

The cover of the magazine 'mib' features a close-up photograph of two young children. The child in the foreground is a young boy with dark skin and short hair, looking directly at the camera with a slightly open mouth. Behind him, another child is partially visible, also looking towards the camera. The background is dark and out of focus. The magazine title 'mib' is printed in large, bold, lowercase letters at the top left, with 'mi' in yellow and 'b' in orange. To the right, the text 'people in mission', 'global issues', and 'news & events' is stacked vertically in white. At the bottom left, the text 'Refugees - who'll be their neighbour?' is written in large, bold, white letters. At the top right, there is a small, textured graphic element that looks like a piece of torn paper or a map fragment.

mib

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Refugees -
who'll be their
neighbour?

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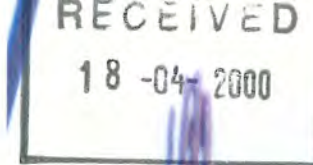
Watch Your Language

Take a fascinating trip to South Central Asia. Meet the people, taste the food, and learn about life in this Muslim part of the world. This year's WOW project takes you there, with activities, crafts, puzzles and country information.

Then help us raise £8,000 to support BMS workers in South Central Asia. If you're a Christian, it's a difficult part of the world to work in. You have to watch who you talk to and what you say. That's why we've called the project Watch Your Language. But there are no restrictions on how you use what's in the project book. And we want to hear about the fundraising events you get up to!

Watch Your Language project books are available free of charge from BMS. (To order please use form on page 35). The project runs until the end of December.





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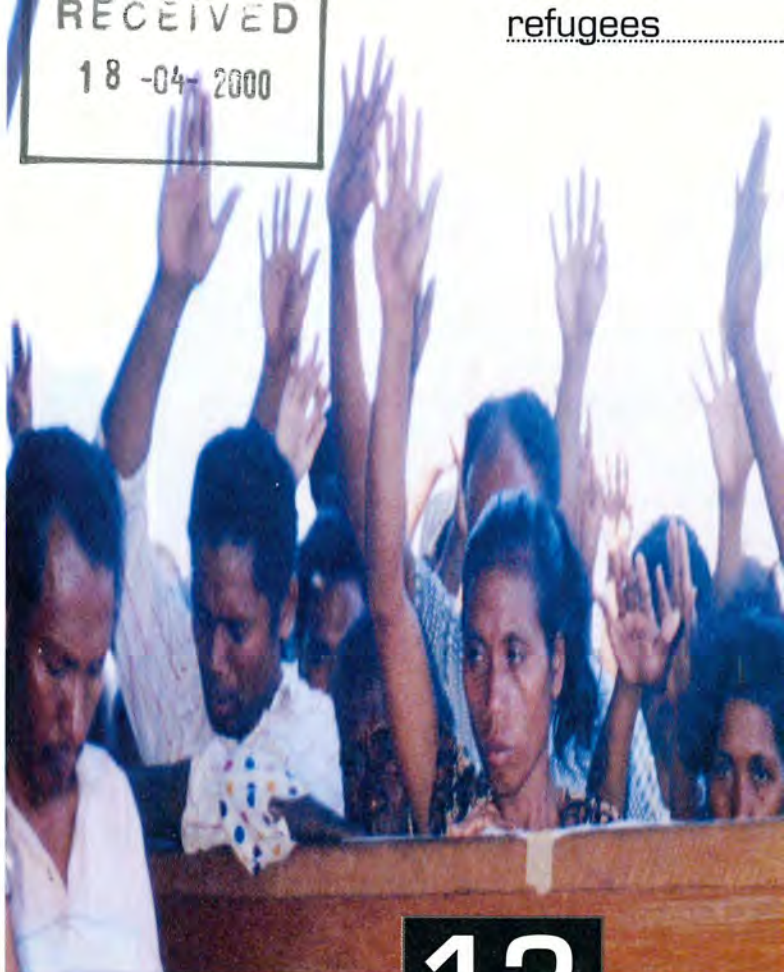
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COVER PICTURE : CHILDREN IN REFUGEE CAMP OUTSIDE NAIROBI, KENYA (STEVE FLASHMAN)



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WORLD

There's no stereotype for being a refugee. You can be born one, or become one overnight at any age: young, middle-aged or old. You can be living in what was a politically stable society - or not. You might have been well-off with an abundance of material possessions, or you might have been quite poor, with nothing. Being a refugee does not discriminate on the colour of your skin: white, black or brown are just as vulnerable. It doesn't matter where you live, whether it is a country of plenty or not; whether the climate is equatorial, temperate or cold. It doesn't matter if you had a job, or if you had none. Nor if you had a large family, or if you had none.

Anyone can become a refugee.
Anyone at all.

There's no room for complacency on the part of those who have lived their lives in political peace and stability - who have not ever been refugees, and perhaps have never known one. This is the sort of situation where we "remember those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." (Heb 13:3) So we're looking at refugees this issue in conjunction with the launch of 'Welcoming the Stranger', the joint initiative of the BMS/BUGB project pack on refugees. You see how BMS is involved in the plight of refugees all over the world, and is working to alleviate their suffering and hardship. We're featuring situations in the Balkans (page 10), Indonesia (page 12), Congo (page 14), Chechnya (page 16) and Thailand (page 18).

We're just beginning the process of unveiling a new look to BMS - one that will be relevant and up-to-date as we enter the 21st century, yet remaining true to what we believe God has called us to do. Find out more by pulling out and reading the insert in the centre of this issue of *mb*.

With best wishes

Jan



editorial editorial editorial editorial editorial editorial editorial editorial editorial



India
Widow forgives

A year after her husband Graham and two sons Philip (10) and Timothy (8) were burned to death outside a home for lepers in a remote village 600 miles south of Delhi, Gladys Staines has openly said she has forgiven Dara Singh, the man who led the attack. "I have forgiven him", she said. "Forgiveness opens up the path of healing. Everywhere I go people recognise me and ask me why I did that (forgive). Even some Hindus and other non-Christians have stopped me and asked me how and why I did that. But that is the Christianity we are asked to practice."

Australian Baptist missionary Graham Staines worked with lepers in the state of Orissa for nearly 30 years. He and his sons were sleeping in their car outside Baripada Hospital in January 1999, when Hindu militants attacked. Armed with bows and arrows, sticks and clubs, the mob prevented father and sons



Gladys Staines

from escaping, while some in the crowd stuffed straw into the car and set fire to it.

Police were under immense international pressure to bring the killers to justice and arrested more than two dozen people, all of them allied with militant Hindu nationalist groups. It has taken over a year to capture the ringleader, Dara Singh.

The affection ordinary Indians feel for the Staines family has been apparent in numerous memorial services held throughout the country in the months following the incident. During a service at Bangalore cathedral, the police commissioner, Revanna Siddaiah, a Hindu, commented, "She is a remarkable one - a great Christian."

Gladys Staines' family back in Australia has urged her to leave India. But she remains committed to continuing her husband's work, and raising her 13 year-old daughter, Esther, in the country she has come to love. She said, "My mission is to continue my husband's work. I want to stay in India and finally build a 40-bed hospital, an extension of the leprosy home to which Graham had dedicated his life."

She has had warnings

land will be allocated for use as a Christian church in Doha. The property would be divided by common consent among the various Christian communities, to construct individual church facilities.

This decision has been supported by Qatar's progressive young emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, who came to power in 1995, ousting his own father in a bloodless coup. He then went on to make deals with Israel, lifted local media censorship, gave women the right to vote and run for office, and oversaw sweeping decentralisation of government ministries and departments.

A Western church leader who was born and raised on the Arabian peninsula commented, "The Gulf is shaping up to being a real testing ground for whether Islam can live with diversity in its midst." (Maranatha

Newswatch)

Greece New wave of persecution

An evangelical Christian radio station that had been

running for 11 years has been taken off the air. Police swooped in at the end of 1999 and shut down Channel Station 2000, a Christian radio station which reached five million Greeks in the greater Athens area. They seized a satellite link and arrested 73-year-old retired pastor, Lakis Regas, who was working as a technician. The authorities accused the station of operating without a proper licence. Channel Station 2000 was also accused of interfering with radio frequencies used by the Navy. But station engineers



said the claim was unfounded and no evidence had been produced to demonstrate the interference.

Station Director, Thanos Karbonis, said "We've been proclaiming the good news of Christ for 11 years without any problems. Channel Station 2000 is very fruitful; it has brought many people to Christ. Mr Karbonis also believed the Greek Orthodox Church was behind, what he called, this 'censorship operation'.

In 1994, Hellas 62, Greece's only evangelical

TV station was forced to close after coming under strong opposition from the Orthodox Church.

The Fellowship of Free Evangelical Churches in Greece believes the shutdown of the radio station is "further evidence of stronger persecution of minority faiths in Greece."

This is one of several incidents that have taken place in Greece recently against evangelical Christians. In Thessaloniki a pastor stood trial for operating an illegal church – a charge that was later dropped. Three Greek Christians have also been given suspended jail sentences for running a Christian centre in Larissa, central Greece, in a case in which officials from the Greek Orthodox Church supported the action against the centre. The government has also refused permission for a children's camp, which has been run by Evangelical churches for 68 years, to operate this year. (CSW)

Sierra Leone "Let us forgive"

The country of Sierra Leone is struggling on towards establishing a permanent peace. Its leaders are trying to work out the details of a fragile peace accord signed last July by the government and the heads of two factions of rebels. This accord was the culmination of a process initiated and supported by the country's religious groups, both Christian and Muslim.

A 13-member ecumenical team organised by the All Africa Conference of Churches and the World



A 13 year old girl who had her hands hacked off.

ASSOCIATED PRESS



Council of Churches recently visited Sierra Leone. They visited a camp that housed hundreds of thousands of amputees, victims of one of the most common kinds of terror carried out by the rebels.

What stood out above everything else was a lack of bitterness among the war's many victims, who seemed to want reconciliation rather than vengeance. The residents at this camp sang a song, "Let us forgive." One resident told Richard Parkins, a team member, that he would be satisfied if the rebels "would just say they are sorry." It seems that not only the amputees, but even those who were not profoundly affected by the violence seemed willing to



say publicly, "Let's move on."

In the nine years of conflict the churches have earned the respect of the people, commented Parkins. "They stayed with people during the conflict, church workers risked their lives, and eventually negotiated with the rebels. Many people told me that the churches have been the glue of the society here."

The peace process will bring former rebel leaders into some positions of authority in the government, and allows for the immediate return of former rebels into the population. (Episcopal News Service)

Colombia Saving souls with soap operas?

Spanish speakers throughout North and South America are coming to Christ through 'En Familia' (In Family), a video series produced and directed by John Magyar, a Baptist.

'En Familia' consists of 12 short dramas that look at some of the most serious problems faced by families today. They are produced in the form of telenovelas, which are popular with TV viewers throughout Latin America.

"It is produced at about



a middle-class to upper-middle-class cultural level," said Magyar, "and because of its 'soap opera' quality, it has appeal to all socioeconomic groups."

The average 'En Familia' episode runs for ten to 12 minutes and covers issues such as abortion, aging parents, AIDS, child discipline, divorce, drugs and homosexuality. Small groups gather weekly to watch an episode; then discuss what they have seen.

