

ENGAGE

The BMS World Mission magazine

THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL!



BEARING FRUIT - AND VEG! - IN MOZAMBIQUE

You're bringing plentiful food to families in need.

SNEAK PREVIEW

Your exclusive look at this year's harvest appeal.

PRAY FOR PEACE Our partners in Lebanon ask for your prayers against escalated conflict in the Middle East.





WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

BMS World Mission is inspired by our heart to bring the gospel where it's not known, to bring hope to a troubled world and to bring help for the journeys of the displaced. We respond to suffering and injustice with the promise of abundant life in Christ.

Through your support and alongside our trusted partners, we send UK Christians and equip local disciples in over 30 countries across four continents. Our highest goal is to see people come to faith in Jesus Christ and experience life in all its fullness.

Have something to say in response to this issue of *Engage*?



www.facebook.com/bmsworldmission



@bmsworldmission



Use the freepost envelope included in your mailing to send us a note, a cheque or anything else in response to this issue!

We look forward to hearing from you!



Editorial

HOPE IS AN ACTION

Laura Durrant

April 2024



It seems to me that there's been a heaviness in the air so far this year. At the time of writing, conflict rages on in the Middle East and Ukraine, concerns about the climate are increasing, and many are still feeling the pinch from the cost of living crisis. It's easy to feel helpless right now.

On the BMS World Mission Day of Prayer back in February, we reflected on the idea that hope is an action. That reflection has helped carry me through some full-on months: the idea that something as small as lifting up a prayer at the beginning of the day is putting hope for the world into action. That I'm not too small to make a difference.

The pages ahead include a lot of small people like me who are enacting God's hope across the world. Like Amelia in Mozambique (page 7), who's growing bountiful crops for her family, as well as making sure she cares for her land. Like Alia in Lebanon (page 13), who's working with our partner Thimar in the face of increased escalation in the Middle East. Like the BMS supporters on pages 6 and 19, faithfully supporting and praying for BMS' work every day.

I hope you find yourself in these pages. Find those who, like you, are putting up a fight every day by turning their faces to God and asking him to give them hope. As always, you're welcome to get in touch with me on magazine@bmsworldmission.org – I would love to hear from you!

God bless,
Laura
Editor



Write to me at magazine@bmsworldmission.org

3. News

A sneak peek at this years' harvest appeal

5. Unending love in a time of crisis

Dr Kang-San Tan gives thanks, even in darkness

6. Festive thank yous!

Your amazing support last Christmas

7. Bearing fruit – and veg! – in Mozambique

Your support is bringing abundance to people in need

10. Persecuted, but not abandoned

Jailed, abused, threatened with death – all because they dared to share the gospel



16.

Disaster is imminent

But your support can help stop a catastrophe

18. Letters from Ukraine and the UK



13 Hope spreads as history repeats

Why Lebanon isn't losing hope

You might spot these icons on the pages of *Engage* – they're there to show you which ministry area the work comes under.



BMS World Mission
Website: www.bmsworldmission.org
Tel: 01235 517700
Email (general): mail@bmsworldmission.org

The Baptist Missionary Society; registered in England and Wales as a charity (number 1174364) and a company limited by guarantee (number 10849689).

Managing Editor: Matty Fearon
Editor: Laura Durrant
Design: Malky Currie
Front cover photo: Jenny MacLennan

The views and opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of BMS World Mission.

© Copyright 2024 BMS World Mission
ISSN 1756-2481





Your support can help bring abundant life to Bangladesh this harvest.

HARVEST 2024: SNEAK PREVIEW

Words: **Laura Durrant**

God is moving miraculously across Bangladesh. This harvest season, you and your church can stand with your brothers and sisters to help even more people receive the hope of the gospel for the first time.

We saw 12 new believers baptised on our first full day in Bangladesh. It was amazing to see these steadfast new disciples take this step of faith, despite the costs. During the week myself and a BMS World Mission film crew spent in the country, we heard plenty of stories of determined Christians stepping up to boldly share their faith – a challenging feat in a country where Christians make up around 0.3 per cent of the population.

