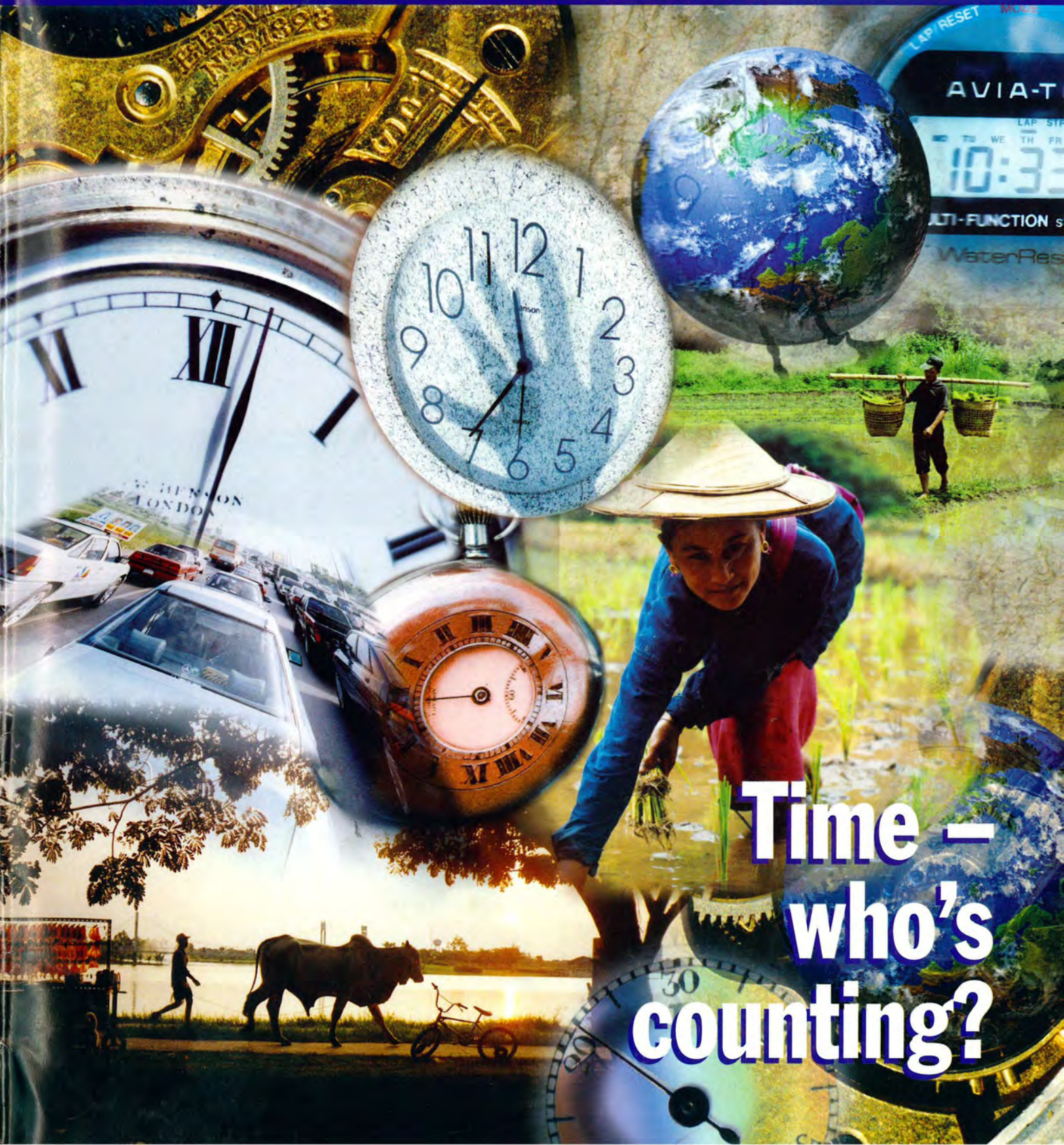


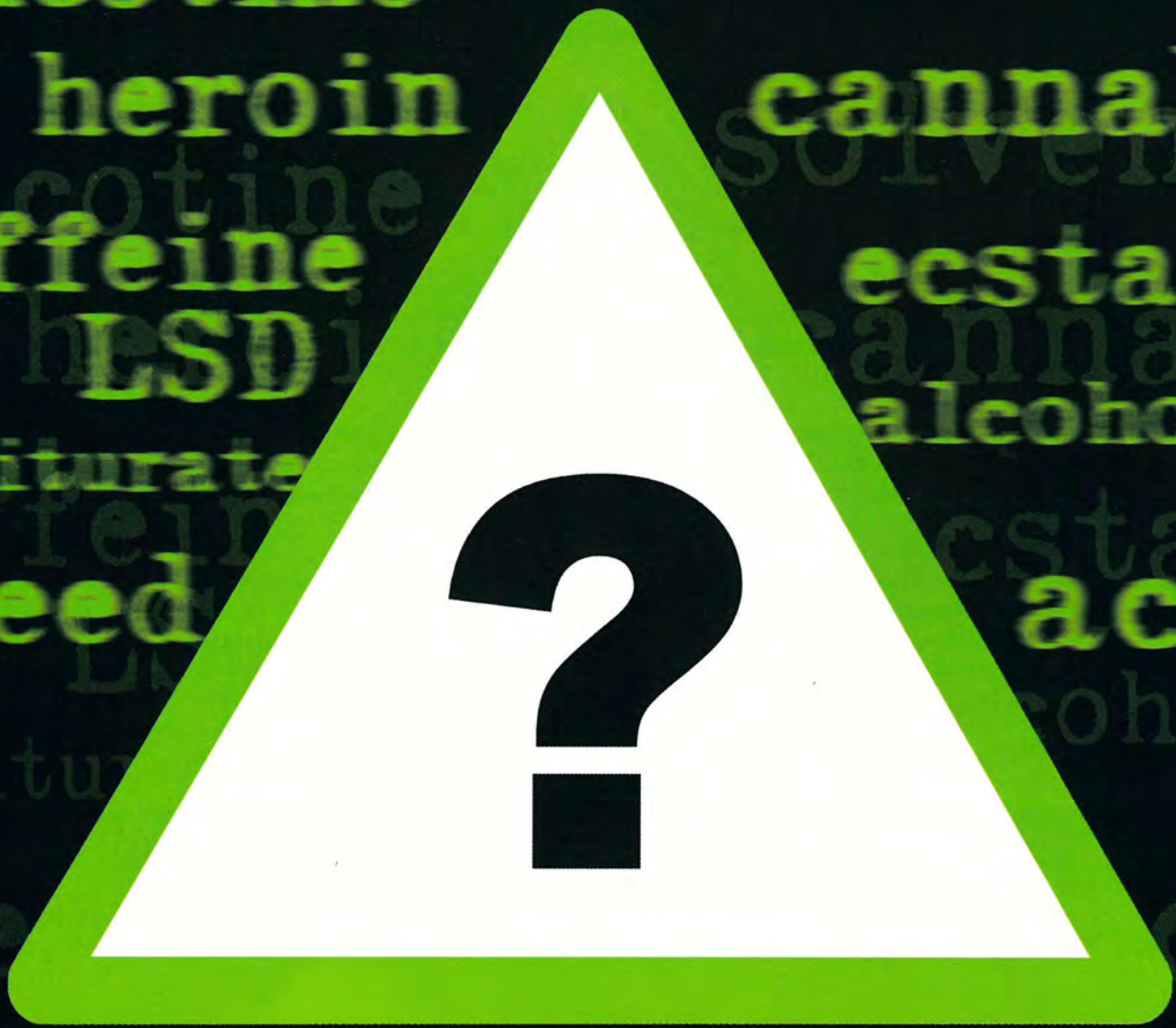
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COVER PICTURE MONTAGE BY SARAH PRENTICE

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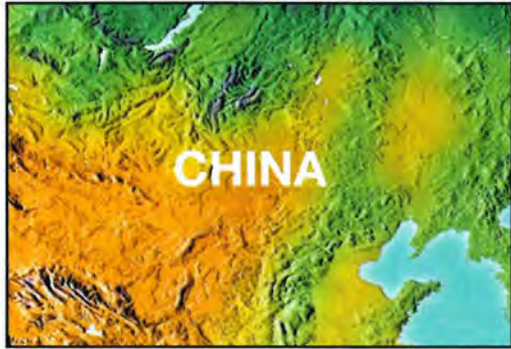
Time - who's counting?

m/h September / October 1999



news

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



China/United States Chinese leaders learn about Christ

Hundreds of Chinese leaders who are studying in the United States have attended a conference in San Diego, California in which they learnt about the basic beliefs of Christianity. The conference, 'China 99' was run by Dr Tom Phillips, President of International Students Inc (ISI), a 45 year-old organisation of Christian volunteers who want to have friendships with international students at US colleges. They help students learn – in Mandarin – more about American culture and, if they are interested, also about basic Christian beliefs. Conference attendees were given a chance

to discuss the implications of Christianity and consider how Christianity is relevant in China. The speakers were all Chinese Christian leaders from all over the world. One of

them, Dr David Aikman, former Beijing bureau chief for Time Magazine, commenting on 'China 99' said it gave scholars an "opportunity to learn as much as possible about how the Christian faith can change the lives, not just of individuals, but of entire nations." He commented, "I have always said that Chinese students and scholars in the US are the single most strategic missionary target group in the world." The Chinese students stayed with American host families, and were able to visit local tourist attractions. American Christians also attended – there was an English interpretation available – and sought to make one-to-one friendships with Chinese individuals. (Assist Communications)

DAVID AIKMAN



ASSIST COMMUNICATIONS

Brazil

Brazil's Catholic bishops have decided to ask forgiveness for its part in nearly four centuries of slavery, at next year's commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the first European landing in Brazil. An estimated four million slaves were transported from Africa to Brazil between the early 1500s and 1888 when Brazil officially abolished slavery. Priests not only accepted slavery, but sometimes even kept slaves. (LAP)

Italy

A modern ecumenical translation of Luke's gospel in seven languages – Italian, German, English, Spanish, French, Japanese and Arabic – has been printed by the United Bible Societies. It is available free of charge in hotels in Rome. The President of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy said 'holy theft' should not only be tolerated, but encouraged. (nev)

Guatemala

Proposals by the Guatemalan coffee producers to eliminate a minimum wage for their farm workers have been rejected by the General Guatemalan Workers central who say it will lead to exploitation of workers. It is claimed the minimum wage of US \$2.75 per day is the workers only guarantee of a steady income. The National Coffee Association has suggested paying employees on a per unit basis instead of a daily wage, maintaining it will increase productivity. (LAP)