Eneried Romero and her pastor husband, Isai, have used "En Familia" extensively as an outreach to non-believers around their church. She said the four themes that had impacted women most were spousal abuse, divorce, child discipline and communication between husband and wife.

In the episode on spousal abuse a 'macho' husband heaps hateful insults on his wife. "Many women identify with the woman in this video and cry

as they see their lives reflected in the drama," said Eneried. In one case, she went on to say, "a woman left the group with the

Alistair Brown



Reflects.....

Unless they're mine, children can be as cheeky as they like – well, providing they're also charming and almost always they are.

I seem to gather an entourage of urchins wherever I go, especially in rural villages. The group in this picture are from a small settlement in the south of Bangladesh. Gorgeous children full of fun, smiles and curiosity. They darted into almost every photograph, and taking their picture was partly my attempt to appease them. It didn't work of course but I'd rather have their laughter and mischief than sullen or frightened kids.

When I look at the photograph, two things stand out for me. First, they're poor in a way almost no-one in this country experiences. Inadequate diet, rough shelters, sparse clothing. And few choices. They can't move to another area; they can't visit a careers guidance officer to decide their future prospects; they'll never change their place in society.

Second, they'll almost certainly never hear of Jesus. Countries like Bangladesh have a tiny Christian population, and on their own they've little opportunity or resources to make Jesus known. A high birth rate generating a demographic bulge for under 18s does nothing to make it easier to spread the good news to children.

Children are a special strategic focus for BMS. Often they're exploited; even more often they're simply neglected. Jesus refused to let that happen to children. Any Christian manifesto should establish a basic right for children to hear and experience God's love. That's our aim, and with the right resources which include prayer, people, finance and commitment much more can be done. The children in this picture should know and get the chance to experience the good news. ●

Alistair Brown is General Director of BMS



realisation that she is really someone of value before God, and that Christ gave his life to save and heal her.”

Nearly 600 sets of ‘En Familia’ materials have been distributed in 18 countries.

In Asunción, Paraguay, the drama on alcohol abuse led to the creation of an alcohol co-dependency group. Then a church was started.

“The timing is right for ‘En Familia’ in the Spanish-speaking world,” said Magyar. “People are just hungry for Christ. God has just been really, really moving in Latin America. It’s one of those moments in time where you either take advantage of the opportunity or you miss it.”

Magyar concluded, “Through ‘En Familia’ Baptists have an opportunity to seize the moment. We’ve never produced anything that has opened more doors faster to present the good news of Jesus Christ.” (Baptist Press)

Japan New church planting initiative

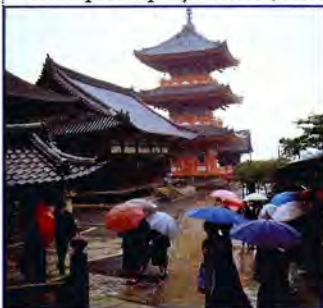
A new church planting movement is helping to renew weary Christian workers in Japan by focusing on the transforming power of the gospel. The Church Planting Institute is a network of missionary agencies that mentors leaders and has been likened to a personal renewal movement reminding Christian workers to draw close to God, and minister in his



power – not their own.

Evangelism in Japan is extremely difficult. Only three per cent of Japan’s 125 million population are professing Christians, and the nation’s Protestant congregations average 35 members. Some towns do not have a church. Missionaries struggle with the complex language and culture, and can get easily discouraged, and as a result Japan has been called ‘a missionary’s graveyard’.

More than 450 foreign missionaries and Japanese nationals have completed the training course. It includes principles of church planting and evangelism, and has additional topics such as ‘Inspiring worship’, ‘Discipleship by Grace’, and



‘How to reach Japanese men’.

The conference refreshes pastors and missionaries. One person said, “I think maybe I dare to hope again, to dream again.” Another commented, “It refreshed me by taking our eyes off the daily struggles and turning our focus back on Jesus.” (Religion Today)

Vinoth Ramachandra

Nice Guys or Real Guys?

In 1936, Dale Carnegie wrote a book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, that sold more than five million copies over the next two decades. More American Christians read it than they did the Bible.

Carnegie was a commercial salesman, upset by his shortness of stature, who overcame his feelings of inferiority by giving evening lectures on the art of public speaking. He realised that in a nation of immigrants, what people feared most was making fools of themselves whenever they opened their mouths. Carnegie’s prescription was simple: always smile, never argue with people, never disagree with what they say, never find fault, be a ‘nice guy’. The way to get along with people is to be like them.

Jesus, the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles were not ‘nice guys’. They were controversial non-conformists. They rocked the boat, asked embarrassing questions, provoked ridicule and hostility. This does not mean that they spoke without careful thought, nor that they were never silent. But whether silent or outspoken, they did not avoid pain and seek popularity, influence and success at the cost of faithfulness to God’s truth. Little wonder that their lives usually ended in martyrdom.

It seems that many Christian leaders today are anxious to be seen as ‘nice guys’. Always charming, never at a loss for words, eager to please everybody, shunning theological debate, never admitting their moral struggles, doubts and failures lest their reputation is tarnished. It usually takes a sudden and shocking public scandal to reveal to others that all was not as lovely as it seemed.

To be a ‘nice guy’ or a ‘real guy’? That is the question. •

Vinoth Ramachandra is South Asia Regional Secretary of IFES



Lee Bray's diary



LEE BRAY accompanied BMS President Andrew Green on a journey to Bangladesh and Thailand. Continuing the extracts from his diary.

Friday 29

The day begins at 6.30am with an encounter with an extremely large spider in the shower. It takes two grown men (Andrew and me), a shoe, a bucket and a stiff broom to defeat the beast!

Today we travel to Chandragonha where Sue Headlam's work is principally based, and then onto Chittagong.

Our first visit is to a small Christian family in their tiny home. The lady shows us the loom on which she weaves bags. The 'bag industry' has bought them a television and a fridge. The technology looks a little incongruous in their rudimentary little hut.

We drive to a narrow street, and are taken through a gate in the wall and into another world - the slums of Chittagong. Hundreds of people live here, crammed

together, in homes smaller than most garden sheds. Just inside the gate is the tap that supplies their water - for drinking, cooking, washing - one tap, hundreds of people. Their homes are largely built out of scrap. We are shown into one. In the gloom we can make out three 'rooms', each about the size of our stair cupboard at home. Twenty people live here.

The sights, sounds and smells of Bangladesh crowd in. We are taken down one particularly smelly street with a central drain and, at the end, the latrines. The stench is nauseating, but there are homes right here. Next to the toilets, in the most appalling stench, is a tiny one-room shack, home to a family of four, piled high with televisions for repair.

Our driver hurries us on. Although we were oblivious to it there is danger about. The TV repairman and his family are Christians. If we dawdle there it will be thought that we are giving them money, and this would be bad ... (Who for? Us? Them? The slum community?)

We are taken to the home of the slum community leader. We are asked to make ourselves comfortable and then, in the middle of some of the world's most abject poverty, we are served a small meal - samosas, crisps, sweetmeats, water and sweet tea. We can't be sure of its origin, but in the face of such utter generosity we cannot possibly refuse it. All they want is to serve us, and they expect nothing in return.

On this trip I have been humbled again and again. Everywhere we are made so welcome.

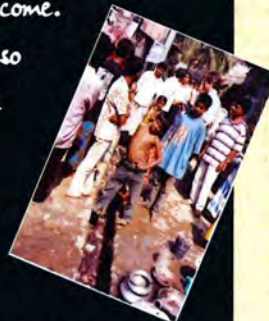
But nothing so far, (and I think perhaps nothing ever again) will make me feel so small as this. Here, in a Bangladesh slum, in a Muslim home, I have encountered Christ, and he has served me. These people's generosity puts me to shame.

In the afternoon we are due to visit the Under-S's Clinic, but it has been closed for "inspection" by the government. This has never happened before, and it seems likely that the timing to coincide with our intended visit is no accident. What is it that we ought not to see?

On arrival at Chandragonha Hospital we climb the hill to Sue's flat. In the evening we stroll down to the village with our driver to visit the barbers. A haircut and shave takes over 30 minutes - I have never been shaved with such care and attention, no stray hairs go down my neck, John has every grey hair clipped from his moustache, a head massage is thrown in too - and the whole thing costs only the equivalent of 25p each.

During the night the jackals howl. They come in packs, carrying rabies Sue says. But they are outside, and we are inside!

To be continued next issue.



who cares?

Jan Kendall reports on a visit to a Serbian refugee camp

It was big news for the last couple of years, but now it has faded from the front pages and TV screens. Bosnia. Yugoslavia. Kosovo. The very words conjure up thoughts of hundreds of thousands of refugees who fled their homes, because of unspeakable atrocities, in tidal wave upon tidal wave of ethnic cleansing. Serbs, Croats, Kosovars, Albanians, Bosnians – they have all suffered.

Recently Fiona Pimlott, BMS Youth and Children's Co-ordinator and Andrew North, BMS Regional Secretary for Europe visited a Serbian refugee camp near the town of Bicske in Hungary, run by Hungarian Baptist Aid. Altogether about 500 Serbian refugees live in blocks, row upon row, which once served as temporary accommodation for construction workers. Each family lives in a space about 20 foot square, with minimal furniture. Families like Reuben and Judith and their three children, who fled northern Yugoslavia.

In their living area they have two sets of bunks pushed together providing beds for the parents and baby on the lower level, and for the two grown-up children at the top. An extra bunk bed provided a spare bottom bunk that was made into a sofa. There were two wardrobes for clothes, a table and two chairs, a TV and a hat stand. They share a kitchen and bathroom with other families in the block.

Reuben is also a pastor, and in conjunction with the 40-member Baptist church at Bicske, he leads a service for the Serbian refugees in the camp. The Hungarians who help out are also Serbian speakers. Reuben and his family had had a hard time previously just being Baptist Christians because they were thought of as a sect. But this is a good opportunity for the Serbs to get together, finding refuge and security in God, before the time comes when they have to return home, each of them to a different place. It has been an encouragement that numbers of those attending are increasing.

On Saturday mornings Reuben's daughter Vicky runs a children's club. Fiona said, "The first thing I noticed about her was her brilliant smile. Standing there in front of the children, wearing jeans and a fleecy jumper and singing 'Don't build your house on the sandy land', she looked just like any other children's worker. Vicky told me she was one of the few girls in the camp, and she missed female company. She told me on her arrival her family had been put into quarantine for six weeks following the procedure that all refugees have to go through. I asked her what it was like. 'Yuk' she replied. And she still smiled."

Judith cried when Andrew and Fiona visited the camp, because at last she felt someone had remembered their plight. People had not been bothering with Serbian refugees.

As they left the camp they prayed with the family. Andrew prayed in English for peace and reconciliation. Judith put her arm around Fiona's back, and Fiona put her arm on her shoulder. As Andrew continued praying there were huge tears streaming down Judith's face. A response to a small act of kindness and care. ●

Jan Kendall is *mb* Editor

Pictures:

- 1 Judith and youngest child
- 2 Refugee camp near Bicske, Hungary
- 3 Serbian children praying in the children's club
- 4 Andrew North, BMS Regional Secretary for Europe, with Andrea and David, translators
- 5 Fiona Pimlott, BMS Youth and Children's Co-Ordinator, with Vicky
- 6 Burnt out buildings in Kosovo
- 7 Soldier patrolling a road block in Kosovo
- 8 Kosovan refugee carrying his possessions



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KOSOVO Update 8

In Kosovo itself teams of people from Europe and America, including BMS personnel are helping to rebuild lives.

