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Prayer Letter

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The people behind the figures

At the time of writing, Philip has just completed all his budgets and expenditure estimates for the next BMS financial year. It is quite a job, as you can imagine. There are so many aspects to consider and umpteen currencies and exchange rates to juggle.

For all of the BMS personnel across Europe, there are such items as household expenditure, rents, medical insurance, and travel. For the new people, Philip mustn't forget to include language study and set-up costs. For some families, there is schooling to consider or a house move. Then there are all the grants that BMS makes to various Baptist Unions and other partner organisations. For example, there are grants to support church-planters, financial help to enable work among Europe's Roma and among young people, and scholarships for theological education and evangelism training.

All in all, Philip has written some 25 pages of figures and data. Are you feeling sorry for him? There is no need to, in fact, because this exercise provides a terrific snapshot of what God is doing around Europe through BMS! Far from being a laborious, administrative task, writing the spreadsheets is a wonderful reminder of all the people behind the figures.

Currently, some 31 UK workers are serving with BMS across Europe in the areas of churchplanting, teaching, and development. In addition, BMS is financially backing a further 52 partner workers (identified by the local leadership) in their ministries: churchplanting, evangelism, theological education, and lay-training. In these ways, channelling people and finance coming from the UK Baptist churches, BMS is currently engaged directly in 13 different European countries and indirectly in more besides. Thank you for the part you play in all this.



Amsterdam 400

This year marks the 400th anniversary of Baptist beginnings. It was in the early 1600s that a number of religious refugees from England gathered in the back room of an Amsterdam bakery to pray and study the Bible together. By 1609 a group of them had formed what we have come to know as core Baptist convictions, especially the necessity of a believers' church and one which would also be separated from state control and practise believers' baptism. It was from these modest beginnings that Baptists spread throughout the UK, North America, Continental Europe and beyond to become a worldwide movement with a community today, four centuries later, of around 100 million members.

We look forward to joining with around 1,500 other European Baptists to celebrate this significant anniversary from 24 to 26 July at the 'Amsterdam 400' event. It will be an occasion for the European Baptist family not only to review historical beginnings but also to seek to discern God's calling for the future.



News in brief

In our last letter we mentioned the fact that there is a steady stream of UK language students spending their 'year abroad' working in a Continental European church rather than in the more typical role of a school language assistant. In this vein, we look forward to welcoming Stacey Hatcher in September.



Stacey is studying French and Italian at Bath University and, for her 'year abroad' she will spend six months helping out at the Paris office of the French Baptist Federation and then a further six months working with a BMS couple in Sicily. Judging by past experience, Stacey ought to be able to improve her language skills more than she would have done in a school role and, at the same time, she will have the satisfaction of contributing meaningfully to the ministries in Paris and Sicily.

Also in September, two new BMS teachers will be joining the GDQ School for mission workers' children in Tirana, Albania: Jill Morrow and Margaret Reeve. I say 'new' but, in fact, Margaret served with BMS in D R Congo during the 1970s. It will be good to welcome her back and to get to know Jill.

Family news

We mentioned above the 400th anniversary of Baptist beginnings. On a much more modest, personal level, this summer marks the 20th anniversary of Philip's ordination at Totteridge, High Wycombe and our induction at Croxley Green. Check out the photo from 1989!



At the time of writing, all three children have begun sitting their public exams: Lydia, the first part of her baccalaureate, and Luke and Charis, the final part. Pray for Luke and Charis as they explore options for next year, in both France and Scotland, and as they make their decisions during July.

By God's grace, Philip's brother Mark is keeping on keeping on. The most recent battery of tests in June showed a picture of relative stability. That is to say, there had been no development of the pelvic tumours, the liver was still clear, and the lungs were not at the stage of requiring treatment. In Mark's circumstances, this was relatively good news. We look forward to our two families holidaying together in France in August, God willing. On his blog, Mark reiterates his thanks "to the many people from far and wide who pray for us".

Prayer Points

- ◆ Give thanks for the 31 UK workers and 52 partner workers currently being supported by BMS across Europe.
- ◆ Pray for the home assignment church visits that many of these UK workers will make this summer.
- ◆ Pray for the 'Amsterdam 400' event, 24-26 July.
- ◆ Pray for Stacey Hatcher, preparing for her 'year abroad' in Paris and Sicily.
- ◆ Pray for Jill Morrow and Margaret Reeve, preparing to go to Albania.
- ◆ Pray for Luke and Charis, awaiting exam results and making plans for the future.
- ◆ Pray for Philip's brother Mark.

With our love and best wishes,

*Philip & Rosemary
Luke, Charis & Lydia*

BMS World Mission supports 350 personnel working in 34 countries of the world. Together they are involved mainly in church planting, development, disaster relief, education, health and media and advocacy.

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