Jordan

Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary (JETS) has now received all approvals to purchase eight acres of land in Amman, according to a report from president Imad Shehadeh. The procedure involved approvals from Jordanian intelligence and government officials for land ownership. "This is full recognition of JETS and all it stands for," said Shehadeh. "God has indeed blessed JETS in its unique presence and ministry in the Middle East." (EBPS)

Kenya

Joseph Misha, vice moderator of the Baptist Convention of Kenya has said, "There are 400,000 baptised members in 2,100 churches and 400 preaching points. We have tried to reach every place, every village and every one of our 42 tribes." (BWA)



Russia Bible still a rare book

“The Holy Bible is still a rare book in Russia,” Yekaterina Geneva, director general of Moscow’s Library for Foreign Literature told those present at a launch of a project to supply 46,000 Russian Bibles to provincial and prison libraries. Although there are over 150,000 local libraries in Russia, she explained, only a fraction of them even have a single copy of the Bible. Fr Georgi Chistyakov, member of the editorial board of Russian émigré newspaper *Russkaya Mysl*, confirmed that there was a great demand for Russian Bibles in the provinces, and added that the distribution of Bibles in minority languages of the Russian Federation was also required. Fr Aleksandr Borisov commented that although translations existed in languages such as Mari, Moldovian and Yakut, these had been prepared by the Stockholm Bible Translation Institute and had yet to be paid for. The President of the Moscow Interprovincial Currency Stock Exchange, Aleksandr



KESTON

Zakharov, is the main sponsor of the project. He said that Russian businessmen were prepared to support such ‘loss-making’ projects at a time when the country was beset with economic troubles. The brightest of them understood, he said, that no successful economic development was possible without honest and conscientious people: “You can’t build anything worthy and beautiful on a rubbish heap,” he added. (Keston News Service)

Australia Cyber- evangelists unite for ‘virtual outreach’

A small group of ‘wired’ Christians have established what is believed to be the first ‘virtual’ missionary

centre in the world – designed to reach out to the millions in cyberspace. Other Christian groups and organisations have previously used the World Wide Web to present the gospel, typically through ‘seeker sensitive’ sites that draw curious browsers to them. Allan Carrington, the project’s team leader said, “I am talking about being more proactive and going out into the cyberspace community, much like we do when we send teams out to preach and talk with people on the street; I know some individual Christians are doing it, but I am not aware of any organisation that is.” Carrington, a former printing and publishing businessman has over the past few years helped develop the use of the web by YWAM, and now has linked with others in Australia and the United States. Members of the team ‘meet’ together daily on-line to swap updates and prayer requests before ‘going out’ to share their faith in chat rooms, forums and networks. “It’s a very small start,” said Carrington, “but the possibilities for ministry are enormous. The Internet

problems or concerns, and we have an opportunity to come alongside and befriend them. I heard of one retired man who led several people to Christ in just a few months by going on-line. “Linking the cyber-evangelists in a team is important. A lot of Christians shy away from the Internet because of the negative way it is used for things like pornography. Christians need to be able to support and encourage one another – much as we would if we sent a team to do ministry in the red light district of some city. But as new communities and cultures are formed in cyberspace we have to be there among them, as Christians. Young people especially are rejecting the traditional infrastructures like the Church and turning to the Internet. One futurist has said that in the new millennium young people will be looking for their spiritual answers on the Web.” CYWAM – <http://www.unity.net.au/cywam> (YWAM News)



community is growing all the time, and in many ways it is a whole new mission field that has opened up to us. “Many people out there on the Web are looking for answers; they may have personal



Georgia Police break up evangelistic meeting

Georgian police have been accused of breaking up a series of evangelical rallies held in the Gldani district of the capital Tbilisi by the Pentecostal Madli Evangelical Church. Rallies held at the end of May on a Tbilisi housing estate were interrupted, and the pastor and congregation assaulted and verbally



abused by the Gldani police. The church had informed the police of the events before the rallies took place. The pastor Zaali Tkeshelashvili commented, "They didn't ban them, and told us they could go ahead." He believes the Gldani police themselves took the initiative in seeking to stop the rallies and attack participants, without official

sanction.

Rallies were held on 28 and 29 May; on the second day the pastor and his wife were asked to go to the Gldani police station, where they were asked to give a complete list of the names of people in their congregation. They refused to give the list, and after two hours were allowed to leave. They were not forbidden to meet publicly but were asked for the volume on the sound system to be reduced. On the next night their meeting was again interrupted, first of all by the police officers, and later by the Assistant Police Chief Ekizashvili who stormed into the meeting and forcibly removed the microphone from Pastor Tkeshelashvili as he was speaking. He insulted him and his wife, saying, "Go away from this place, I will kill you all!"

Ekizashvili lost self-control; struck the pastor's wife and pushed a 60-year old woman to the ground. This entire episode was recorded on video and in photographs. Soon after the Police Chief Tamaz Davitashvili arrived. Together with the other officers he attacked congregational members who were trying to protect

Alistair Brown



Reflects.....

I prefer prettier pictures than those which surround these words. They're outside and inside photos of the infectious diseases unit at Vlora hospital, Albania. When I was there in 1997 conditions were grim – broken windows, fungus infested walls, poorly equipped wards. Staff were making the best of a near-impossible situation.

Things are changing. With help from a special gift, BMS is transforming the building so that it's clean, bright and better equipped. The 'after' pictures should be wonderful compared to these 'before' shots.

But much about Albania isn't changing yet. Systems are weak, resources are few, people are desperately poor. It's the most impoverished nation in Europe.

That's made it hard for Albanians to watch the lavish outpouring of gifts and aid on the Kosovan refugees, and the vast amount of help being given to rebuild their land. Yes, they need aid, but many Kosovans are better off than most Albanians. And the Albanians aren't getting anything like the same help.

Through BMS many have been helping Kosovans. We'll keep doing so. But we won't forget neighbouring Albania. God's love doesn't come in blitzes. It goes on and on. Our love must be like that too. ●

Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS



the pastor. One member was thrown to the ground, kicked in the head and face, leaving him with three loose teeth; another was hit in the face and choked; others, including the pastor, were beaten. Immediately after this the police sought to arrest Pastor Tkeshelashvili, and

11 other members of the congregation; and to track down and remove the videotape documenting their violence against the congregation. The group went into hiding for several days, and eventually left Gldani with the help of some American friends. (Keston News Service)



YWAM



India Slum improvements open door for gospel

Missionary workers in Madras have helped hundreds of families escape flooding and sickness by laying concrete floors in their cramped, one-room homes.

Although the homes in this part of the city, where about 12,000 people live, have brick walls, tiled roofs and electricity, the mud floors became soaked during the monsoon season.

The missionaries arranged for the floors to be raised and bricked, and the walls plastered to further reduce damp. Residents were asked to make a small contribution to the \$20 per home cost, with the work carried out by a local mason who had become a Christian.

"The places are far more livable-in now. Because the area is next to a lake it would often flood or moisture would seep in. Now that the floors and walls are

cemented things are much cleaner, drier and nicer to live in," said Trevor Edgeworth, the programme overseer.

"We had the opportunity to share the gospel with many people through this project," he added. "Because they knew we were Christian social workers who were trying to help improve their lives, people would often ask questions about their situation and we were able to share with them, pray for them and demonstrate how we could bring about some change."

Since they began work in the area, staff have started a church and established a Sunday school programme that caters for over 1,000 children every Sunday. They are also involved in literacy training, medical care and a day care programme.

More recently they have started a savings service that involves over 200 women from the area. "We opened it because there are local money lenders who charge high interest which the people cannot pay back. They are then in financial bondage for years, and sometimes even end up having to give their possessions to the money lender to get out of debt." In this programme participants pay 30p each week to small groups, whose members decide where the money should be loaned. So far recipients have used the money to start local businesses to help support their families. (YWAM News)

action

card



Caring for War Victims

"The Renamo guerrillas came at 6.00am this morning," says Salida, a nurse at Chicuque Rural Methodist Hospital, Mozambique. "The next six hours I will never forget. My 25-year-old nephew was attacked. They cut his neck from his body in front of me. I fled and came to this hospital. I had to have courage. My faith kept me alive."

Her faith and that of the other nurses at Chicuque Hospital also kept many others alive. Throughout the civil war that tore Mozambique apart until the peace of 1992, they had to deal with endless war-related injuries. And in the few years following the war, the hospital's admissions were dominated by people hurt by landmines.


While those injuries have now fallen sharply, the nurses are still overloaded with work, as Chicuque Hospital is a regional medical centre. Home-related accidents are numerous, such as burns caused by domestic fires, and the hospital staff are taking an increasingly educational role in the community. Nurses at Bollobhur Hospital in Bangladesh face similar problems. "Please pray for seven-year-old Rubel, who was severely burned after the towel that he wore around his waist caught fire," says Gillian Rose, a UK missionary with the Church of Bangladesh. "Burns are a huge problem in the dry and dusty land, where it is impossible to keep anything clean. As with most other patients, Rubel was not brought here immediately after the accident. He arrived with all manner of strange concoctions smeared all over him, and already infected. It will take months for him to heal."

Please pray for these nurses and send your card, offering encouragement to:

Thomas Sengo
Escola Biblica Likumbe
PO Box 142
Maxixe-Inhambane
Mozambique

or to: Bollobhur Hospital
PO Kedargoni
Dt Mehepur
Bangladesh

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



Owen Clark

Honorine

a woman with a future

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

At last the July 1998 State Exam results were coming out. Now April 1999, it had been a long wait. The morning the Pedagogy list was published, Honorine hurried to the nearest newspaper stand. Breathless, she peered over a shoulder. Was her name there? Suddenly it leapt into focus. Matuzele Honorine! With a shriek, she turned and fled. She'd made it!

Finished school and got her State diploma! At 28. Honorine had left her village at the age of nine to join an older sister in Kinshasa. At Lisala church she attended a class which led to her baptism at 12. Eager to learn, she joined every course, seminar or retreat she could, and grew. In time she took her turn to help others to grow - led Bible Studies, trained in literacy work, taught women to read and went to Bolobo with a team to train other people. In house groups and women's meetings, she learnt to preach and under the Kinshasa regional evangelist, she faithfully served a struggling cause at Mikonga, beyond the airport, leading, preaching, visiting homes and organising. By 1994, now 23, Honorine was a mature, active Christian and a valuable church worker. Yet she felt at a crossroads. Having abandoned secondary school in her fourth year for lack of financial support, she couldn't go on

to further training. Should she look instead to marry and raise a family? She prayed that God would either open the way to go back to school, or provide a husband. At a seminar at Kimpese the answer came and, back in Kinshasa, she opted for school. Not easy - four years in school uniform with younger girls, submitting to the discipline, fending off male teachers - but she was heading somewhere. Friends provided the means, and she did the work - year by hard won year, until the State exams. No wonder she shrieked when she saw her name in the list. There's still a hard road ahead. She wants to prepare to better serve Christ and her country by studying Theology, Mission and Development - the biggest obstacle the cost. Honorine believes, however, that God loves her and has guided her steps to this point. Also, that her future is safe in his hands. ●
Owen Clark is a church worker with BMS in DRC



999

GEOFF BLAND TALKS ABOUT THE CONFUSION OF LIVING IN NOT ONE – BUT THREE – ERAS.