The Kosovans have largely returned home – a term which usually meant returning to a pile of ashes. One American observer reported: “The Serbian paramilitaries were very methodical in the destruction of homes. They piled furniture up in one of two rooms, poured on kerosene, and then lighted it so that it would catch fire to the ceiling and roof area. Generally in front of every house there would be a gully full of half-burnt clothing. That was what remained of the extra clothing people in the dead of winter tried to take with them to keep warm. The military would make them dump their extra clothing, then they would pour kerosene on the pile and destroy what clothes they needed for warmth.”

Groups are helping to rebuild houses and provide people with basic living amenities. BMS Relief Fund grants totalling £65,300 have provided woodburning stoves and wood fuel for villages to the north and east of Prishtina.

BMS engineer David Wheeler has been instrumental in helping the refugee families. Working together with Medair, a Swiss emergency relief organisation, David has arranged for concrete blocks to be made. Medair’s main brief has been to put roofs on houses, but typically it has been barns that have been re-roofed, which, in effect, has created wind tunnels. The blocks have been made by Sejdia, a Kosovan refugee, who came to know David when he volunteered to help him build a kitchen in Tirana refugee camp. David comments, “The blocks have been really handy; they have made walls watertight; they keep people warm; and they are used as partition walls when two or three families are sharing.” The blocks have been bought by Medair and then have been distributed free in the villages around Prizren.



6



Steve Mantle reports on a recent visit to Indonesia where he saw at first hand the preaching of the gospel alongside the distribution of relief supplies

With the fall of President Suharto in 1998, Indonesia has been wracked by violence, much of it of religious origin. Christians make up about ten per cent of Indonesia's 210 million people, but they live side by side with Muslims in thousands of towns across the islands that make up Indonesia.

BMS does not have missionaries sent out from the UK working in Indonesia, but it does support 14 Indonesian workers, mostly pastors and evangelists, all of whom think of themselves as BMS missionaries. BMS works in Indonesia through its partner, the Kerapatan Gereja Baptis Indonesia (KGBI).

In the pro-integration / pro-independence conflict of September 1999 in Timor, more than 200,000 people fled from East Timor to West Timor. Some went to the main town of Kupang to live with families. Others camped on spare ground in the town. The fact that this happened in the dry season compounded food and water shortages. Youbert Warouw, Director for the KGBI Department of Evangelism, said "There is not enough food, medicine or space for people, and as a result they are suffering disease."

Youbert then went on a fact-finding mission to see how the refugees were faring, and what their main needs were. As a result BMS sent a Relief Fund grant of £4,500 immediately, to distribute food and medicine to 6,500 families in the camps both in Kupang, and further afield.

In November Youbert set off with Youtie Legoh, the President of the KGBI, and Othniel Laoanak, a Baptist church planter. They worked together to survey the needs, and found different groups of refugees. After establishing which group to work with, they bought rice and instant noodles, which they took to the camp. As they went round the camp, they were escorted by troops, in case a riot broke out. The group of refugees they had chosen to work with was made up of Muslims and Christians from the Catholic and Reformed traditions. The conditions in the camp were terrible - there was no sanitation, and little water which meant diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera and malaria were claiming already weak people as their victims. As well as sharing the material goods, they had such an enthusiasm for church planting and evangelism that they also preached the gospel, and more than 300 people made a commitment for Christ.

I then visited Indonesia in January/February this year. On my very first

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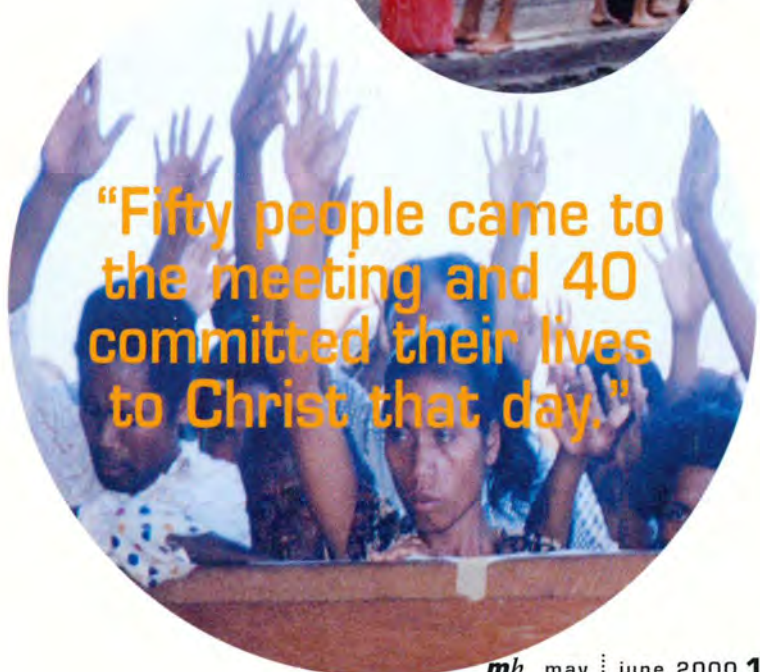
day I was aware of the mounting tension between Christians and Muslims, and there were frequent reports of Christians being attacked throughout the region. It seems that there is a deep hunger among Christians seeking God's help and support in this time of persecution. I visited one church on the island of Nias off the west coast of Sumatra – it took over 20 hours to get there along rough roads, plus an overnight ferry crossing. I don't think I've ever had so many near-death experiences in any one 20 hour period!

Fifty people came to the meeting and 40 committed their lives to Christ that day. Thirty wanted to go forward for baptism. The KGBI will offer discipleship training to the new converts, and they will not baptise them until they have been Christians for at least three months, and have shown their commitment to the Lord.

The need to work with the East Timorese refugees remains as great as ever. Estimates say as many as 125,000 refugees have now returned home, but for those who are left, they are living in overcrowded camps, with inadequate shelter, and fears of epidemics / breaking out. The KGBI are now seeking to buy Bibles for the refugees, and with the money BMS had given, pastors who had lost their homes and churches are being helped.

On my way into Manado Youbert and Youtie took me to a KGBI church which had become home for two missionaries and their young families who had had to flee from the island of Ternate. They told me how their church was surrounded by stone throwing and machete-wielding Muslims intending to destroy the church and kill any one who got in the way. Angry scenes followed in which some Christians were hacked to death. The two families managed to escape, leaving on the very last ship bound for Sulawesi. They lost all their belongings. The island of Ternate had been 50/50 Christian/Muslim for generations, but now there are no Christians. They are either dead or have fled. Many KGBI staff believe it is the militant Muslim plan to rid each and every island across the archipelago of every trace of Christianity. ●

Steve Mantle is in-coming President of BMS



"Fifty people came to the meeting and 40 committed their lives to Christ that day."

Living on

Gwen Hunter describes what it's like when

■
It was early one Sunday morning when persistent knocking brought me to the door to find Lina and one of her daughters in a state of agitation. Lina's granddaughter was in the hospital outpatient department, ulcerous legs giving cause for concern. She was one of twins and the boy had died two days before, with malnutrition and associated anaemia.

The family had a debt to the hospital, money had finished, the surviving twin needed treatment and they couldn't afford medicines or food. Father had gone further east to contact friends for help. He didn't return alive and the second twin also died, despite the help we gave. Only the mother was left to mourn the loss of all her immediate family, together with her mother and sister. I was surprised to learn that Ngida had married and gone with her husband to live in Congo Brazzaville where they had settled well and were becoming relatively prosperous until the war broke out and they had to flee along with thousands of others.

Fighting broke out again between the government militia and the rebel groups more than a year ago in Congo Brazzaville. There have been massive and violent atrocities against the civilian population in an attempt to wipe out whole communities with arbitrary executions, mutilation and rape being performed on a wide scale.

First the Brazzaville population fled to the south to seek refuge in the tropical forests, but they found themselves, together with the local population, victims of indiscriminate violence. They had no access to food or medical care and fleeing in ever-greater numbers further south and west they crossed the borders in their thousands into the Bas Congo region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (or DRC, formerly Zaire). They preferred to stay near to the borders but it was difficult to get help to them in some of the remoter parts and the DRC government wanted to avoid the security hazard with Congo Brazzaville militia crossing the borders. Consequently they moved on down to the river at Luozi (the head town of the Manianga area). UNHCR officials came in with food and supplies and set up camps but soon found that they couldn't cope with such large numbers.

Thousands of refugees flooded into Mbanza Ngungu and others, passing through Luozi, poured down into Kimpese. At the same time



a knife-edge

refugees pour into your country



“The local Congolese couldn’t find anything to buy because the refugees needed to eat as well.”

the simmering war in Angola boiled up again. The UNITA rebels gained ground and moved towards the north of Angola causing tens of thousands to flee similar atrocities and pour north into Bas Congo (DRC). Many of those fleeing from Angola this time have fled before. For them, life seems a vicious circle of fleeing, settling in temporary accommodation, returning, planting, and often before a full harvest can be gathered, fleeing again leaving their fields to be flattened and their houses looted. They live on a knife-edge. Insecurity is a way of life. Poverty and malnutrition are normal. Yet they survive as a people though many individuals are lost.

So it was that once again Bas Congo (DRC) became home for probably at least 150,000 refugees fleeing from war to its north and south. The people of Bas Congo are in a critical period. The land which has been grossly over-farmed can just about support the local population, many of whom live at or below subsistence level and now there was an influx of hungry mouths to feed. In Luozi the market became a meagre affair. The local Congolese couldn’t find anything to buy because the refugees needed to eat as well. Many refugees were sick. The hospitals filled up with needy souls who couldn’t afford to pay. Aid organisations such as the Red Cross and Doctors without Borders have come in with some help but fleeing takes its toll. A diabetic pastor fled from Congo Brazzaville, his insulin was running out, he couldn’t exist without it; frantic radiophone messages were sent. The medicine was only to be found in Kinshasa and that was several days away and with no regular or sure way guaranteed.

The Church is called upon to show the love of God. To give away what it needs for itself - not out of its abundance but out of its poverty. Our Congolese have given themselves to help these refugees. In fact over the border in Congo Brazzaville our Congolese have often been badly treated in the past and many of the refugees have remarked on the warmth and love they have felt in the way they’ve been received by the people in Luozi. They came in fear, fleeing from violence, suffering, insecurity and pain and they were received with compassion. Man’s inhumanity to man causes refugees. Only God’s love between peoples can bring about reconciliation. Oh that God would bring peace - real peace - to Angola and Congo (both Congos) so that the refugees can return in security to their homelands and build for a good tomorrow. ●

Gwen Hunter is a pharmacist and BMS missionary, currently on her final Home Assignment in the UK after working in Zaire/Congo with BMS for over 30 years.