During the trip we met power couple Bina and James. They’ve been working in the tea plantations of Shrimongol for the last ten years, bringing practical help to people experiencing terrible poverty, as well as sharing the Word of God. They’ve

reached thousands of people with their ministry – and this harvest, you and your church can help our partner reach even more.

Our partner, the Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha, have a bold plan to train and send hundreds of mission couples like Bina and James to reach thousands more people across Bangladesh. It’s amazing to see the effect that this faithful couple have had on people’s lives, both practically and spiritually – delivering relief after disasters, helping children with nothing get an education and equipping people to share their faith. I know it would be just incredible to see the effects of such support replicated across the whole of Bangladesh.

Will you commit to helping those in need and sharing the gospel this harvest? We’ll have more updates and resources coming very soon, but you can save the date for your service today to make sure your church is ready to stand!

BANGLADESH FACTS

169 million
Population of Bangladesh

0.3%
Percentage of Christians in Bangladesh

35 million
Number of people living below the poverty line



Lucia is excited to serve her new community in Chad.

SHARING CHRIST'S LOVE IN AFGHANISTAN AND CHAD

Please welcome two new members to the BMS family! Oksana* and Lucia Bastos are moving to Afghanistan and Chad respectively, and are excited to see how God works through them. In 2021, after the crisis in Afghanistan, Oksana felt God calling her to the country. She is praying that God will use her to share Christ's love, especially

with girls and women. Lucia is joining the team at Guinebor II Hospital in Chad as the Partnership and Project Officer. She wants to encourage Christians to make a positive impact in the lives of unreached people. Please pray that they have a powerful impact on the communities they're serving.

**Oksana's name has been changed for security reasons.*

TEACHING FUTURE GENERATIONS IN NEPAL

You might remember the piece on Joy Ransom training teachers in Issue 57 of Engage. Since Joy left Nepal, her colleague Santana has stepped up to lead the programme, training teachers to use phonics to teach English and transform education for

children in remote areas. One teacher has been teaching for more than 30 years – he was amazed at the concept of phonics and reflected on how learning never ends! Thanks to your faithful prayers and support, Santana can empower teachers to give children in Nepal a better education.

From the
General Director

UNENDING LOVE IN A TIME OF CRISIS

Kang-San Tan



When earthquakes, flooding, wars and the climate crisis inflict untold suffering on displaced communities, they raise significant questions for us: is this a punishment from God, and how can a loving God allow such sufferings?

For example, the accounts of Noah and the flood (Genesis 7: 1-24) or Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19: 1-29) could be viewed as divine retribution against human sinfulness. If so, we could only pray for their repentance, or even feel justified for our lack of compassion for human tragedies in distant communities.

However, if we view human disasters as manifestations of God's love and mercy, our response is framed through a God who loves his creation and will not leave humanity to suffer alone.

Whether it's a Nepali earthquake, the war in Ukraine or the conflict in Israel-Gaza, BMS provides the opportunity for UK Christians not only to pray, but also to respond in practical love. While victims of natural or social disasters might not see God in the midst of trauma and death, they experience relief and support through the generous giving from UK communities. Therefore, both the giver as well as victims might one day acknowledge that "the faithful love of the Lord never ends" (Lamentations 3: 22-23, NLT). Thank you, as always, for your continued partnership with BMS!

Thank you

*Big thanks
for all you do*

Christmas treats two years in a row!

Take a look at these wonderful efforts made by BMS World Mission supporter Penny Hyde of Stockton Baptist Church over Advent. Inspired by Jennie Hembery's BMS-themed Christmas tree featured in *Engage* Issue 56, Penny decided to make her own! The tree was covered with labels with names of mission workers, BMS partners and even some of the BMS UK office departments written on them. People from her church then took

one of the labels home and would pray over them for the week – how amazing is that!

Thank you so much for all of you who pray for us here at BMS, whether it's through the *Prayer Guide*, via social media or by embracing your own creative ideas. It's such a blessing to know that you're joining with us in prayer and praying over all of us here, so thank you. We can't wait to hear more of your incredible prayer stories and creativity.