Thailand is the most easterly location in which BMS personnel are currently working. Due to the vagaries of time zones we shall be one millennium ahead of everyone in the UK for a full six hours on New Year's Day. Not that this is likely to cause any feeling of temporal superiority among the Thai people, for millennium fever is likely to be a bit of a non-event in a country whose calendar has already seen 542 years of the third millennium. When the clock turns midnight on December 31 it will be the start of the year 2543 of the Buddhist era and for the vast majority of Thai people that's the way they count it. New Year itself is an important holiday in Thailand – twice a year! In fact only twice each

year do most Thais have an extended break lasting several days, and both of these occasions are New Year holidays.

In the past the Thai calendar began on April 13 and still today this Songkran festival is celebrated as the most important Thai holiday and is widely referred to as the Thai New Year. All work places close for three days of national holiday and migrant workers in the cities return in huge numbers on an annual visit to their home villages. They are unlikely to reach home dry, as one of the hallmarks of the holiday is the liberal throwing of water in joyful anticipation of the coming of the rainy season. With the arrival of the rain the rice will again be planted and the annual cycle of harvest can begin once again.

Though Thais continue to number the years according to the Buddhist era, since 2484 (ie 1941) the official New Year's Day has been January 1, in order for the year itself to be in line with the western calendar. This is a practical necessity with a tangible benefit – a second New Year holiday! So while Christmas is a normal working day that passes by largely unnoticed, both December 31 and January 1 are public holidays here.

There is in fact a third New Year celebration in Thailand, recognised by the large Chinese community. This falls some time in February, and though it is not a public or bank holiday, most of the Chinese-owned shops and businesses close for several days. As the Chinese community is responsible for over 90 per cent of Bangkok's commercial activity, the city once again becomes a shadow of its normal self. There are just three times

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October 1999 mb

time – who's counting?

um starts here!

in the year when Bangkok is quite a pleasant place to drive around – and on all three occasions it's because it is New Year!

But the lack of millennium fever is not only due to following a different calendar. Even if the calendar was the same, it is unlikely that the millennium idea would generate the same excitement here. There is, in fact, no Thai word for millennium. Look up the word 'decade' or 'century' in an English/Thai dictionary and you will find a single Thai word with the identical meaning. But with the word 'millennium' the dictionary must resort to explaining that this refers to a period of one thousand years, for the Thai language manages quite well without a particular word for this period of time.

And really that makes a lot of sense. Despite all the hype and 'fever', a millennium is a pretty irrelevant concept for all practical purposes. A century is a much more manageable chunk of time for us to look back over with celebration and look ahead to with anticipation. A century allows for three generations, the usual range of relationships in human families, but even the most devoted students of their family trees have no sense of family continuity over a thousand years.

The anticipation of another millennium might make a great excuse for a party but could itself cause us to overlook the more obvious and

meaningful challenge that comes at the start of any new century. What are the differences that we could and should be making in our world during the next hundred years? It would be very sad if we overlooked that more manageable question because of preoccupation with the exciting but shallow millennium idea. So, personally speaking, I don't mind at all that by being in Thailand millennium fever is largely passing us by unnoticed. Call me a party-pooper if you like, but when it comes to December 31 I don't want to focus primarily on it being the start of a new millennium. I shall as always welcome the opportunity to look back on the past year with thanksgiving and to look ahead to the new year with fresh dedication to God. And this year there will be an additional very special factor – I will be able to look back over the century that has passed and look ahead to the new century that is about to begin. That's more than enough for someone who expects to last about three score years and ten. ●

Geoff Bland is a BMS missionary involved in theological education in Bangkok, Thailand.

the test



JOHN FURMAGE TALKS ABOUT SOME IMPORTANT DATES IN BRAZIL

It is rather weird that here in Brazil there does not seem to be too much excitement or even interest about the turn of the century. The date to watch here is 22 April 2000, and it is to this date that we have nightly countdowns on TV and elsewhere. On that day in the year 1500, Pedro Alves Cabral made the first European landing in Brazil, so the country is celebrating 500 years since its discovery. Cabral had set out from Portugal with 13 ships, 1,200 men and eight Franciscan monks in the hope of reaching India. They landed near Salvador, Brazil's first capital. In such a tropical paradise they boasted that God was a Brazilian, although such confidence has wavered recently. However if they are right, and God is a Brazilian, then perhaps everything could come together nicely

on 22 April 2000 if that day is also the date of the end of the world. The paranoia about the Millennium Bug seems to have overshadowed most of the prophets of the end of the world in 2000. A number of dates for the

**“Was Chernobyl
a trial run for the
end of the world
2000 scenario?”**

second coming of Christ are being offered by various Christian groups. ‘INRI Cristo’ our resident incarnation in Curitiba seems to be silent, but since he is already here, perhaps a suggestion on the end of the world might be more appropriate. The Y2K bug, from all the hype, is the apocalyptic agent to watch. One might expect that Brazil will be badly affected as banks, etc, computerised long before their British counterparts, but as they upgrade very rapidly here those

computers and programs that only used two digits for the year are probably all gone now. Brazilians upgrade at a frenetic rate; for example, the Income Tax department accepted returns on floppy disks last year and via the Internet as well this year.

There's also another problem that no one is talking about: year 2000 viruses. The virus Chernobyl, which hit on the anniversary of the disaster this year, is expected back via the Internet to destroy most modern computers minds and force you to buy a new motherboard. My nephew got it last month, but was fortunate; he only lost the contents of his hard drive. Was Chernobyl a trial run for the end of the world 2000 scenario? If I was a betting man I would put money on it. No wonder no one is talking about it: it is just too horrendous to contemplate, rather like the end of the world itself, except that this one will make a lot of people a lot of money in increased sales.

Having said that, some folks thought that the end had come in January when the long-awaited currency crash finally came. Over a few days the real plunged to less than half its value against the dollar. All sorts of high jinks and rumours helped it spiral out of control to such an extent that now it is slowly coming back to where it will probably stabilise at about 40 per cent of a devaluation or

of time

time – who's counting?



1.7 to the dollar. Inflation, which was at British levels, jumped to about 3.61 per cent a month in February, and has oddly enough, fallen to -0.32 per cent in May. Government projections are that it will be around six per cent on the year. You can believe that if you like! But there are other things happening at this time. The Brazilian Baptist Convention is finishing a ten year programme with a simultaneous evangelistic campaign in 1999 using the slogan 'Jesus Christ is the Only Hope.' It could not happen in 2000. That will be an election year and they just could not afford advertising space with all the politicians vying to announce their plans. Even the free space obtained by painting road side rocks will be at a premium. In a previous campaign in the 60s, a candidate whose name was Jesus Christ – I kid you not – went round painting his ballot sheet number under all the propaganda; I often wonder if he was elected. The campaign has all sorts of targets like 6,000 new churches, which at the moment seem unlikely to be reached. The major cities plan, or have had,

traditional mass evangelistic crusades with American evangelists; at least one of whom comes free if you will write it up in the Baptist Weekly. To the small churches in the interior, like Dois Vizinhos, struggling for survival, it is all rather irrelevant. Our churches do not have the money, so we are concentrating on well-tryed programmes. It is a delight to see in the south west of Paraná a new concentration of testimonies of authentic Christian living, teaching of the living word of God and fervent, believing prayer. There is a hunger for the Word here for the first time, and the Lord is adding to the church. However, any lack of enthusiasm for the national campaign in Paraná state may be because the first Baptist church in Paraná started on 7 September 1903,

so the Baptists here will have to wait until 2003 to celebrate 100 years of Baptist work in the state. I'm supposed to be organising that celebration in this neck of the woods! Which date will turn out to be the most important? We will have to wait and see. ●

John Furnage is a church worker with the BMS in Brazil.



when **time** stands

**DELYTH WYN
DAVIES** RECALLS

Once upon a time – I was sent to what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo for an awareness visit. I had been warned that the concept of time there was entirely different to that I was used to, but experiencing it for myself brought quite a few surprises. Here are some extracts from my diary record:

Upoto – Sunday, 3 November.
Boy, do they get up early here! At 4.30am I could hear a choir singing and it was still dark. It must be the keen ones having a prayer meeting I thought to myself. Then to my amazement I heard a church bell at 4.45am and again at ten minutes intervals. Suddenly there were many voices to be heard in the vicinity. People were obviously up and about at this early hour and judging by the noise level, were even being very sociable.

I'd been lying awake in my bed for some time and as I was so intrigued by all the activity, I decided to get up and watch what was going on. As day was dawning the fishermen were already in their pirogues gliding gracefully on the river and many people and children were carrying things on their heads around the village. Within a few minutes a group of men had gathered on the steps which lead into the church and I could hear singing and then a man speaking. It was only around 6.00am and two meetings of some kind had already taken place!

The first visitor of the day arrived soon after I had washed and changed. This was an experience that occurred quite often and one which I found really hard to understand. Who wants to entertain visitors before you've had time to wake up properly or have your breakfast?

Here in Upoto my visitor was on a

courtesy call. It was the Sunday school director who is also a pastor. He had come to escort me to the Sunday school which was to start at 7.30am. When we arrived, the classroom was full of children aged between two and 18.

After Sunday school finished and only four hours after waking up, it was now time for breakfast! Then I had to wait for the call to go to the main worship service. The church bell had been ringing since 8.30am and arriving at the church I saw a boy standing on the back pew pulling the rope for the bell. A choir was singing and we had a time of informal singing until the service started at 9.35am.