"GETTING THE WAR OUT"



A report on life in Chechnya – and beyond

It is said that since the Soviet Union crumbled in 1991, Chechnya has become one of the most dangerous places on earth – especially for Christians. Chechnya declared its independence in 1991, a claim Russia has never fully recognised. In 1996 Russia granted Chechnya limited political autonomy after another war ended there, but tensions rose again in August 1999 when Chechen militants seized control of the Russian republic, Dagestan. In September 1999, following bombings in Moscow, Russia invaded Chechnya in what it called a 'terrorist-fighting operation'.

It is believed that around 40 Christians remain in this breakaway, predominantly Muslim republic. The other Christians fled to adjoining regions, along with their mainly Muslim neighbours – more than 250,000 people altogether.

Among those who wanted to stay was Alexis Sitnikov, pastor of the Baptist church in Grozny, Chechnya.

He had been kidnapped twice, and his ribs had been broken before being kidnapped again by Muslim extremists in October 1998. His family continue to pray for him regularly, but hope is diminishing. In March 1999, the next pastor, Alexander Kulokov was kidnapped. Two weeks later a church member saw his severed head displayed at a market stall in Grozny. His successor, a 23-year-old deacon, Vitaly Korotun, was abducted in August 1999.

Recently a 13 year-old girl from Grozny Baptist church, Anya Hrykin, was found by Russian soldiers after being held for three months by Muslim extremists who beat, raped and starved her. She is now recovering in the care of another refugee family.

What of those who fled? Some escaped to Ingushetia, Northern Ossetia and Dagestan in the former Soviet Union. Thousands made the dangerous trek over icy mountain roads of the Caucasus mountain range into Georgia. Ingushetia received more than 230,000 refugees and has found it hard to cope. Most live with host families, or rent accommodation, but

"20,000 or so people live in tents, railway carriages, buses or hastily built shacks."

above: children's paintings from Chechnya and Georgia

OF THEM



20,000 or so people live in tents, railway carriages, buses or hastily built shacks. It was to this region of Ingushetia that BMS sent a Relief Fund grant of £3,000 in November 1999, to help provide food, clothing and blankets to around 2,000 people who had fled their homes.

Those in Georgia are with families or in camps. Traditionally the two countries of Chechnya and Georgia have been enemies. The dilemma for Georgian Christians has been how to respond to the plight of their mainly Muslim, Chechen neighbours.

One group of Georgian Baptists led by Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili, President of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches of Georgia decided to offer food, clothing, school books and other materials, and to spend Christmas with the refugees in their camp. Bishop Malkhaz said, "I am getting more and more convinced that the care of the children and the most destitute has to remain on our priority list. These children and refugees have been brought out of the war, but it is going to be very hard to get the war out of them." ●



Too close to home?

More than 100 passengers on the Boeing 727 that was hijacked back in February asked for asylum in Britain. Escaping the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, they came to Britain seeking a new life in a free society, free of persecution. Last year almost 90,000 people sought refuge in Britain, representing a 50 per cent increase on previous figures and making Britain the second most popular place to flee to, behind Germany. According to latest figures, genuine asylum seekers are outnumbered three to one by people simply looking for a better life in Britain.

The bottom line is that there are huge masses of humanity desperate to find a home. We can shout about social justice, fair play and humanitarian aid when they are out there. But when some of them arrive on our own doorstep we shout other words like: "Having let refugees from war-torn Kosovo in, we should kick the ungrateful parasites straight back out again!" (Daily Star). "All manner of Riff Raff are now coming to Britain, because we're the softest touch in Europe!" (Sunday Mirror). "The refugees are mainly Nigerians, Turks, Indians, Somalis and former Yugoslavs. Few of these countries feature persecution on a scale to justify the influx." (Mail on Sunday). According to the Refugee Council of Great Britain many genuine refugees who have come here to escape persecution, torture, ethnic cleansing and death are facing discrimination, verbal abuse and physical attacks. They are coldly referred to as "economic migrants" or "benefit scroungers".

The horror of being uprooted from your home and having to run for your life is not an experience that many of us will ever have. We glibly say that 'home is where the family is', so perhaps we should live with our family in a home-made shelter for a couple of years with a plastic bag as our toilet and an old spoon to help us dig in the dirt for food!

Fair dealing, compassion and integrity are the bedrock of Christian response in a hurting world. We can't turn our back on the people issues that plague our planet. Holding people at a distance, however complex the issues are, will never work. They will always be close to home! ●

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



for more than 50 years a forgotten war has raged in a former British colony. A gentle, hospitable people whose lands straddle the border of Thailand and Burma have been campaigning and fighting for autonomy. The Karen, one of the so-called hill tribe groups of this area, have lived in these lands for generations and were promised by the British a measure of independence when colonial rule ended; an independence that has been denied them ever since.

Earlier this year, this war hit the UK headlines because a band of soldiers, reputedly led by 12-year old twins, stormed a hospital on the Thai side of the border at Ratchaburi, took hostages and were eventually defeated by Thai troops. *God's Army* – as this group of fighters is known – took its desperate action in a bid to stop the Thai army co-operating with Burmese troops in the latter's long-running efforts to stamp out Karen resistance to its rule. But the outcome of its action is likely to make life in the hill tribe areas harder for everyone.

Already members of the Karen and Mon tribes face discrimination and difficulty in their daily lives because of their ethnic identity in both Burma and Thailand. The situation is far worse on the Burmese side of the border, especially for the Karen. There a war has been waged against them that, if it were happening in Bosnia or Kosovo, would have been labelled ethnic cleansing by Nato and precipitated action to stop it.

Karen villages are razed, their inhabitants forced to flee into the forest and find refuge where they may. Of those who are not killed – and many hundreds have been – many find sanctuary in camps on the Thai side of the border.

In the area around Sangklaburi, where BMS workers Angus and Carol MacNeill were working until late last year, there were two such camps. One was home to about 3,000 Karen, the other to 5,000 Mon. These camps, like the others dotted along the hundreds of miles of border between the two countries, are overseen by various non-governmental organisations, including The Burma Border Consortium, which BMS has supported through the Relief Fund.

Angus and Carol talk movingly about the complexity that the camps bring to everyone's life in the area. "The 'walls' of the camps seemed to be quite porous, with camp residents moving in and out both officially with a permit or quite unofficially," they say. "We had contact with a girl who didn't have an identity card of any kind and who had been living in one of the camps. She'd left the camp and was working locally – illegally, of course, and so at a low rate of pay.

"One day she went back to the camp because there was a head count of some kind," they continue. "She resumed the life of a camp refugee – no work to do, but food supplied and freedom from hassle by the authorities."

Her story is typical of what appears to be happening all the way along the border. Thousands of people live in the shadow world of uncertainty – technically stateless but contributing to the bottom end of the Thai economy, living in a twilight world of exploitation and discrimination that affects not just 'refugees' but also indigenous hill tribe people.

The raid on Ratchaburi forced the issue into the Thai headlines.



Examining what was happening in the north of her country, Bangkok Post assistant editor, Sanitsuda Ekachai commented: "Deforestation. Drug trafficking. The influx of illegal labour. A new wave of communicable diseases. A rise in crime. And now terrorism. These national security problems are the end product of military oppression in Burma. Yet we blame the lambs instead of the wolves."

She was voicing the concern of some in Thailand that the military is siding with the Burmese army to force a resolution of the Karen question that will stop the migration of people and the disruption of the Thai hill tribe areas. She continued: "Millions of refugees from war and poverty have fled across the border in search of safety and hope, even though many end up living a dog's life in Thailand's sweatshops and brothels."

Astutely she points out that "like it or not, the influx of foreign labour, new diseases and terrorism are the other side of the

"Millions of refugees from war and poverty have fled across the border in search of safety and hope, even though many end up living a dog's life in Thailand's sweatshops and brothels."

globalisation coin."

Back in the hill tribe areas, countless refugees live outside the camps. Their lives are perilously uncertain but they have chosen work over life in overcrowded and highly regulated camps. But their uncertainty wasn't that much greater than many long-term hill tribe residents. As Angus and Carol remind us "many of these still do not have Thai citizenship. Although not looked upon by the authorities as refugees - they did have Hill Tribe Cards allowing them to live and work in a certain locality - their rights were limited. What the authorities were really saying was that they could not be sure that these people could stay in Thailand forever."

The shoot-out at Ratchaburi seems likely to make life for these people harder as the Thai authorities take a harsher line on 'terrorists' using their country as a base for their armed campaign against a neighbour with whom Thailand is building a lucrative economic partnership.

Maybe Sanitsuda Ekachai is right when she says: "Only when justice and equity prevail domestically and internationally, will the oppressed not need to use violence to fight back." ●

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

Toulouse

A series edited by **Jan Kendall** that looks at towns and cities around the world where BMS personnel are working. By **Robert Atkins, Katie Bates, & Bethan Jones**



Introduction

Toulouse is a cosmopolitan city of 700,000 inhabitants, only three hours' drive away from Barcelona. In fact 30 per cent of the population have some links with Spain. Toulouse also welcomed a large number of French refugees from the Algerian conflict in the 50s and 60s – the so-called 'pieds noirs' – blackfeet. The British and German embassies reckon that there are 3,000 each of British and German people here but some estimates go as high as 6,000 each. Most of them live to the west of Toulouse around the airport at Blagnac. There is an Anglican Church as well as a fish and chip shop in Pibrac. In the city centre, Irish pubs abound. Social

commentators have already noticed that St Patrick's Day is becoming an important international festival!

Toulouse is universally known as 'la ville rose' – the pink city. Everything of any age, including medieval cathedrals and Roman remains, is built out of red brick. The effects of light on the brick are quite arresting. The saying goes - 'the town is pink in the morning, red in the midday sun and mauve at dusk.'

Toulouse is France's fourth largest city. It is also the space and aviation capital of Europe, and the number one city in France for electronics, robotics and leather and seed industries.

History

Toulouse existed as a settlement by a ford of the River Garonne before the Romans came to France. The site became a huge Roman city – the third largest city in Gaul. In the fifth century, it was the Visigoth's capital. From the ninth to the 13th centuries Toulouse was the seat of one of the most beautiful courts of Europe.

The Spanish Inquisition was invented in Toulouse. Saint Dominic was upset by the progress of the Albigensian heresy (also known as Catharism) which taught that the material world had been created by a bad god, whereas only the spiritual, invisible world had anything to do with the



Above: Le Capitole

Below: Aerial view of Le Capitole



good God. Dominic founded the Dominican Order with Catharism in mind, and opened the first community at Toulouse in 1216. But Cathar doctrines struck at the root of Catholicism and the French political institutions so church and state, backed by the king (Louis VIII), formed the Roman Catholic crusade against the heresy. This area was added to the territory of the French crown in 1271. The University was founded by the Inquisition to propagate 'orthodoxy'.

1814 saw the battle of Toulouse. Wellington's soldiers beat the French, unaware that the war had already ended and that Napoleon was no longer on the throne. Shortly after, Napoleon returned for the 'thousand days' and Waterloo.

After the revolution in France the city became rather sleepy and missed the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century; it only began to grow again after the First World War.

