is South Asia Regional Secretary of IFES



"Forget the mansions. I hope that in His Father's House there be bathrooms - plenty of bathrooms."

CARTOON BY DIK LAPINE



# DRUGS

A resource pack exploring the issues of drugs of all kinds – from coffee and chocolates to smoking, alcohol, solvent abuse, soft and hard drugs. Presented in a worldwide context, these issues are relevant to young people in the 14+ age group in Britain today.

Pack available free of charge from Autumn 1999  
Contact BMS Resource Department on 01235 517617  
or email: [resources@bms.org.uk](mailto:resources@bms.org.uk) for more information



Warning: Not reading this project could seriously damage your health