What a service – it lasted four hours and the communion part was still to come! I was amazed that I had not even noticed so much time had gone by. During the first part we had five choirs taking their turn to sing and it seemed that each choir had been determined to share a song that was longer than its predecessor! We then saw two babies dedicated, and visitors from other churches welcomed before the sermon. Between each of these items a choir would share a song. Then the fun started with the collection. As in the usual tradition each person was to come forward and place their gift in a basket at the front, guests first, then the children, then the men who were all sitting on the left hand side and lastly the women who were on the right hand side. This was done to the sound of lively African singing. Everyone was dancing and waving their arms and although it probably took an hour to happen, it was thoroughly enjoyable. Finally at 1.30pm the service finished and I was taken to the door to shake hands with everyone leaving the church. I discovered later that there

were 1,200 in the congregation, though I did not need a head count to tell me how clammy my hands were! Here people have time for each other, to shake hands with everyone or to visit a grave and spend time with those who are grieving. We, in our fast moving Western world, are the ones who are slow to appreciate how precious time can be.

After a brief break to wash our hands and have a cup of tea at home I returned to the church for the communion part of the service. The atmosphere was entirely different at communion with everyone in a solemn and quiet manner. Some time was spent in the act of receiving four members who had been excommunicated and following some thoughts on the parable of the lost sheep, the four were asked to kneel whilst the pastor prayed. The brief glimpse of him holding each one by hand and helping to lift them to their feet was a most powerful demonstration of God's love and reconciliation and will remain with me for a lifetime.

Lunch was served at 3.30pm and the rest of the day, what was left of it, was free for relaxation. Having rested for a while I went out to watch the sunset over the river. This was the first opportunity that I had to watch the very quick sunset that they have so near the equator. Soon it was dark and the sky seemed so vast, stretching endlessly in all directions and full of bright stars. This was a time to savour and an opportunity to be grateful for the privilege of spending time in a land where time often stands still. ●

Delyth Wyn Davies is BMS
Co-ordinator for North and West
Wales



time – who's counting?

still



Above: Upoto Church
Right: Church choir
Far right: Church offering
Below: Sunday School



“We in our fast moving Western world, are the ones who are slow to appreciate how **precious time** can be.”



evangelism in the new millennium

TONY CUPIT LOOKS AT EVANGELISM IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

The 20th century is racing to a close and a new century is soon to begin. That in itself is momentous, but when coupled with the start of a millennium, it is big news.

The arrival of a new millennium is too big an occasion to ignore. The secular world will squeeze every possible marketing and publicity ounce from it. Politicians are beginning to position themselves for the fleeting glory of being in office at this significant moment in history. Travel companies will arrange for the affluent to see the first touch of sunlight as a millennial dawn touches the Pacific sky. New music to mark the transition will emerge, poems will be composed, entertainers will vie for prominence, as monstrous concerts will be staged before huge audiences. Some of this will be positive and wholesome, much of it will not. Indeed, the occasion offers the possibility of a huge Bacchanalian orgy of drunkenness, promiscuity and violence from a world whose ideas of celebration are too often marked by hedonism and licence.

How should the Christian Church react? What will we Baptists do to mark the moment? Should the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) take some

leadership in this? Certainly whatever is done must be with humility and an acknowledgement of how the Church has so often failed Christ and his people. But with all the theological, chronological and emotional hesitation we may have about the event, it is our good news to be shared with people everywhere. To leave the celebration to the non-Christian world would be to abrogate our responsibility as followers of Jesus Christ. It is hoped and anticipated that BWA member bodies will want to celebrate two millennia of the Christian era and be in the vanguard of acknowledging that a new century/millennium recognises the birth of a Saviour 2,000 years ago. In general terms the BWA will be marking the end and beginning of a millennium in three ways:

- 1 Encouraging member bodies to engage in their own celebrations either at a point in time or over a period that straddles these anniversary events.**
- 2 At a suitable time all BWA member bodies will be invited to be involved in a major evangelistic effort that is relevant to the circumstances of the country where the union or convention is placed. The BWA's Division of Evangelism and Education is seeking to bring leadership to this.**
- 3 A Baptist world congress will convene in Melbourne, Australia in January 2000, a very appropriate time for Baptists from all**

over the globe to bring our worship, love and praise to the Christ whose incarnation is the reason for the millennial celebrations and whose death and resurrection continues to offer hope to a needy world as the new era begins. ●

Tony Cupit is the Director of Evangelism and Education for the Baptist World Alliance

(REPRINTED FROM 'THE DEED' WITH PERMISSION)

FOOTNOTE: *The Baptist Union of Great Britain, Baptist Union of Scotland and Baptist Union of Wales are all members of the Baptist World Alliance. The Baptist World Alliance is a fellowship of 188 Baptist unions and conventions comprising a membership of about 42 million baptised believers.*





Above & left: All Africa Baptist leaders



Above: Latin American leaders
Below: All Africa Baptist leaders
Right: BWA poster



Because Christians will acknowledge the birth of Jesus Christ in 2000 AD, BWA encourages you to:

- Declare that He alone is Lord!
- Celebrate the coming millenium!
- Join with Christians everywhere in telling the world about our crucified and risen Savior.



The millennium bandwagon rolls on STEVE FLASHMAN

A very famous chicken hit the headlines in the early 1800s when it laid an egg with the date 1809 printed on it! The owner, fortune teller Mary Bateman, persuaded a lot of people that this was a clear prediction of doomsday. Apparently the chicken had laid a whole series of eggs with various predictions printed on them and people were paying a lot of money to get their personalised egg message! It wasn't until someone interrupted Ms Bateman stuffing an egg up the rear end of this unfortunate chicken, that the fraud was exposed!

More recently Edgar Whisenaut wrote a best selling book entitled, "88 Reasons Why the Rapture is in 1988". Not many people bought the sequel! And Marilyn Agee, a so-called 'expert' on Bible prophecy posted her prediction on the internet with the words, "We are running out of time to get right with God!" Her predicted date for the rapture – 31 May 1998.

Alongside all the talk about "doomsday", the advance of scientific discovery is unstoppable. With the impending advent of nanotechnology, where tiny computers can store one million trillion bytes of memory in one cubic millimetre and plans being made to land men on Mars, you would think that the millennium world would also bring advances in the areas of justice, peace and equality. The reality is that in the last 30 years the economic gap between rich and poor countries has doubled; wars in the last ten years have resulted in more children than soldiers being killed and disabled; and the £2.5 billion that the British spend on clothes every three months would more than pay off Africa's entire debt to Britain! The millions of underprivileged people in the Developing World are not concerned about how they will celebrate the millennium – most probably don't even know what the date is. And who cares anyway when your prime concern is how to feed your children today. Their lives hang in the balance in the precarious world in which they live, like a perpetual doomsday of epic proportions threatening to engulf everything around them.

The Christian Church has spread all over the planet and just like the billions of little lights that are picked up by satellite pictures of earth wherever there are people living, the light that we are called to bring must shine. We have a tremendous opportunity as we approach the millennium to draw attention to the Jesus who said, "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come." ●



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

rt in Evangelism



David McLellan is passing the time in

The Himalayan mountain kingdom of Nepal is either four and three quarter, or five and three quarter hours ahead of the UK, depending on the status of British Summer Time. Nepal has no seasonal time adjustment, and most Nepalis react with astonishment and disbelief to hear that every single clock in Britain is adjusted by an hour forwards, and then by an hour backwards at special days each year. When you stop to think about it, it is quite a social achievement for the UK!

Meanwhile, Nepal, sandwiched between its two powerful neighbours, India and China, jealously guards its distinct identity, by having a unique time zone.

Being a quarter of an hour ahead of India, it is quite common to see visitors who have come to Nepal from there, arrive for appointments 15 minutes late. With the somewhat more relaxed attitude to schedules in this part of Asia, it can be several days before the

**“it is possible to
celebrate at least
four new years
in any stretch of
365 days”**

embarrassed visitor discovers the cause of their unintended impunctuality.

But as millennium fever sweeps the planet, there is more time variation in Nepal than just those measured by clocks. As you fly into Kathmandu, you may be told the local time, but the flight attendant will probably not have enough time to explain the date.

Nepal has a number of different calendars and it is possible to celebrate at least four new years in any stretch of 365 days. Some Nepali communities recognise the Chinese New Year in February, while the Newars, the dominant ethnic group of the Kathmandu Valley, mark their new year

in November.

However, the two most commonly used systems are the standard Gregorian calendar, as used in Britain and many other countries, and the Vikram Sambat calendar. The top of a Nepali newspaper usually carries both dates: as I write, the Kathmandu Post declares it to be May 26, 1999, and Jestha 12, 2056.

What then is the fuss about a new millennium, when Nepal celebrated it, in mid-April, 56 years ago! The Vikram Sambat (VS) calendar originates from the date of the coronation of King Vikramaditya of Madhya Pradesh in India, who was reputedly responsible for a revival in Hinduism. As a Hindu kingdom, Nepal has retained the VS calendar, in contrast to its almost total decline in the more diverse states of India.

In some ways the calendar is familiar to western eyes, having twelve months each with around 30 days, but the old adage of – 30 days hath September –



Left: UMN Headquarters



nepal



has no counterpart in Nepali, as the number of days in each month varies from year to year. So Jestha this year and last year had 31 days, but in 2054 and 2053 it had 32 days! Consider yourself fortunate if the only complexity in your year is whether February has 28 or 29 days – and that with a well defined rule. There are no easy rules for the VS months which vary from 29 to 32 days with no predetermined pattern. As an added complication, most months have two different names, so Jestha is also known as Jet.

The VS calendar is set by a group of Hindu astrologers who confer and define it around various 'auspicious' events. This includes setting the dates for the large number of Hindu festivals, many of which depend on the position of the moon. However, these dates are only announced a few months before the start of the new VS year, which can make forward planning a trifle difficult. Take, for example, the next year 2057 VS, which begins in mid-April 2000.

The dates for 2057 will not be known until 1 January or February 2000, so if you want to plan a year ahead using the VS calendar, you won't know the exact dates for another eight or nine months! Some departments of the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) design and publish calendars or diaries, in both Gregorian and VS formats, and often have to pay a fee to receive the dates sufficiently in advance to meet printing schedules.

In UMN, as in many other organisations in Nepal, both calendars are used. Staff are paid on the last day of the VS month, corresponding roughly to the middle of the Gregorian month and, for similar reasons, the UMN financial year runs from mid-July to mid-July. All of which means that the precise dates for paydays and even such a key event as the end of the financial year, are not clearly defined until between three and 15 months in advance. So, is that more complicated than adjusting all the nation's clocks by

an hour, twice a year?!

Why then, you may ask, does Nepal not get in step with the rest of the world? Is it such a big issue to be out of step – the rest of the world is not as well-defined as we often think. Culture in Nepal is different from culture in Birmingham, Boston and Baghdad, just as culture in those three cities varies one from the other.