Thank you for standing with refugees




BMS supporters raised an extraordinary £62,225 for the Safe Haven Christmas appeal! You've helped make sure that refugees arriving on the Greek island of Lesbos are greeted with a safe space after their testing

exodus, leaving their homes and their lives behind. In Issue 58 of *Engage*, you heard about the harsh reality for thousands of women and children fleeing oppression, persecution and even execution. You met

Bibi*, who fled Afghanistan due to extreme poverty and the restrictions on her rights. Trekking over mountains with minimal supplies to reach the Turkish coast and enduring a dangerous eight-hour boat ride, she and her family landed at the Mavrovouni camp. Near this camp is BMS partner All4Aid's welcome centre, a safe space for women from the camp. Your generosity is the equivalent of more than 5,000 family meals or the provision of critical hygiene items for more than 10,000 families. Beyond this, you've made sure that BMS-supported workers can remain on the frontline of the refugee crisis. Because you gave, the beacon of Jesus' love will remain lit on the island of Lesbos – thank you.

**Name changed for security reasons.*



BEARING FRUIT AND VEG! IN MOZAMBIQUE

When Amelia's husband died some seven years ago, the grief was hard enough to

bear. But on top of that, she also had to find a way to feed her five children. In Amelia's rural community of Chassamba, Mozambique, many people were struggling to grow enough food to meet their needs. Money for necessities such as school and hospital fees was scarce. And all this was particularly hard for a widow with no-one to help her.

"We saw that single mothers and

widows in that community were more vulnerable, as they haven't someone [to] support them," says BMS World Mission worker Carlos Tique Jone, who serves in his native Mozambique. A closer look showed that the community was using farming practices that were not only producing disappointing harvests, but were actually damaging the environment. So Carlos and his agriculturalist colleague designed a project to help people like Amelia to lift themselves out of poverty.

There were two parts to the project. Firstly, they taught the

participants new farming techniques that would help both their yields and the environment. They also trained them in how to grow vegetables. The community's main crop was maize, but by growing vegetables too they could have something extra to sell in the local market. Before long, cabbages, carrots, tomatoes and onions were springing up in Chassamba. "From selling the vegetables, they can get income to support the other needs they have," says Carlos.

The second part of the project was to give a cow to three families in the community, providing milk and an



“ WE’RE HERE SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS TO SO MANY PEOPLE. ”

Amelia didn’t know how she would survive when her husband died. Your support means she can provide more than enough food for her children and grandchildren.



additional source of income. When each cow reproduced, the calf would be given to another family, ensuring more and more people could benefit. Much to her joy, Amelia was chosen to receive a cow – and last year, hers was the first to give birth. “She’s caring well for this cow, and this baby is growing well,” says Carlos.

The project was no quick-fix solution. Carlos and his team walked alongside the participants for three years, giving them regular training and support. Now that the project

has officially ended, they continue to mentor the families, visiting them twice a year to see how they are getting on and troubleshoot any problems.

“Usually, it is a problem associated with climate change, because sometimes the rain doesn’t come [at] a good time,” says Carlos. To combat this, he and his colleague have introduced the farmers to quick-growing maize, which is less likely to be spoiled by untimely rains. Last year they also supplied each

family with ten fruit trees, which will help provide nutritious fruit that they can eat or sell.

A joyful harvest

Today, the change in the community is incredible to behold. “We are happy to see that the people apply what they [learnt] from the project,” says Carlos. “They are farming well. All of the families that were part of the project are not suffering anymore.” The farmers are delighted to show



“
**ALL OF THE FAMILIES
 THAT WERE PART OF
 THE PROJECT ARE NOT
 SUFFERING ANYMORE.**
 ”

Widespread poverty and the increasing effects of climate change mean many communities struggle to grow food. Thanks to you, people in Chassamba have seen many bountiful harvests.



Carlos is determined to use his skills however he can to help those in need in Mozambique. Thank you for supporting him and making this work possible.

Carlos their thriving crops and the items they have been able to buy after selling their produce. Some have even purchased solar panels to provide electricity.

Wonderfully, Amelia now has plenty of food to feed her family, and no longer has to worry about where the next meal is coming from. Her two youngest daughters are attending school regularly, and the whole family has hope for the future.

“Amelia is always joyful, and she usually asks me not to leave her house

without having lunch, even when I have a quick visit,” says Carlos. “She says, ‘No, you don’t leave my house without having something to eat!’”