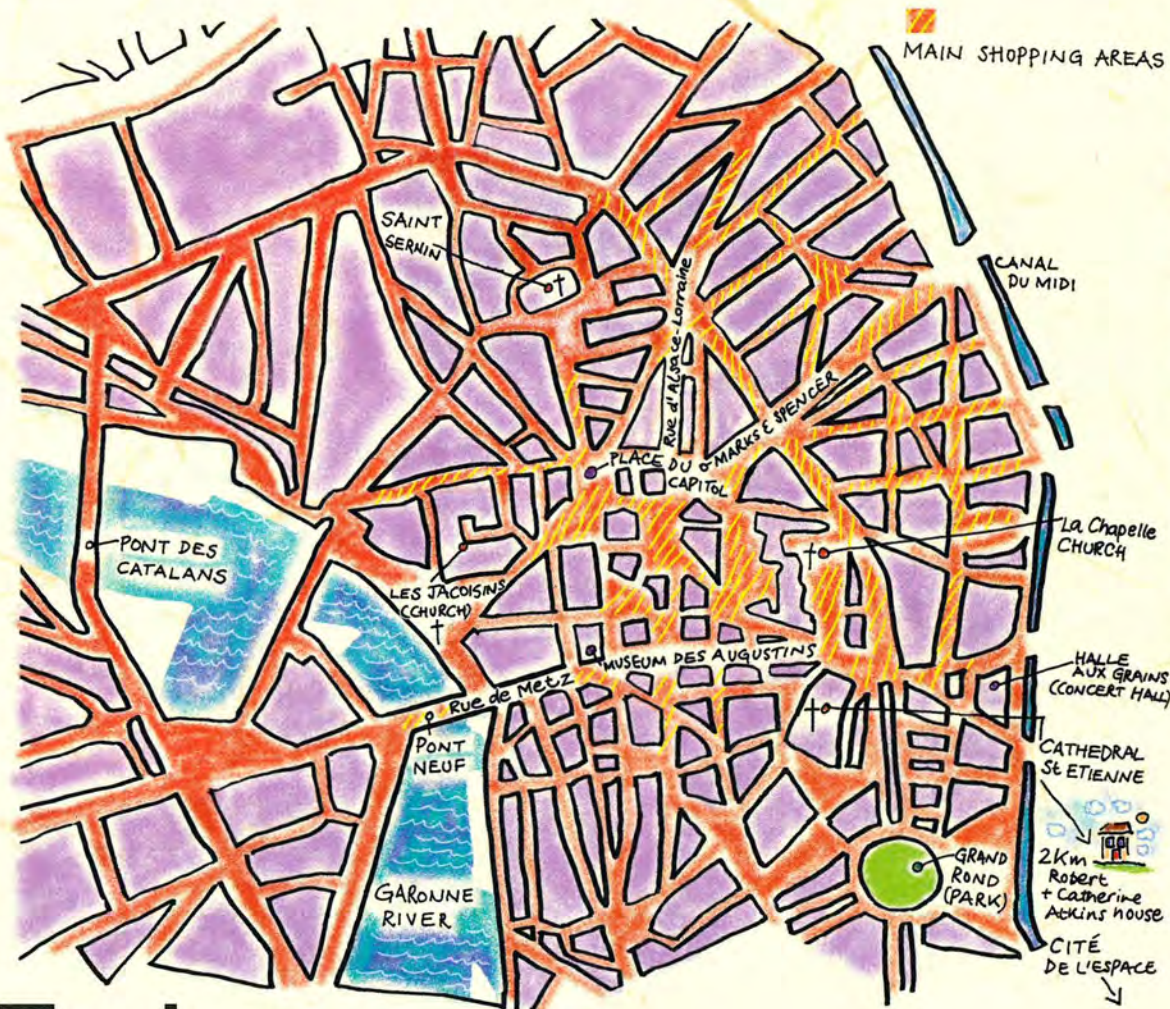
First Impressions

Toulouse is a bustling university city that welcomes people from all countries and cultures. Its snug streets and picturesque environment make this highly populated city seem cosy and intimate. Despite being thoroughly French, it boasts a uniqueness of architecture that has very mediterranean tendencies while its friendly inhabitants are far from the coldness of Parisian busyness, pertaining more to the Spanish warmth of character.

Toulouse is a very cultured city. There are a number of museums and cathedrals to visit. St Sernin,

St Etienne, St Augustin and the Basilica, all of which are impressive. There are also a number of theatres and two cinemas in the vicinity.

Toulouse has a big city philosophy, always very busy and never any room to move. However, you must remember that in general the French will not move to let you pass, but will keep to their path. It is really up to you to move! But pavements are for everyone aren't they? Toulousians on the whole are very proud and will not be defeated. At first this is frustrating but you get used to it.



Toulouse

Homelessness

There are plenty of homeless people in Toulouse. Sharing the streets of its cosy, clean apparent wealth are many people who are far from any of these things. Homeless because of circumstances, whether inflicted upon them or otherwise, many of these people live in a society all of their own where the order of their day is decided by how much money they can get begging, and where they can get their next meal.

Transport

Toulouse is in the forefront of aircraft technology - Concorde was made here and Airbus is a big employer. Much of the work for the Ariane European space programme is done here and a space museum opened in 1997 which is now a major tourist

attraction in the South West of France.

It is possible to travel by boat from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean thanks to the 'Canal du Midi' which was opened in 1680 and is now classed as an ancient monument. The architect was Pierre-Paul Riquet. His statue has its back to the canal because it was diverted.

There is also an underground railway which has no driver.

Leisure Activities

Toulouse is the rugby football capital of France. The local team provides a good number of members of the French national squad and was champion in 1994, 95, 96, 97 and 99.

The Christian Scene

There have been Christians in Toulouse since at least 250AD.

This was when the first bishop of Toulouse, called St Saturnin, was martyred by being dragged by a bull down what is still called 'la Rue du Taur' - Bull Street. His remains are housed in the biggest church of its kind in the world. It was built in the 11th century to welcome the very numerous pilgrims on the way to Santiago de Compostella in Spain. It also has the largest collection of relics in France - Calvin (a reformer from the 16th century) wrote a witty treatise ridiculing them.

Nowadays, there are more than 40 Protestant places of worship - many of them short-lived, hard to find, ethnic set-ups. The church scene is very fragmented indeed. Apart from the historic and traditional Eglise Réformée, the strongest protestant churches are the Pentecostal ones which have recently celebrated 50 years in



Left: Halle aux Grains
(concert hall)

Below: Cloister in museum des Augustins



Toulouse, but are themselves divided. Protestant churches here tend to be international – much of their strength coming from French West-Indian and French-speaking African Christians. Every two years there is a 'Fête de la Bible' which aims to gather the largest possible number of evangelical Christians for a shared service. There are usually as many as 700 to 800 at this.

Profile

Pierre Bordas (not his real name) spent 15 years in prison for *grand banditisme* – loosely translatable



as total mayhem linked to armed robbery. Once, when he and his accomplices were searching for a hiding place for their loot, they came across a hermit in a cave. This man, who had obviously never met Pierre before turned to Pierre and said, 'Pierre, m'aimes-tu?' That shook him but he didn't change his lifestyle straight away.

In fact, it took nearly twenty years and that long prison sentence before Pierre was finally able to say 'Yes, Lord: you know that I love you.' A video featuring Nicky Cruz was an important factor in his conversion.

Now, Pierre has been disowned by all of his former friends. When some of his old associates came to visit him recently one of them said, 'No, I've come to the wrong

flat! Pierre doesn't live here!' He must have seen the cross, the Christian posters . . .

Pierre is a volunteer who works at the church's homeless people's breakfasts on Mondays. He jokes that he can't come on a Tuesday because he's holding up a bank! He's talking about the 'banque alimentaire' – the bank of foodstuffs where organisations can go to get food parcels for those in need. He does this for the Salvation Army where he also helps out. In fact, Pierre is soon to become a Salvation Army soldier. He says, 'Once, I used to shoot at people in uniform - now I'm going to be wearing one myself!'

The BMS in Toulouse

BMS personnel Robert and Catherine Atkins have been working in Toulouse since 1995. La Chapelle, the church with which they work, and the only evangelical church in the city centre, offer homeless breakfasts to people in the hope that they can not only offer them the temporary necessity of food, but also the more permanent provision of accommodation. They hope that through these acts of help in the church they can get them closer to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. Although realistically they can only expect to give food, an open-house Bible discussion is also held after every homeless breakfast for the very real spiritual need. ●

God is faithful

Katie Bates is a Bristol university student studying for a degree in French and Italian. She recently came to the end of a six-month placement working alongside BMS missionaries Robert and Catherine Atkins in Toulouse, France.



“I re-read my first prayer letter recently and realised just how faithful God has been to me over these past few months; experience has been plentiful and I am certain I have grown in many ways. I really enjoyed encountering such a wide spectrum of people, from the homeless to those at the top of the French social ladder. I have really felt blessed by all the friends that I now have in Toulouse.

Anyone working with an inner-city church will know that the people and situations that arise can be difficult; working with the church of La Chapelle I have witnessed a fair few of them. I've found the breakfasts for the homeless a real experience. They are held in the church kitchen and there is generally a very comfortable and friendly atmosphere. My job, and that of all the

workers there, was to simply encourage this atmosphere in the hope that we might be a kind of silent witness for Christ. After each breakfast there is a Bible study, to which all are invited. The length and depth of the discussions that took place more recently have been a real encouragement.

For someone who had little contact with children before, I was thoroughly surrounded by them in Toulouse. Living with a family which included seven, 11, 15 and 17-year-old children, taking Sunday School once a month, helping teach English to ten to 11 year-olds and spending a lot of time with the minister's three children, I am now a confirmed lover of kids! Although it could be a little manic, I am very glad I lived with a French family. It has been a real advantage with regards to learning about French culture and language. ●

“I re-read my first prayer letter recently and realised just how faithful God has been to me over these past few months;”

WHO?

WHEN?

WHAT?

WHERE?



Volunteers in Prague, Summer 1999. Rob Vaines, Marc Vandie, Jo Oldfield, Kurt Vandie

Summer

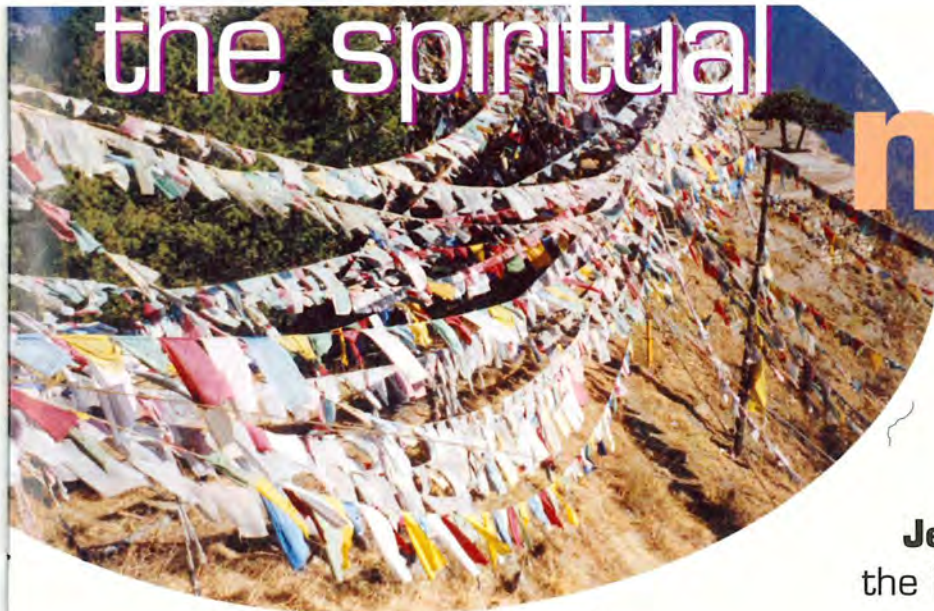
What will you be doing? You could be on a BM...