Which is the standard for the others to follow? Certainly, those of us who are Christians would recognise Jesus Christ as the standard to follow in many areas of life, whatever our cultural background. At other times, however, it may be sufficient to recognise, appreciate and even revel in cultural differences, without trying to make others step – in time – with us. ●



David McLellan was formerly UMN HQ Director and is now BMS Manager for Mission Partnerships based in Didcot, UK



A SERIES EDITED BY **JAN KENDALL** THAT LOOKS AT TOWNS AND CITIES AROUND THE WORLD WHERE BMS PERSONNEL ARE WORKING BY **KEVIN & LINDA DONAGHY** and **BARBARA & KEITH HODGES**

Background

As ancient explorers sailed up the Tejo River from the Atlantic Ocean, they reached a point about eight miles above the mouth where the river suddenly broadened into a lake. The northwest bank of this sheltered estuary became the site of Lisbon – Portugal's

capital as well as its largest city and port.

The city stands on seven hills around a small riverside plain. The climate is cool and wet from December through to February, but very warm in July and August. Evenings are chilled by ocean winds.

Lisbon is a city of distinct sections dating from different periods. The oldest part is the Alfama, the medieval quarter. Its narrow, cobbled streets and alleys wind steep, crooked paths up the slope of Lisbon's highest hill. At the top stands the ten-towered medieval castle of St George, Lisbon's oldest monument, parts of which date back to the fifth century.

On another hill is the Bairro Alto, the high quarter, which dates from the 17th century. The streets are steep and narrow, but much straighter than those of the Alfama. The Bairro Alto is known for its craftspeople and its nightlife. This

is the commercial Baixa district, centred on the crowded cafés and neon lights of Rossio Square.

There tall modern office buildings tower above the fountains and cafés of the tree-lined Avenida da Liberdade; modern low-cost complexes have been build on the outskirts of the city.

First Impressions

- Traffic chaos, impossible parking, getting lost.
- A mixture of old and new – old electric tram cars in some parts and very narrow streets together with new large shopping centres. (The Colombo Shopping Centre is on five floors!) Old bakery shops and Marks and Spencer!
- The centre of Lisbon is a hive of activity with shops, opera house, and cultural activities. Yet it has an olde worlde charm.



Lisbon



History

The Greek hero Ulysses is Lisbon's legendary founder. Archaeological evidence suggests that the site was occupied as early as 5000 BC and that a Phoenician trading settlement may have established there before the Romans occupied the site in 205 BC. The Romans built roads, walls and baths. The city fell to the Visigoths in the sixth century, and 200 years later the Visigothic city fell in turn to the Moors – Muslims from Northern Africa who entered Europe by way of Gibraltar. In 1147 the Moors were driven out by the king of Portugal, Afonso Henriques (1109-85). His successors recaptured Lisbon as their royal capital.

The 15th and 16th centuries were Portugal's golden age of exploration and discovery. During this time, Lisbon became the commercial centre for the Portuguese empire.

Disaster struck Lisbon on 1 November 1755, when an earthquake destroyed two-thirds of the city with extreme loss of life. The Baixa district was planned and built on the devastated plain at the city's centre. Another disaster struck the city in 1988, when a fire destroyed the historic Chiado shopping district, leaving 2,000 people without jobs and 300 homeless.

Politics

Portugal as a whole has just celebrated 25 years since the revolution, which brought down the Salazar regime,

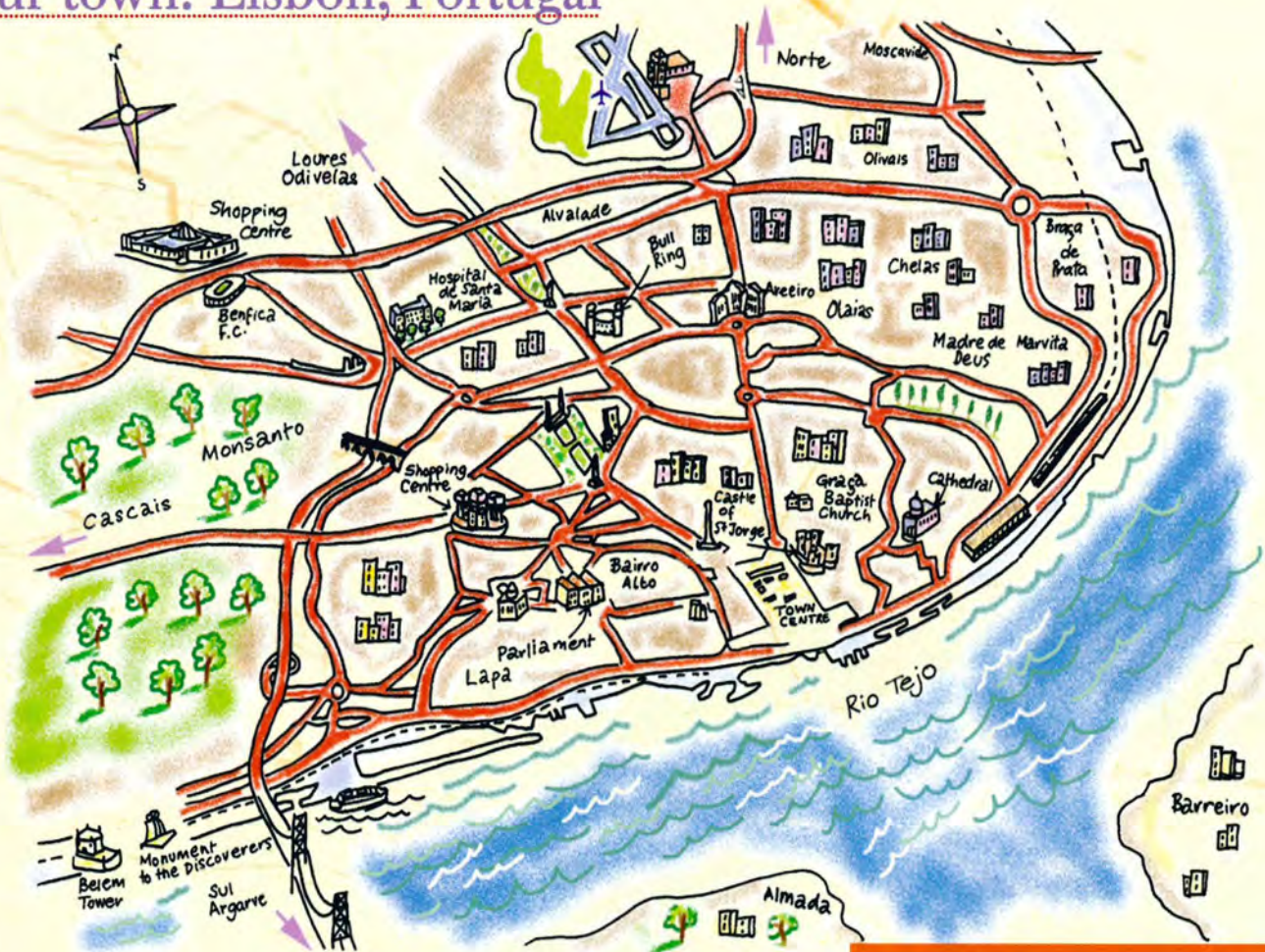
which had been in power since 1932. Since 1974 when the revolution of Carnations occurred – so called because there was little bloodshed, and many of the soldiers who led the revolt were given red carnations to wear by members of the public – the government has been a Parliamentary democracy with a President.

People

In 1991 Lisbon's official population was given as 677,790, but the population of Greater Lisbon, including Carnaxide where the Hodges are based, would take it well over two million. The city of Barreiro where the Donaghys work, has a population of 50,000.

Carnaxide has Angolans,

our town: Lisbon, Portugal



Lisbon



Mozambicans and South Africans integrated into the society.

Economy

Lisbon's economic life centres around the harbour. Port wine and cork are characteristic exports. Industrial products include porcelain ceramics – the city is noted for its distinctive tiles; expertly crafted leather goods and shoes; and copper ware. Industrial development is concentrated outside the city on the opposite bank of the Tejo. Barreiro is chiefly known for its chemical works and everyday large

amounts of – something – is seen pouring out of these factory chimneys. The Ponte 25 de Abril suspension bridge, and more recently the new bridge, Ponte Vasco de Gama, the longest bridge in Europe at about 11 miles in length, link the two sides of the river.

Religion

There are only three Baptist churches in the city of Lisbon, and some more in the satellite towns, but overall the Baptist church is still very small in relation to the population. In the whole

of Portugal there are only 62 Baptist churches with 4,379 members.

Barreiro

Kevin and Linda work in Barreiro, which is more and more becoming a suburb of Lisbon, although it has a completely different feel to it. The quickest way to get from Barreiro to Lisbon is the 35 minute ferry ride. The ferries run for 18 hours a day, and there's one every ten minutes at peak periods. There are also ferries from Lisbon to four other cities on the south bank, and the journey times take from ten to 50 minutes. In



Above: Monument to the Discoverers



the rush hour the river is very busy, and there have been a number of collisions between ferries. By car the journey takes 45 minutes, but you can get held up on the old bridge for as long as an hour and a half. Both bridges have tolls and the chances of finding a parking place in Lisbon are very slim. This year a rail link is being opened between the south bank and the centre of Lisbon, with the train line suspended under the old suspension bridge. House prices have risen. Five years ago a two bedroom apartment on the edge of Barreiro would have cost £40,000;

today it would be £80,000.

Barreiro and much of the south bank is communist by tradition; following the fall of the Salazar regime it returned communist council members and members of parliament, and they still do 25 years on. The communist regime is not a problem to the Church, but because the Catholic Church had such an influence during Salazar's reign, many people have washed their hands of all religion since the revolution.

Carnaxide

Carnaxide was originally a dormitory

town for those working in Lisbon, ten km away. It has very few houses, with most people living in a block of flats. It has three hypermarkets and its own indoor market.

Because of its growth, a lot of light industry has come into the town, especially the pharmaceutical industry, and cosmetic firms. There is very little poverty and everyone enjoys a reasonable standard of living.

Social life is at a low profile. There is no cinema and no theatre. But most travel to Lisbon for the zoo, the parks, the night-life and the eating places. ●

Right: View from Pokhara

Below right: INF guest house compound, Pokhara

Far right: INF headquarters (Three years old)

Centre: Short term flat - First floor in Nepali house



nepal



BY BRIAN AND WENDY GIBBS

Here we are back home in Derbyshire, in the old routine – or are we? After years of involvement in BMS work as a local missionary secretary our chance to ‘do something’ came as we approached retirement. Margaret, our daughter, had been seconded by BMS to the International Nepal Fellowship (INF) to work as a junior school teacher in Surkhet, west Nepal.

At Christmas 1995 we visited her in Nepal. Without realising it, the seeds were sown and on our return, we wondered whether there was anything for us to do there on a voluntary basis. We asked BMS that question.

INF were asked if they could use us. They replied that Brian could work full-time at the headquarters in Pokhara and Wendy (an ex swimming teacher!) was asked if work in the busy guest house would appeal. The guest house manager, Marcelle Pilkinton, needed help in a number of ways – including having a regular day off! So, having been accepted by BMS and INF, we left the UK at the beginning of October 1998, with the aim of being in Nepal for six months. What a prospect!

Our arrangements went so well that we arrived in Pokhara only ten minutes late after two days of travel. We were met by BMS missionary Denise Clark and were taken to our new home – a

fully operational flat on the first floor of a Nepali home. We soon settled in and were able to begin work.

Brian was initially providing holiday cover for the recruitment officer. This was a busy position dealing with offers of long and medium term service from all over the world: medics, scientists, social workers, teachers, electives and so on. The hardest part was matching needs with offers and dates – quite a



jigsaw! Later he turned more to health and safety and did audits for different departments within INF – technical services, guest house and language school.

In the meantime, Wendy was trying to organise her life at home, alongside shopping in the bazaar and work in the guest house. There were regular guests and one-night stays in the eight double bedrooms. Lunches were served in the dining room each weekday for a further 40 to 50 staff from the headquarters next door. Lots to organise – shopping expeditions to town, bookings, bills, socials and so on.



A highlight was the annual conference in February. Although the majority of the staff are based in Pokhara, there are a good number working in remote villages or stations who rarely come into town. Everyone attended for the week of the conference and all the members resident in Pokhara offered accommodation. We now met everyone – how exciting it was matching photographs with the real thing!

Once we had become accustomed to life in Nepal, we became more and more at ease with it. Home, and thoughts of it, became less intrusive as we adjusted to our surroundings – the diet, the climate, and the company. Then the second half of our stay passed quickly and we were on the countdown to leaving our new life with its friends and colleagues.

How had we changed in the six months, we wonder? We can't put a finger on anything, but surely we can look at many situations through new eyes. Would we go back? Why not? It was a wonderful opportunity. We would recommend it to anyone with time to spare, be they 18 or 60. There is so much to be done – why not ask the Lord and then BMS? ●

Where's WIGTOWN? action teams

Brazil 28:19 Action Team



EVERY YEAR THE 28:19 ACTION TEAMS TOUR THE UK SHARING THEIR EXPERIENCES OF WHAT GOD IS DOING OVERSEAS. **STEPHEN MCGARVA** REPORTS ON ONE SUCH VISIT TO HIS CHURCH.

Wigtown, Scotland's National Booktown, is in the extreme south-west of the country and the Brazil Action Team spent a week there in June.

The local Baptist church is small (33 members) but very active, and we chose to commemorate our 18th anniversary on mission with the team. We have a strong emphasis on youth ministry, and much of the team's time was spent with the young people of this rural community. Even after the day's official programme was over, the mission continued amongst the teenagers, with the pool table and Playstation being used well into the night!

The team led three

assemblies and two class visits in the primary schools, and four assemblies in the local high school - this meant that every school-aged pupil in Wigtown heard about the love of God, not only for unknown people in Brazil, but also for us, here. The reaction from the primary children was great - singing and cheering and asking questions - and the reception from the high school students was amazing - not just listening politely, but with rapt attention, as four of their peers (almost) shared their own stories of God's work in their lives.

We invited the team to join us in our mission, rather than to do our mission for us and they participated enthusiastically in the various aspects of our ministry to all ages in the community: the children's club held an extra games evening with the team, and one night dozens of the children joined the adults at a barbecue.

Much of the success of the team's visit came from the fact that their work built on what we were already

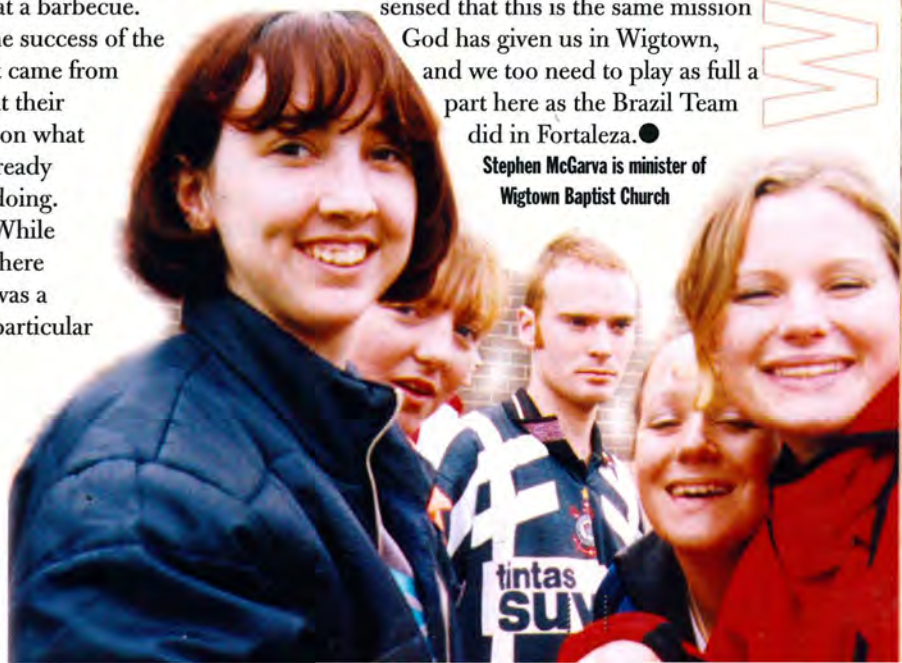
doing. While there was a particular

"God's name was love, and his face smiled, as the team hugged and talked to and played with the street children".

intensity of work that week, we wanted to avoid seeing mission as a load of special events and then the church returning to 'normal' - we are 'on mission' every week in the year! In the absence of traditional evangelistic rallies, someone questioned if we were really doing a mission, but they realised as the week went on that this was real mission - us going out, rather than expecting people to come in!

A few years ago there was a song in the charts which asked, "If God had a name, what would it be? If God had a face, what would it look like?" We realised that some of Brazil's street children and others got part of the answer when Mel, Becky, Fraser and Craig were with them for a short time. God's name was love, and his face smiled, as the team hugged and talked to and played with the street children. During the week, one or two of us sensed that this is the same mission God has given us in Wigtown, and we too need to play as full a part here as the Brazil Team did in Fortaleza. ●

Stephen McGarva is minister of Wigtown Baptist Church



WIGTOWN

"He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind."

(Eccl 3:11)

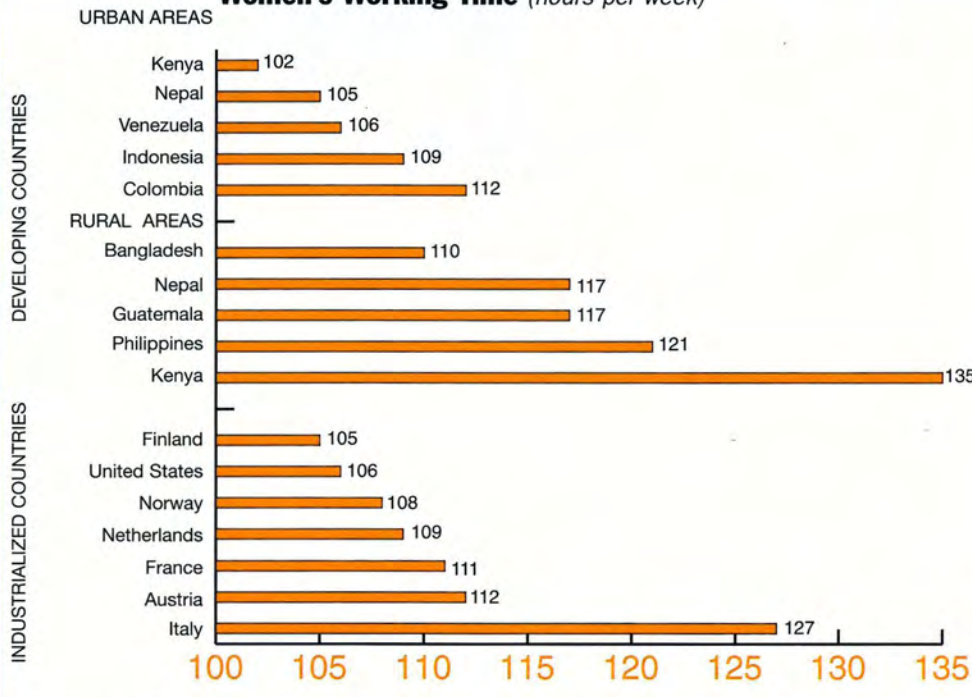


TIME CATCH PHRASE

The answers to all these phrases have 'time' in them somewhere. See how many you can guess. (Answers page 27)

- 1 They've come through the progress of things affecting them.
- 2 An old man with a scythe and hourglass.
- 3 She did not use the hours available to her well.
- 4 He was prematurely old.
- 5 In his race, he beat what was expected of him.
- 6 For ever.
- 7 The conditions of life have altered.
- 8 Until some other arrangement is made.
- 9 Serving a prison sentence.
- 10 Exchange a greeting or casual remark.
- 11 He did his apprenticeship.
- 12 Their hours of labour were curtailed.
- 13 Repeatedly; on many occasions.
- 14 When the person behind the bar tells you to go.
- 15 A period of exceptional enjoyment.

Women's Working Time (hours per week)



TAKEN FROM THE WORLD GUIDE 1997/98, PUB INSTITUTO DEL TERCER MUNDO

What the Bible has to say about time

The Bible seems to be more concerned about the God-given contents of certain moments of history ('times' and 'seasons') rather than measuring the passing of time. God is very much in control, and the Bible stresses certain times - points at which God advances his purposes in the world.

- God is not bound by time** (Ps 90:2; 2 Pet 3:8)
- God was active before time began** (1 Cor 2:7)
- God's sovereignty extends to an individual's life** (Ps 31:15)
- First record of Jesus' preaching; 'The time has come'** (Mk 1:15)
- Jesus' ministry had key times appointed by God as decisive** (Jn 7:6, Lk 19:44, Mt 26:18)
- Signs of the end of the age, and of time** (Mt 24, 25; Mk 13; Lk 21)



take 2



*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.*

ECCLESIASTES 3:1 - 8

How many days in your life?