BRAZIL

- Location: São Paul
- Dates: 15 July -
- Team: 10 - 12 n
- Assignment: Working
- Cost: £1,050

If you are over 18, if y
SELECTION: Selection
 prepare you for your e
 Centre, Birmingham
 For more details and an appl

the spiritual

mosaic
of India

Tibetan Prayer Flags up a mountain pass in Shimla, Himalayas

Jenny Lunn explains
the images she saw in India

It has been said that Hinduism is the very thing that defines India and indeed, I have seen a religion that penetrates the whole of life; society, politics, and culture. Hinduism is incredibly complex and in theory, is destroyed by any attempt at description or classification. It is both a public affair and a private religion.

All the large temples dedicated to different gods are matched by small shrines in every family home for their favourite deity. Shrines are found everywhere and anywhere. A gaudy plastic image of Ganesh – the elephant god – with flashing lights, sits on the dashboard of a taxi (the good fortune of a god is certainly needed amid the chaos and danger of Indian roads!) Incense burns beneath Shiva's picture in a shop, infusing every product with its odour. A stall selling garlands of orange flowers is found next to a street shrine, where passing devotees take a

moment from their journey to worship Durga, temporarily blocking the pavement.

What of the Christians? I have met some enthusiastic churches, growing youth groups, envisioned congregations and courageous and committed individuals standing up for Christ in India. Also, countless organisations are working hard for the poor, oppressed, destitute and marginalised, and campaigning for social justice and equality. Being a Christian is by no means a carefree lifestyle. It was the first time I had ever been to an ordinary church which had a dozen security guards with guns guarding the gates and fences.

What image do I take away from India? One of huge religious diversity, but not one of peace and harmony. I will remember the buzz of Pune Old Town at Eid as the Muslims celebrated the end of Ramadan. The young peach-robed Hare Krishna devotees stopping

me in the shopping arcades of Delhi. The sign boards at rural railway stations which I presumed to be 'Do not leave baggage unattended' messages but turned out to be deep philosophical Hindu thoughts to challenge the waiting traveller. The peace and tranquility of the Bahai temple where people of all faiths are welcome to meditate and worship in unity and harmony. Two village panchayats (local leaders) in rural West Bengal – the first time women, and Christian women at that, had been elected. The exposure to such a spiritual mosaic has certainly challenged me to think about issues of tolerance, love for your enemies, the place of politics in religion (and vice versa), unity, forgiveness and the supremacy of Jesus Christ. ●

Jenny Lunn is a member of the 1999/2000 India Action Team, and comes from King Street Baptist Church, Oldham

Teams 2000

this summer?
Summer Action Team in...

12 August
members
alongside BMS missionaries in favela slums

PRAGUE

Location: Prague

Dates: 8 July - 29 July

Team: 6 - 10 members

Assignment: Hands-on opportunities for service, including various practical projects at the International Baptist Theological Seminary and supporting the Seminary in its work

Cost: £500

You have a few weeks to spare this summer, and if a challenge is what you want, then here's what to do: Day is 3 June – a chance for us to meet you plus an informal interview. **TRAINING:** 30 June - 2 July to fully experience. **DEBRIEF:** 25-27 August. Both Selection and Training will take place at BMS International Mission

Main countries for the world's internally displaced people

Sudan	4,000,000
Angola	1,000,000 - 1,500,000
Colombia	1,400,000
Iraq	1,000,000 <i>More than 1,000,000</i>
Afghanistan	540,000 - 1,000,000
Myanmar	500,000 - 1,000,000
Turkey	400,000 - 1,000,000
Bosnia & Herzegovina	840,000
Azerbaijan	576,000
Sri Lanka	560,000
Russian Federation	550,000*
India	520,000
Burundi	500,000
Rwanda	500,000 <i>500,000 - 1,000,000</i>
Lebanon	400,000 - 450,000
Uganda	400,000
Peru	340,000
Dem Rep of Congo	300,000*
Sierra Leone	300,000*
Georgia	280,000 <i>200,000 - 500,000</i>

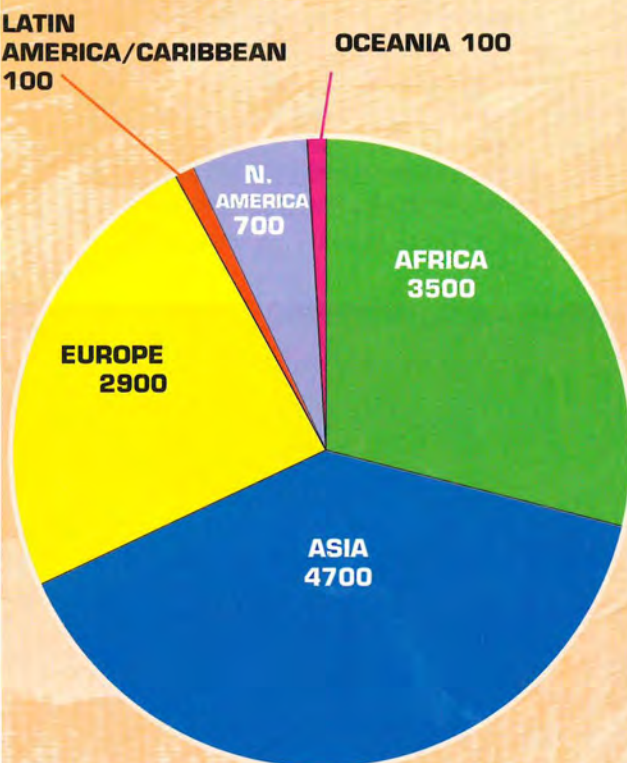
*Reliable estimate unavailable

(New Internationalist)

*"The dogs ate the dead,
the living ate the dogs."*

A description of life in the Angolan town of Kuito,
as the civil war continues in that country.

Global refugee population in the world *(end of 1997)* (000's)



Refugees

Facts

- One in every 255 people on the planet is a refugee.
- The majority of refugees are women and children.
- 85% of refugees are in countries of the Majority World, that is those who can least afford to welcome them are the most generous in doing so.
- There are an estimated 22 million refugees in the world today (though figures vary considerably) plus at least 30 million people displaced within their own countries.
- Some African countries have simultaneous inflows and outflows of refugees. The same people may cross and re-cross the same border repeatedly, fleeing successively from different versions of repression or conflict.
- Asia is host to the largest number of refugees, more than 5 million of whom are Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran.

(New Internationalist, Third World Atlas)

Meditation

- Leader:** The Lord is the way of the lost
- People:** The Lord is the staff of the lame
- Leader:** The Lord is the guide of the blind
- People:** The Lord is the strength of the weak
- Leader:** The Lord is the hope of holiness
- People:** The Lord is freedom of the slaves
- Leader:** The Lord is the consolation of those in bonded labour
- People:** The Lord is the spring for those who seek the water of life
- Leader:** The Lord is the comfort of orphans and widows

Confession of sin

Leader: Let us confess our sins unto Almighty God. Almighty God, our Lord and redeemer, we confess that we have sinned against you and against our fellow men.

People: God forgive and help us.

Leader: We confess that we have seen the ill-treatment of others, and have not gone to their aid. Father forgive. We confess that we have not loved you with all our heart, nor our neighbours as ourselves. Father forgive.

People: God forgive and help us.

Silence

Leader: Almighty God who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from our sins through the incarnate Word. Amen.

Taken from a service of prayer, repentance and reconciliation held in Georgia with Chechen refugees and Muslim leaders present. The service was led by Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili, President of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist churches of Georgia.



Chechnyan Refugees

Welcoming the stranger



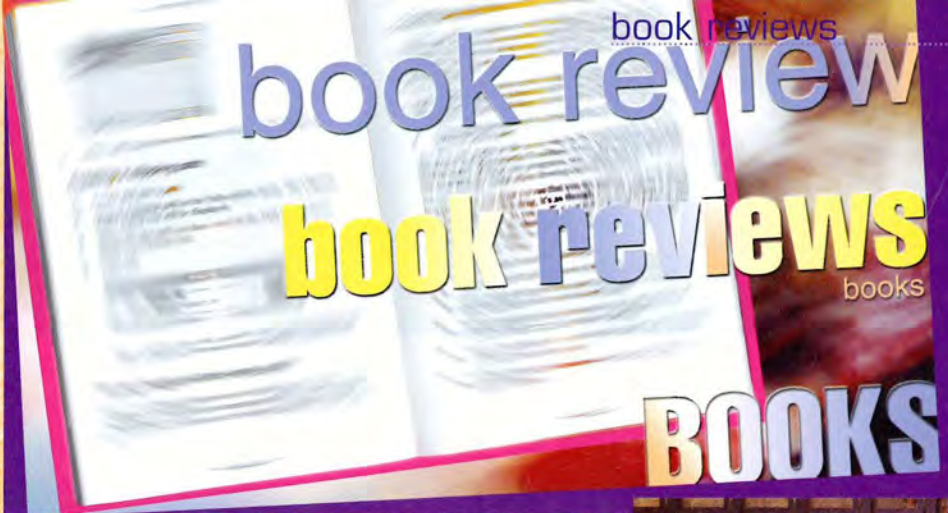
Thousands of refugees are on the move

around the world.. What happens if they turn up on our doorstep? The new Asylum and immigration Act could mean that refugees will – perhaps for the first time – come to your church looking for help. How will you respond?

Welcoming the Stranger is a practical guide and study pack on this crucial issue produced jointly by the BMS and BUGB. It contains a summary of the new legislation, a guide to setting up a project to help refugees, stories from around the world about how the BMS is involved with displaced people and theological reflections.



Priced £3, it is available from Rob Vaines on 01235-517617



Book Title: What is mission?
Theological Explorations
Author: Andrew Kirk
Publisher: Darton Longman Todd
(ISBN 0-222-52326-6)
Reviewer: Simon Jones, BMS
co-ordinator for London & the South East
No of pages: 302
Price: £12.99

There is no shortage of mission primers for undergraduates and ministers wanting to refresh their thinking in this area. But new ones are needed in each generation because while the subject matter stays pretty much the same, the questions we ask about the world and mission change.

This work, by the Dean of the School of Mission and World Christianity at Selly Oak College in Birmingham, is the fruit of a life spent in mission and mission education. Kirk served in South America in the 1970s, came home and wrote the first evangelical theology to seriously engage with the new liberation theologies emerging in the wake of the Medellin and Bogotá Conferences of 1970 and 71 respectively.