Highest life expectancy (years)

1	Japan	80.0
2	Iceland	79.3
3	Canada	78.9
4	France	78.8
	Hong Kong	78.8
6	Switzerland	78.6
7	Sweden	78.5
8	Australia	78.3
	Italy	78.3
10	Greece	78.1
19	UK	77.1

Lowest life expectancy (years)

1	Sierra Leone	37.5
2	Malawi	40.7
3	Uganda	41.4
4	Rwanda	42.1
5	Zambia	43.0
6	Guinea-Bissau	43.8
7	Afghanistan	45.5
8	Burkina Faso	46.0
9	Angola	46.5
	Guinea	46.5

(POCKET WORLD IN FIGURES 1998)



- Answers
- 1 (They have stood the test of time)
 - 2 (Father Time)
 - 3 (Washing time)
 - 4 (Before his time)
 - 5 (Record time)
 - 6 (A lifetime)
 - 7 (Times have changed)
 - 8 (For the time being)
 - 9 (Doing time)
 - 10 (Pass the time of day)
 - 11 (Served his time)
 - 12 (They were put on short time)
 - 13 (Time after time)
 - 14 (Call time)
 - 15 (The time of one's life)

Projects Prayer People

PROJECTS UPDATE

PRAYER FOCUS



Project 9061 Providing theological books for Angolan pastors

Twenty four Angolan pastors, who have fled the war in that country, now live in Luanda, the capital. In escaping they have lost everything they owned, including their theological books. This BMS project is seeking to raise money to provide these pastors with three to four books each.

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.




Jenny Smith, Nancy and Stanley Hornsby: Budapest, Hungary





Readers of the May/June issue of *mh* will know that we were asking people to pray for another volunteer to join Jenny in teaching English to students at the

Baptist Theological College in Budapest. The Lord has answered and Stanley Hornsby will be heading out with his wife Nancy in September. Both have taught in Budapest before and were instrumental in Jenny first going to Hungary (she taught there in 1992 to 1995).

Please pray:

 for Jenny and Stanley as they begin a new academic year and get to know new students

 for the 'open house' evenings that

Jenny holds in her home. Pray they will be times of great support and encouragement  for Nancy as she seeks to renew and build friendships made when the couple were last in Hungary

Gwen Hunter: Kimpese, Democratic Republic of Congo



Finance and economy are always unstable in DRC with wages often not paid for months and inflation running wild. Recently

however the level of wages across the country was raised. Good news for employees – a manual worker now earns £15 per month and a qualified nurse £20, but a decision that could cause difficulties for employers. Gwen and her colleagues at the Evangelical Medical Institute (IME) wondered how they would pay the higher wages but the Lord provides in many ways and with two debts being paid to the hospital by other companies, they were able to



cover the amount needed. A gift from a generous benefactor in Kinshasa meant the hospital school was also able to meet their salary bill. This hospital and its training schools, supported by a number of different church communities, has an excellent reputation nationally and doctors from all over the country are sent there to complete their studies. Gwen, who has been in Zaire/DRC since 1968, has been heading up the pharmacy and schools at IME but comes to the end of her service in Congo in September and is looking to retirement in 2000.

Please pray:

P for guidance as Gwen seeks the next step in her life and service. It cannot be easy to leave a country after so many years.

Judy Cook: Bangkok, Thailand

Judy began her first term of service with BMS in April by heading to Bangkok where she is learning to read and speak in the Thai language. A good grasp of the language is especially important for



Judy who will be working in the hills of Thailand with tribal women, teaching them about health care and sharing the love of Christ. Judy, a nurse from Birmingham, has visited her future workplace and says that she is, 'confident that this is the place of the Lord's calling for me'.

Please pray:

P thank God that Judy has settled well in Bangkok, has made good friends and is enjoying her church life
P for good progress in language

learning – the Thai script is particularly difficult

P for guidance and for the right doors to open as Judy investigates opportunities for voluntary work, preferably with children, alongside her studies

Jean and John Rogers: Larnaca, Cyprus

Jean and John went out to Cyprus in May as Barnabas Project volunteers to



work with Sat-7 for two years. Sat-7 sends out weekly Christian satellite TV programmes to the Muslim world and the couple have settled into their jobs quickly – John as Chief Operations Officer and Jean as PA. The couple are attending Larnaca Community Church. As there is no current pastor, the services are led by church members and within weeks of their arrival, John was invited to preach his first sermon. Aside from the heat, the other main difference the couple have noticed is that Arabic music is written right to left meaning Jean has been playing piano music with the sheets turned backwards and a light bulb behind! She says it is easier than putting her brain into reverse!

Please pray:

P Sat-7 employees come from many different countries, cultures and backgrounds.
P for sensitivity and unity as they all work together for the gospel.
P for good friendships to develop quickly
P that the intense heat will not prove too draining – August is the hottest month

Chris and Geoff Bland: Bangkok, Thailand



The new academic year at the Bangkok Institute of Theology (BIT) began in June with an exceptional number of students – over 50 accepted. A number of these are serving pastors who attend for two days a week to study a Masters degree, but the majority enrol for a four year degree course. Geoff teaches New Testament studies at BIT and is also writing several commentaries in Thai. One on John has already been published, and Acts will be published later on this year. With little theological material available in Thai, the books will be of great value to many theological students. Chris is involved in teaching English to the students so that they can access the many texts which are available in that language. The new Action Team which arrives in October for six months will help her in this work, befriending and working alongside the students to give them practice in speaking English.

Please pray:

P for the building of good relationships with the new students
P for Chris who now has twice the number of people to teach English - all of varying ability which makes the task even harder
P that the new Action Team would settle quickly into the life of BIT, make good friends with the students and prove a great support to Geoff, Chris and the family.



Judith and Tony Sykes: Vellore, India

Judith and Tony have been in India since January 1997 during which time Tony, a civil engineer, has been working on a centenary building project at the Christian Medical College. The hospital has an excellent reputation and people travel thousands of miles for treatment there. They are now building a new centre for mothers and children and new residential tower blocks. The engineers Tony works with are Hindu with the occasional Muslim, but quite happy to work on a Christian hospital, and Tony has built good friendships with some of them. Judith works at ANBU Illam, a hostel for children with cerebral palsy. The home's aim is to help the children reach their full potential both physically and academically. Judith helps mainly in the vocational unit where children are taught craft and maintenance skills with a view to being able to go back to their homes to help support their families. She has been teaching them to use a sewing machine, do cross stitch and patchwork and in turn, the children have been teaching her Tamil!

Please pray:

- P** for continued health and strength
- P** for a time of rest and relaxation as they visit family in the UK in September

PEOPLE WORLDWIDE



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

Kalpana Kathmandu, Nepal



Kalpana is eleven years old. Until February of this year she was acting as the mother and provider for her brother Shiva (aged nine), and two sisters Sita (five) and Sapana (two). Each day she would go round to the neighbours begging for food. Her father died two years ago of TB and alcohol abuse, and last year her mother ran off with another man, abandoning her children, because her new husband did not want them.

A concerned Hindu neighbour



Désiré Bombile

started trying to find ways to help the small family, and then Suman, a pastor in one of the local churches, offered to take care of them. Suman and his wife now have official guardianship of all four children, and aim to bring them up in every way as their own. They have also adopted another little girl who had previously been abused. They want to give the children a chance to learn what it means to be brought up in a loving Christian home.

Kalpana has active TB, and is now on treatment, while Shiva and Sapana have latent TB, needing medication. All the children are gaining weight and learning to laugh and play again. At the beginning of March this year Kalpana smiled for the first time. She is getting a second chance at childhood.

Katrina Butterworth (BMS doctor working with UMN in Nepal)

Désiré Bombile Democratic Republic of Congo

(photograph above)

Désiré became a Christian at the age of 15 after listening to a sermon on Deut 30:15 'Today is a day to choose between life and death.' He began to teach in the Sunday school, and then to preach. Gradually he felt the call to study to be a pastor. This was in 1996.

His father had been fairly well-off, but his father and family had been part of president Mobutu's entourage, and had fled in 1997. After this Désiré found it difficult to support himself. Friends gave him help in money or





goods; someone bought him an electric powered mill so that he could grind people's cassava for them between studies, but the electricity in Kinshasa is very erratic.

When the Ugando-Rwandan alliance began a war against the DRC in July 1998, the authorities looked for Rwandans, assuming them to be the enemy. Désiré was tall and thin and was accused of being a Rwandan Tutsi several times. He was knocked about, shot at, and had his belongings rifled through. In the end a policeman took him and detained him for his own safety. In fact he spent most of the time between August and December in protective custody. He had been well looked after and had a TV set to watch as well as being able to read his Bible. But he says, 'I was deprived of my freedom.'

Désiré says: 'Everything that has happened to me is food for thought, study in God's school. It really happened. I didn't just read about it. I had no friend or relative to help, only the Lord. I was like Daniel in the lions' den with only God to save me.'

John Mellor (BMS missionary in Congo)

**Philippe Menten
Bredene, Belgium**



I was a happy child with parents who took good care of me. Around the age of 16 I began to search for something more; I knew the values that society prescribed weren't enough for me. At 18 I began to experiment with drugs; got involved in 'underground' music, and took more



and more drugs from cocaine to heroin, from mushrooms to synthetic drugs, but I felt a spiritual emptiness. In 1989 my best friend whom I lived with died from an overdose of heroin. From then on my life went in a fast downward spiral, a kind of self destruction without knowing it. I began to drink a lot, had a lot of girlfriends for one night, and took a lot of drugs, not because I was addicted but because I couldn't find a meaning in life.

In that dark hole I met Carine (who is now my wife). She was a born-again Christian and told me about Jesus. At first I didn't want to know, but then we spent days and nights in discussion. God was pushing me in a corner: I decided to give my life to him. I went down on my knees and felt an indescribable warmth. I wept like a little boy who finds his mum and dad after being lost.

The Lord turned my life round. He's there! He's the meaning of life! I have become a fireman and an ambulance man, a husband and father, an artist and above all, a child of God.

I want to put on your hearts the people that society looks down on: the junkies, the hippies, punks, artists etc. A lot of the time they are looking for the 'real' things in life and can't find it in society or religion. Let's help them to find the real thing, Jesus!

Stuart Filby (BMS church worker in Belgium)



PEOPLE WORLDWIDE



Baptist House News

Good News for the Trimble twins

BMS workers in Nepal, Tim and Caroline Trimble, have heard from the UK Home Office that British citizenship has been approved for their Nepali twins Karuna and Samijhana. The official certificates should come through in time for a return to the UK for a family wedding.

New Executive Director for IAM

Harri Lammi was unanimously appointed as Executive Director elect at the Board meeting of the IAM in May. Harri will succeed Bruce Gibbs of New Zealand in November. Harri, a Finn, is currently Operational Director of IAM based in Kabul. BMS works in partnership with IAM, and has recently accepted three people to work in South Central Asia.

Another first for Geoff



BMS missionary Geoff Bland, involved in theological education at the Bangkok Institute of Theology, has just had his third commentary in the Thai language published. It's a 200 plus page paperback on

the book of Acts. The series emphasises biblical exposition, and because the books have been written using the Thai Bible they are able to deal with textual issues that would not even be mentioned in a commentary that was a translation from an English book. Geoff's previous commentaries have been on the Synoptic Gospels and John.



BMS news

St Andrew's Hall: the baton changes hands

The BMS is on the threshold of ownership of the St Andrew's Hall Missionary College buildings in Birmingham.

A celebration was held on Saturday 3 July to mark the life and work of the college, and ended in the handover of the college Bible to BMS General Director Revd Dr Alistair Brown as a sign that the work will continue.

Before presenting the Bible to Dr Brown, the Revd Ernest Cruchley, President of the St Andrew's Hall Council, said he had verbal confirmation from the Charity Commissioners that the sale to BMS could go forward. Ownership transfer is expected to be completed on 31 August, and the hall will be renamed The BMS International Mission Centre.

The process of getting clearance for the £850,000 sale to BMS has lasted more than eight months. "It's been a long haul," said Dr Brown, "but the college

trustees and BMS were united in wanting the sale to happen, which is in line with the founders of the missionary college. With perseverance we seem to have got there."

St Andrew's Hall was formed by the 1966 merger of Carey Hall, dating back to 1912, with St Andrew's College, founded 1945. The buildings have been developed in several stages. In recent years St Andrew's Hall has been run under the guidance of three sponsors - BMS, the United Reformed Church and the Council for World Mission.

"We've been passed a baton to train people for world mission," said Dr Brown. "It's a major responsibility, but also a wonderful opportunity. We're determined to make the most of it."

The Revd David Kerrigan, BMS Director for Mission, said BMS would not rush to start its own courses. "Until now we haven't been sure we'd take ownership of the college, so our mission candidates are booked elsewhere for the next few months. That gives us time for decisions on building, staffing and curriculum issues. We can do much more than anything before, but we must prepare well."

Albania – latest news

Sixteen volunteers left the relative security of their homes in the UK at the beginning of July, bound for Albania, to help with the Kosovan relief effort.

The 16 are all ages, and come from all walks of life; from nurse to café manageress, psychology student to plumber, woodworker to Baptist minister and secretary to counsellor. Their numbers also include Mary Parsons, a BMS midwife in Brazil who has temporarily relocated; the whole team is being led by Justine Horsfall, who has just come to the end of her time with the BMS Albania youth Action Team. Her knowledge of the country, its people and language will be invaluable.

The 16 have all given up between two and six months of their time to work with BMS, based at four different centres in Albania.

BMS already has 16 long-term personnel working in Albania, and normally they would be engaged in such diverse work as engineering, nursing, church work, theological education and village agricultural projects. When the refugees began to flood into Albania, these missionaries put their routine work to one side to concentrate on feeding, clothing and providing accommodation for those who had not been re-housed in refugee camps. Whilst having a roof over their heads, these people

missed out on official aid, and needed help in obtaining food and clothing etc.

Although the missionaries did a sterling task, not surprisingly they could not keep up a sustained effort 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week.

BMS appealed for volunteers to work alongside the missionaries, or to be engaged in other work which did not require a knowledge of Albanian, and was inundated with applications, and the result was this group being chosen.

BMS have been delighted with the response from people in the UK churches wanting to help in this refugee situation. Although the volunteers will initially work in Tirana, Durres and Bregu i Lumit, BMS are also assessing the feasibility of sending them directly into Kosovo.



1 PHILIP CHANT – WOODWORKER 2 JONATHAN HARRIS – STUDENT AT BIBLE COLLEGE 3 MATTHEW JAMES – PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT 4 SUSAN CADDY – STAFF NURSE 5 BRIAN TAYLOR – PLUMBER, WELDER AND HEATING ENGINEER 6 JOHN MASSINK – BAPTIST MINISTER 7 SUSAN BUCKLEY – MANAGERESS OF CAFÉ/SHOP 8 ROD BRADLEY – SUPPORT OFFICER WITH LEA 9 DEE WINFIELD – HEALTH CARE ASSISTANT 10 JANICE TAYLOR – HELPER AT DROP IN CENTRE 11 DEBBIE PEARSON – SECRETARY 12 SARAH BLACKMAN – JUST COMPLETED A LEVELS 13 ZOE RANSON – CARE ASSISTANT 14 ROSEMARY FOX – COUNSELLOR 15 MARY PARSONS – MIDWIFE WITH BMS IN BRAZIL
INSET: JUSTINE HORSFALL - TEAM LEADER



Two new appointments for ACT



Gordon McBain having completed six months Arabic studies in the southern coastal city of Sfax, has moved with Ann his wife and four children, to Tunis, where he has taken up the post of Personnel Director of ACT. Gordon is the first person to hold this new post and he strengthens the existing HQ team of General Secretary and Finance Director.

John Passmore, BMS Regional Secretary for North Africa and Asia was elected President at the ACT Board meetings in April. John has been the BMS representative on the Board for the last three years and vice President since 1997.

ACT is an international Christian organisation, set up in 1982, to co-operate with the government of Tunisia to meet the needs of marginalised groups. There are currently 11 member bodies making up the ACT Board.

Check Out

September/October 1999

September

Arrivals

Gwen Hunter from Kimpese, Congo

Departures

David and Sue Jackson to Colombo, Sri Lanka
Georgie Christine to São Paulo, Brazil
Barbara and Keith Hodges to Carmaxide, Portugal
Cath and David Meikle to São Paulo, Brazil
Nicola and Roger Pearce to Tirana, Albania

October

Arrivals

Colin and Denise Clark from Pokhara, Nepal
David and Yvonne Wheeler from Tirana, Albania
Rosimar and Tim Deller from Goiânia, Brazil
Derek Punchard from Curitiba, Brazil

Departures

None

world

mission link



Downton climbs up

Downton Baptist Church in Wiltshire are keen to raise mission awareness. In the past they have supported projects in Ethiopia, Mali, Albania, Peru, Brazil, and Guatemala. This year they are stimulating interest and raising money to support Tlana and Madini Hnamler, Mizo missionaries working for BMS on a sanitation project in Taplejung, Nepal.

They have put together a collage of a mountain side with a water pipe coming up the mountain, and shaded in the progress of their fund raising. They have committed themselves to raising £5,000, and so far are nearly halfway there.



Over 250 people gathered in the garden of Jim and Eileen Clarke for the fourth 'Open Garden' event to be held in the last seven years. Jim was, until the beginning of the year, BMS Co-ordinator for Central and Eastern England; over 70 churches were represented from all eight counties of his former 'patch'.

In spite of a thunderstorm the night before, resulting in a loss of power from 3.00am until just before 1.00pm, at least 200 lunches were served. ("Don't ask me how with no power," said Jim.) There was a range of stalls, and BMS missionaries Ryder and Heather Rogers were present throughout the day, sharing the latest news on the Albania/Kosovo situation. Altogether £1,300 was raised for BMS, and the event was declared "The best to date!"

Rain didn't stop play

CHALK and ?

Over 150 people were present for the Saturday evening presentation at Chard Baptist Church, Somerset, of the recently returned Nepal Action Team. The Team had been at the church all week, had visited four schools and participated in meetings across the age spectrum.

The Nepal Action Team had been invited to this area by the 'cluster' called CHALK, that is, the Baptist churches of Chard, Honiton, Lyme Regis and Kilmington. The group came together three years ago to work more effectively in a number of mission activities, including support for BMS. In July, CHALK invited their new BMS link Kitty Brett to spend a day with them before leaving for Asia in August.

Chard minister and BMS General Committee member, Peter Morgan said "I am thrilled with the heightened awareness and involvement in overseas mission, and BMS in particular, which has developed in our churches here in the last three years."



Photographs:
Top: Tlana and Madini Hnamler, Nepal;
Above: Jim & Eileen Clarke's Garden Party
Left: Kitty Brett, CHALK link;
Below: 98/99 Nepal Action Team with Phil Hindle, BMS Co-ordinator for the South and West and Peter Morgan.



Tolerance or indifference ?

What does it mean to work towards a tolerant society? Built into the very notion of tolerance is the assumption of disagreement. Voltaire summed it up admirably: "I disagree with what you say, but I will defend with my life your right to say it". Therefore, contrary to the popular view, those who believe that "all religions are essentially saying the same thing" or that "all sexual lifestyles are morally valid", are not practising tolerance. The acid test of our tolerance is when we are faced with beliefs, practices and values which radically challenge our own. It is only when there is fundamental disagreement that our willingness to truly respect the "other" is revealed.

Imagine two people, Mr A and Miss B. Mr A prides himself on his tolerant attitudes. He is an agnostic when it comes to religious beliefs, but thinks that if there is a God then surely all peoples will ultimately be "saved". He ridicules attempts to convert people, and the idea of divine judgment. His attitude to life is one of benign non-interference in others' lives, since what we believe or disbelieve does not ultimately matter.

Miss B believes that what people believe about God does make both a decisive difference to the way they live now, and also to their eternal destiny. She agonises over the thought of people like Mr A facing divine judgement for their wilful rejection of the gospel. She prays earnestly for them. Yet she refuses to use coercion or manipulation in persuading people to respond to the gospel. She believes passionately that homosexual practices are sinful, yet equally passionately defends homosexuals from discrimination and persecution. For her tolerance is not easy; it is something to be worked at. Which of these two positions is more morally admirable? ●



Vinoth Ramachandra is South Asia Regional Secretary of IFES

Waterbombers apply the sermon



CARTOON BY DIK LAPINE



NEW POSSIBILITIES



NEW DECISION



NEW IDEAS



NEW OPPORTUNITIES

St Andrews Hall becomes...

BMS International Mission Centre

From being partners in St Andrews Hall, we have now purchased and renamed it the BMS International Mission Centre, aiming to equip a new and growing generation of mission workers. We believe that IMC can be a key training centre for new missionaries, and a resource for people from other nations, for existing mission personnel and for the Church in this country.

We are seeking a Director for IMC, and a Manager for Mission Training, both based in Birmingham. If either of these could be you, please contact Alistair Brown (General Director) or David Kerrigan (Director for Mission) for an informal chat. Full advertisements can be found in Christianity magazine or recent editions of the Baptist Times. Alternatively contact Mike Quantick, (Administration Manager), and full details will be sent to you. E-mails can be sent to mail@bms.org.uk

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