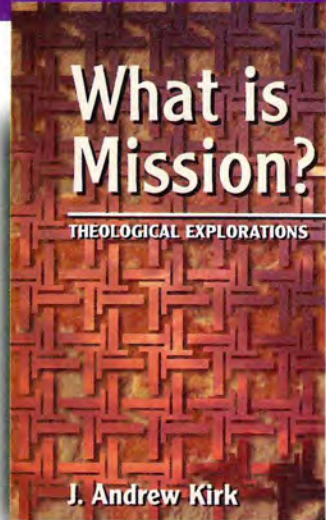
Kirk opened the eyes of many evangelicals to the need to engage with the political and economic realities of the situations they were serving in – whether at home or overseas. He has since gone on to write about the nature of the Kingdom of God and to explore understandings of freedom in contemporary society and the world's religions.

So this book is informed by both practice and reflection, settled ministry and considerable travel around the world. And it shows. Kirk is widely read and is able to bring the fruit of that reading to a range of vital mission topics such as justice for the poor, violence, the encounter with the world's religions, the environment, partnership and engagement with culture.

Each of these topics is tackled with insight under the heading of contemporary issues in mission. It is preceded by reflection on introductory questions such as the purpose of theology and what contemporary New Testament studies tell us about Jesus and his mission.

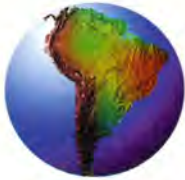
Kirk trenchantly defends the centrality of the church in mission, looking at but dismissing ideas that God's work can somehow be carried separately from the church. This leads him to conclude the book by looking at the role envisaged for the church by her Lord. He faces squarely the chequered history of the church and its need for repentance in the light of its many sins and he calls the church to be prophetic and evangelistic, endorsing the principle that there is no salvation outside the church.

This is really a book for pastors and theological students. But intelligent lay people would benefit from reading it. Perhaps the central section could form the basis for a home group series on mission in the contemporary world. It contains a lot that would stimulate discussion and debate, all the while helping us to focus our minds on the key need of the church today – that it rediscover its role in the world, viz making Jesus known.



prayer projects people

PROJECTS UPDATE



Project: Easter Project All aboard!
Target £30,000

To help raise money for a new boat for Gerry Myhill in his ministry amongst the people living on the islands in the Bay of Paranaguá, and to help finance other ministries Gerry and Johan Myhill are involved in.

Gerry and Johan are BMS missionaries in Brazil. They were invited by their local Baptist Association in the state of Paraná, in the south of Brazil, to work amongst the people who live along the coast and on the numerous islands in the Bay of Paranaguá. Gerry pastors several Baptist churches on different islands in the bay, and is only able to get to these islands using a boat. Gerry's present boat is no longer seaworthy, and parts are not easily obtainable. So BMS plans to sell Gerry's boat and put the money towards a new one.

Money raised by All Aboard! will help pay for a new boat for Gerry and will help finance the other ministries Gerry and Johan are involved in from their base at Curitiba.

PRAYER FOCUS



Mark and Ruth Warner: Massy, France

The Warners are currently in the middle of a year of intensive language training based in Massy, on the outskirts of Paris, prior to beginning ministerial work in France. They describe this latest stage in God's service as "...a challenging new venture" but also say,



"...we know, without doubt, that God has called us to it." Last year a British newspaper ran a full-page article that stated "According to recent figures, there are more British missionaries operating in France than any other country in the world... France is now considered one of the world's most secular countries, with church attendance among the lowest in Europe." Mark and Ruth say, "This land desperately needs credible, vibrant churches established that will affect individuals and the nation to bring them back to God. God has big plans for this land. We hope to be playing our part in those plans."

Ruth has previously worked as a

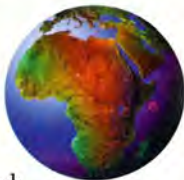
teacher of British Sign Language and also interprets for deaf people at various Christian events. She would like the opportunity to learn and use French sign language whilst in France.

Please pray:

- 📌 **That Mark and Ruth's hearts will burn strongly for Jesus and for the French people**
- 📌 **That they will quickly pick up the language and begin building good friendships amongst those they live and work with**
- 📌 **That opportunities would open up for Ruth to work with the deaf in France**

Karen and Simon Collins: Luanda, Angola

Simon and Karen, a GP and teacher by profession, have been helping out with an encouraging evangelistic outreach by IEBA (Evangelical Baptist Church of Angola) in a deprived area on the outskirts of Luanda, Angola's capital city. Many women and children refugees live in this area and the first time the Collins visited, more than 50 children and 40 mothers came along to listen to Bible stories and sing simple choruses. Simon has begun a weekly clinic with the help of some nurses from the local church, as most of the people cannot afford medical treatment. Karen helps with the singing and story telling



in a junior church environment. The couple have begun attending a church called Combatentes which has 500 or more members. Most of the people in the church speak KiCongo but Karen has decided to continue concentrating on learning Portuguese at the moment, the main language spoken in Luanda. Communicating with people is not the only difficulty Simon and Karen face in Angola - in recent months they have had trouble with the water supply to their house, having to rely on two big barrels which they have managed to keep filled so far. They say, "Praying for the basics like water has been a humbling experience and we thank God that he has always helped us just as we were about to run out."

Please pray:

- 📌 For the effectiveness of this outreach in not only helping people practically, but in also drawing them closer to Christ
- 📌 For the problem of the water supply to the house to be quickly solved
- 📌 For a leap forward in Simon and Karen's Portuguese language skills enabling them to build better relationships and to feel more confident in all their dealings with students, patients and friends

Geoff and Mary Ida Timms: Tirana, Albania

Like all long-term BMS missionaries, Geoff and Mary Ida have been undertaking a period of language and orientation training before commencing work in Albania.

Albanian is a very difficult language to learn but the Timms are making good progress. Mary Ida has



preached several times in Albanian from a written script and is working towards using just an outline. Geoff has been concentrating on building a good foundation in grammar and is now building up his general vocabulary. BMS is consulting with the Albanian Baptist Union regarding their future work but in the meantime, Mary Ida is offering pastoral support to the Albanian pastor of Freedom Baptist Church, and Geoff is undertaking research into the type of development projects that have been tried by Christian groups in Albania over recent years.

Please pray:

- 📌 For the building of good, sound relationships with nationals
- 📌 For God's clear guidance in the next stage of their ministry
- 📌 For continued good progress in language learning

Georgie and Stuart Christine: São Paulo, Brazil

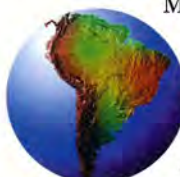
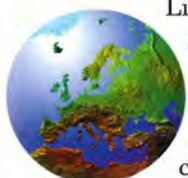
In 1992 Georgie Christine began a programme of pre-school education for five and six-year-olds in the favelas (shanty towns) of São Paulo, Brazil.

Many of you will have read in the Streets Ahead project how, without this opportunity for preparation, many of the children would enter the national schools programme

at seven years of age, finding themselves already far behind their more fortunate classmates and with every chance of dropping out and turning to a life of crime, drugs and prostitution. From one pre-school of 20 children, the idea has grown and developed and March saw the opening of the twentieth school in São Paulo and discussions taking place to expand the project to other Brazilian States, and possibly into Mozambique and India! Georgie and Stuart say, "Our Brazilian churches are full of folk who have dreamt about being a 'missionary' and have found in the favela pre-schools an opportunity to get on the front-line of mission."

Please pray:

- 📌 For the guidance of the Holy Spirit in what countries the project should be introduced and who should lead each new group
- 📌 Thank God for his abundant blessing on this project and pray for continued blessing on all that Georgie and Stuart do in Brazil



PEOPLE WORLDWIDE

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



Teofil and Katarina Deeta, Pula, Croatia

Teofil and Katarina have worked in the Croatian coastal town of Pula for one and a half years. Previously this university town had no Baptist church. The church has grown from scratch to a regular congregation of 20 baptised believers and 20 children. Teofil is now an accredited minister of the Baptist Union of Croatia, having previously completed a four-year theological degree at Osijek Evangelical Seminary in Croatia. He and Katarina are one of three people/couples who are wholly funded by a BMS partnership grant.

Photograph: Katarina and Teofil (right) with Georgio Grlić, the Baptist pastor of Rijeka Baptist Church, at his ordination on Sunday 30 January 2000.

From Reuben Martin, who has been with BMS in Croatia, for just over a year.

Sonia Franco, São Paulo, Brazil

Sonia first came into contact with the church in Jardim Olinda favela in São Paulo in the early 1990s. She says, "At that time my life was in a mess. Nothing seemed to make sense, and from a human point of view, there was no solution." The family were living in a wooden shack with never enough to eat; her husband was out of work, and frequently drinking too much.

In 1992 her son, Diego, had a bad infection. Although Sonia took him to the doctors, she did not have enough money to buy the medicine he needed. She was invited to church by her neighbour, so that Diego could be prayed for on the following Sunday. Stuart Christine was the speaker. He had a big wooden cross and handed round papers on which everyone had to write their sins against God. Then he explained Christ died paying the



penalty for all our sins. After the service Stuart prayed for Diego, and later that afternoon brought round the medicine he needed.

Sonia says, "From that time on my life gradually began to change!" Her husband got a regular job which he is still doing today, and she, too, got a job in the Education Support programme run by the Baptist Orphanage. Three years later her husband became a Christian, and in March 1998 she left the orphanage and joined the staff of ABIAH-OASIS, the organisation that works with Baptist churches and BMS in developing the pre-schools mission programme, as administrative secretary.

Sonia concluded, "My life has been completely restored. Today I have gained my self esteem. I love my work and I praise God for what he has done in my life and the life of my family!"

From Stuart & Georgie Christine, working with BMS in São Paulo, Brazil

People Wanted

Could this be you?

Pastors & Church Workers

BMS is working in several countries where the national church is crying out for co-workers. From Eastern Europe to Bangladesh and Thailand, there is a need for committed pastors to undertake a variety of work including church planting, evangelism or teaching. Up to now you've always thought cross-cultural mission was for someone else - today, ask "is it me Lord?"

Medical Needs

Making Jesus known in the midst of great physical need is a situation where medical personnel can really make a difference. Overseas the needs are great and the workers are few. Whether you're a nurse or a doctor, a midwife or a pharmacist - is God asking you to leave your comfort zone?

Engineering

When the children in your village die of water-borne disease, you don't need to ask what contribution an engineer can make? In the hills of Nepal where there is no electricity, you don't need to look far to see the changes that engineers bring about. Go to a small town and see young girls learning to be welders, working in an organisation which is winning major contracts because of its skilled workforce - and see Christian engineers at work - you won't ask why they're there - you'll wonder why you're not with them!

Teaching

The international language of the world is English - and all over there are opportunities for people to teach English as a foreign language. The context is there for Christians to love these people, show them respect, allow them to see Christ in us... in you. Elsewhere, the delights of teaching missionary children, or local children in a national school. One thing for sure - there won't be an OFSTED inspection!

Support Ministries

We all need the backing of others, and modern mission needs people to work in offices overseas, as administrators or accountants, as managers and logistics officers. One day you'll be welcoming people into the country, next day trying to clear a shipment of medicines. There won't be a predictable routine - that's a promise!

Hundreds more!

These are just examples of the long-term opportunities we have available, but the reality of mission today means that most skills can be used. The only "must" is a love for Christ and a desire to make him known. To contact us, please turn to page 35



New personnel

Alan & Megan Barker

Both members of Centenary Baptist Church, March, Alan is a Scheme Manager of Sheltered Accommodation and Megan is an Occupational Therapist. Both have contributed greatly to the life of their church, leading and helping out at various groups, including Alpha. Alan was also a leader, and Megan helped lead, in a 'church plant' from Maghull Baptist Church, Liverpool. They have three children aged 14, 13 and 11. Following a period of cross-cultural and biblical studies training they will work in Nepal with the United Mission to Nepal.



Susan Caddy

Susan is a nurse, and it is expected that she will work in Europe, possibly Albania. She has been a staff nurse on the gynaecology ward at Nottingham City Hospital since 1998. Originally from Southampton,



Susan has led Crusader groups, and now is an executive member of the Christian Student Nurses Group in Nottingham. She is a member of Queensberry Street and Basford Road Baptist Church, Nottingham. Last summer Susan went to Albania as part of the emergency task force sent out by BMS in the wake of the crisis in Kosovo.

Graham Sansom

Graham has been minister at Wollaston Baptist Church, Wellingborough since 1988, and prior to that he was a school teacher. After a period of training in cross-cultural studies at IMC, Graham will serve with BMS as a minister in Albania.



Baptist House News

Welcome to Sylvia Penny

Sylvia comes to BMS Didcot having just spent ten years in America where she supported her husband who was pastor of a small, non-denominational church. Sylvia's background is in accounting, and she is now



working at BMS as Accounts Supervisor. In the States she enjoyed tap dancing and singing, but Sylvia says she hasn't time to indulge in these activities now she's working full-time!

BMS Relief Fund Grants

Bangladesh £9,000

This money has been given to an Emergency Rehabilitation Programme via the Social Health and Education Development (SHED) Board in Bangladesh to help alleviate suffering of tribal groups returning from India to their homeland in the Rangamati Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. These tribal groups took refuge in India in the 1970s but have been returning to settle in the Rangamati Hill Tracts since a peace agreement was signed in December 1998. Many of the returning families are finding that their traditional homestead land has been acquired by others, with very little shelter, food or work available.

Indonesia £5,000

(See feature page 12)

This money has been given to the KGBI (the Convention of Indonesian Baptist churches) to help provide food, medicine and shelter for those affected by the violence and riots against Christians in Halmahera, one of the larger Indonesian islands.

Sri Lanka £500

Sri Lanka has been devastated by the fighting between Tamil Tigers and government forces. A sum of £500 has been given to the

Contacting Simon Jones

Please note: as new telephone numbers have come in for London, the Co-ordinator for London and the South East, Simon Jones' telephone number has changed to:
0207 639 8717

You can also contact him by e-mail:
sjones@bms.org.uk

Canaan United Peace Prayer Mission which regularly organises mission tours into areas of Sri Lanka. On these tours they usually distribute clothes, food, mats, books and Bibles.

Mozambique £25,000

Twenty five thousand pounds has been given via Baptist World Aid to assist the Baptist Convention of Mozambique in providing water purifying tablets, medicines and food to help some of those who have lost their homes in the worst flooding Mozambique has known for 50 years, followed by devastation brought about by Cyclone Eline. An estimated 200,000 Mozambicans had already been displaced by flood waters before the cyclone hit.



PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE GOLDWATER/NETWORK

An old man walks to safety at Chibuto, Mozambique, having been saved from the floods.

Signs and Blunders

A newish young female missionary was speaking in church and wanting to say she was very embarrassed by something that had happened to her. She kept saying how embarrassed she was, and the word she used for 'embarrassed' was one she had concocted herself and made to sound Spanish - embarazada. Someone in the congregation sniggered, but most realised the linguistic mistake. However they could not hold back when she went on to explain that the reason for her condition was the pastor. Embarazada in Spanish means pregnant!

From John Passmore, BMS Regional Secretary for Asia and North Africa

I recently came across some notes about our early Nepali language gaffs. What difference can a few letters can make? Quite a lot as we found out to our embarrassment. The gaffs are followed by what we really meant to say!

<i>Kukurko maasu man parchha</i>	I like dog meat.
<i>Kukhuraako maasu man parchha</i>	I like chicken meat.

<i>Wahaa mero goru hunuhunchha</i>	He is my ox.
<i>Wahaa mero guru hunuhunchha</i>	He is my teacher.

<i>Maile chiya pasal khaae</i>	I ate the tea shop.
<i>Maile chiya pasalma khaae</i>	I ate at the tea shop.

<i>Tapaaiko shrimati sikal chha?</i>	Is your wife a bicycle?
<i>Tapaaiko shrimatiko sikal chha?</i>	Does your wife have a bicycle?

Fortunately, the Nepali people we spoke to were very gracious in correcting our mistakes and were quick to forgive!

From David McLellan, BMS Manager for Mission Partnerships, and formerly with BMS in Nepal.

Check Out May/June 2000

May 2000

Arrivals

Mark and Suzana Greenwood from Fortaleza, Brazil
Sue Headlam from Rangamati Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

Departures

Kevin and Linda Donaghy to Palmela, Portugal
Derek and Joanna Punchard to Curitiba, Brazil
Jacqui Wells to Chiang Mai, Thailand

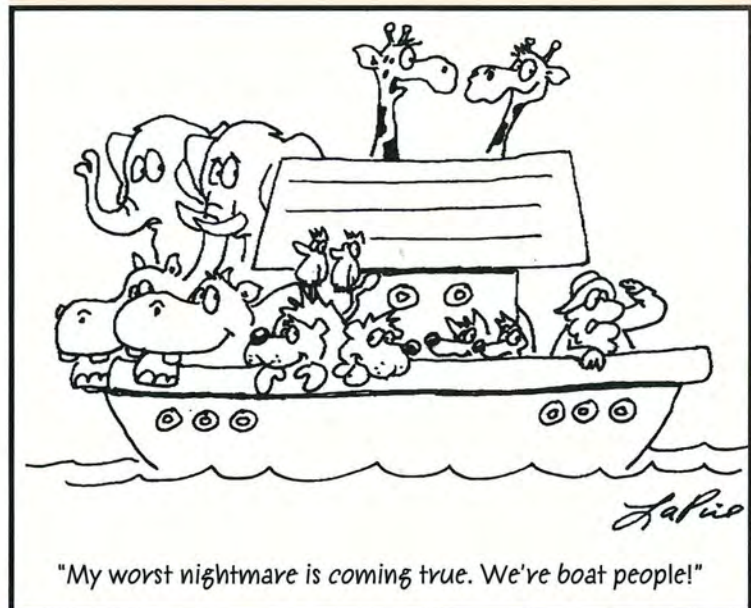
June 2000

Arrivals

Ann and Gordon McBain from North Africa
Sarah Hall from North Africa
Sylvia Bonsor from North Africa
Joyce and Stuart Filby from Ostend, Belgium

Departures

Joyce and Stuart Filby to Ostend, Belgium
Caroline and Tim Trimble to Kathmandu, Nepal



world mission link



Leicestershire celebrates

All people, all places, all ages was the theme for this year's BMS Celebration Praise in which people from all over Leicestershire gathered for an evening of worship, stimulating drama, creative dance, livelink telephone connections and a powerful address by a former BMS Zimbabwe Action Team member, Revd Edward Ibberson.

The Translucent Theatre Company had a key part in the evening - following on from their success at the Baptist Assembly when it was last in London, and soon to be going on tour with their latest production of the Bible Society's 'Entertaining Angels'. The recently established Christian dance group Radi8 performed a dance to the song 'From the squalor of a borrowed stable', and Regeneration music group provided the music for the evening. These three groups are all part of Oadby Baptist Church.

BMS Co-ordinator for the Midlands, Theo Lambourne, interviewed both Mark and Claire Ord, BMS workers in Genoa, Italy, over a live phone link and Rachel Lambourne who last year had been part of a BMS Action Team in Nepal.

An offering was taken from which around £350 will go to the BMS Relief Fund.



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Classes at all levels begin in September and January and at other times for all levels except beginners.

INTENSIVE SUMMER SESSION

10 to 28 JULY

Prospectus on request

Penuel Welsh Baptist Church

When the young people at Penuel Welsh Baptist Church, Bangor asked their BMS Co-ordinator, Delyth Wyn Davies, how they could get involved in a specific work in another part of the world, they hit on the idea of supporting a BMS Action Team. Not only will this church be receiving the India Team during their spring tour, but they've also been receiving the India Team's prayer letters, and have been praying for them, sending cards to them, and arranged a Christmas Toy Fair which raised £170 towards their support. In February they held a BMS fun event for the Sunday school, when people of all ages travelled in their imagination to be with the Team in India through games, dressing up, acting out Indian customs and hearing about some of the Team's experiences. Altogether they raised £400 for BMS that day.

Penuel church would encourage everyone who is thinking of inviting a BMS Action Team to spend a week with them in 2001 to make contact with their Team before they go overseas, so they can get to know and support them during their whole year out.



Paintings for sale

Olive Phillips is offering some of her paintings for sale in aid of BMS work in Kosovo. The pictures are framed, and £50.00 is being asked for each painting. For details of other pictures also for sale (but not featured here) please contact Olive on 01489 690883 or e-mail: ron@rphillips.fsnet.co.uk





Refugees - who'll be their neighbour?

Now it's your opportunity to find out more, to give, to pray and to go...

INFORMATION AND PRAYER RESOURCES

- I would like to find out more about BMS work in:
 - Albania/Kosovo**
 - Congo**
 - Indonesia**
 - Thailand**

- I would like to start receiving news/prayer letters from:
 - Robert & Catherine Atkins**
 so that I can pray for their part in making Jesus known worldwide.

GOING

- I would like to find out more about:
 - the vacancies advertised on page 31**, especially(please state)
 - other long-term vacancies**
 - being a BMS Volunteer**
 - overseas Action Teams** (Year Teams)
 - UK Year Action Teams**
 - Summer Teams**

Giving to BMS

- I would like to give financially to BMS. Please send me:
 - Ways of Giving leaflet which tells me about all the different ways I can give**
 - how I can join the BMS Birthday Scheme**
 - details of the BMS Relief Fund**
- I would like to order:**
 - Watch Your Language children's project**
..... (qty) **FREE**, but donation to costs gratefully received
 - Welcoming the Stranger (joint BUGB/BMS project pack)** (qty) @ **£3.00 each (BK12)** For this item only please add p&p as follows: Orders under £10 add £1.50, between £10 & £30 add £2.40; orders over £30 FREE. Please fill in your details in the name and address section below and also complete payment details.

Anything else, not mentioned above (please specify)

Name

Address

..... Post Code

mb magazine - maybe you've had this copy given to you, and you'd like to start receiving it regularly, or you'd like to give someone else a copy as a gift that will last all year round. At only £9.90 and with a free prayer guide three times a year it's excellent value!

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Please cut out whole page or photocopy and send to: Rob Vaines, BMS, PO Box 49, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 8XA

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RIVER of life?

Caring • Healing • Planting

The rivers in Bangladesh are essential for transport, crops, food and life. But they are also a carrier of death, destruction and disease. Many of the people who live near them are desperately poor and malnourished. BMS World Mission in association with Operation Agri are working with the Community Health Programme caring, healing and planting for a future generation in a country where 700 children die a day.

More details
in July/August *mb*.



Harvest Appeal 2000

In association with Operation Agri