Initially, it was only possible to train 50 families. But the whole community is now feeling the ripple effects of the project. If people are running low on food, they can buy some of the project participants’ surplus. And the original trainees are sharing their new farming expertise freely with their neighbours. “I praise the Lord because I see what God has done in

THANK YOU!

Your prayers and support have brought abundant life to families like Amelia’s in Mozambique. Visit www.bmsworldmission.org/cjone to find out more about how you can support Carlos and his work.

these people’s lives,” says Carlos.

As well as the increase in physical harvests, Carlos is hugely excited to see a spiritual harvest beginning to appear among the families. “We are not just training them in how to grow maize or vegetables – in each meeting we have with them, we share the gospel of Jesus, and some are becoming Christians,” he says. “Remember these people in your prayers, that the love of Jesus can be with them and they can understand the depth of God’s love in their life.” •



PERSECUTED, BUT NOT ABANDONED



Your brothers and sisters are suffering for the gospel. Stand with them today.

Your phone rings.

It's the middle of the night and you reach around blindly, trying to silence the shrill sound that's shattered your peace. When you finally grasp it and pick it up, you hear the words you've been dreading. The police have come. They've put your friend in prison.

They have your number.

And they're coming for you next.





“

"WE KNOW THAT THE LORD WILL CHANGE PEOPLE'S LIVES."

”

Being a Christian isn't safe. It's an uncomfortable truth for Christians in North Africa – not least those that BMS World Mission partner worker Abraham* works with. He and his team train believers to become disciple makers, sharing their stories and God's story with their neighbours and communities. Introducing people to Jesus is something they long to do – he's life-transforming good news –

"WE ARE HARD PRESSED ON EVERY SIDE, BUT NOT CRUSHED; PERPLEXED, BUT NOT IN DESPAIR; PERSECUTED, BUT NOT ABANDONED; STRUCK DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED."

2 CORINTHIANS 4: 8-9

but it comes at a cost. And this spring, they desperately need your help.

The believers Abraham supports and trains face huge challenges. He has countless stories. The call he received was to tell him that 11 Christian leaders had been captured and imprisoned by police, their phones (containing the names and numbers of other Christian leaders in the country) taken. Now, with no-one safe, the other leaders were fleeing to neighbouring countries. Forced to leave everything behind for following Jesus.

The Christians meeting together in a well – literally gathering underground in the middle of the desert for fellowship, because it's the only way they can meet as a group.

The church that has gone from

700 people to nine, as persecution has forced the members to flee their homes and spread out across the country.

There are good news stories too. The 90-plus small groups gathering and reaching out across North Africa and Arab-speaking countries, formed by people who've been trained in disciple making by Abraham and his team. The police officer who

had his mindset around evangelism completely transformed and has since shared his testimony with colleagues and prisoners, seeing people choose to follow Jesus. The woman who, following the training, started reaching out to children on the streets in her community, and who now runs a small group for more than 60 children in her home.

What unites each of these people, each of these stories – both the encouraging and the hard to read – is a deep, committed love for Jesus and a desire to share him with others who've never had the opportunity to hear the gospel. And that's what unites them with you, too – even if their stories seem a million miles away from your life here in the UK.

Your brothers and sisters in Christ

in North Africa are inspiring. They're living out the gospel and making disciples despite the danger. Some of them are incredibly isolated. Some don't know any other Christians for miles. Many lack resources or training. Many need encouragement and financial support. All of them would love your prayers.

"This isn't a job," says Abraham. "It's a lifestyle. If we believe in Jesus Christ as the only way to God, this is what we have to do, because... we know that the Lord will change people's lives. If we want to multiply our ministry, we should pay the price. Even if they will put us in jail."

Today, we're asking if you would help these believers by standing with the Church in North Africa. On the next page, you'll find three ways you can support them. Choose one, two or (if you can) all three.

Being a Christian isn't safe. But one thing a Christian should always be is supported. Held in love and prayer by a community of believers. And we're asking if you could be part of that community today.

Your brothers and sisters in North Africa are outnumbered. They don't all have church families cheering them on and supporting them. And yet... they're still faithfully following Jesus. And yet... they're still choosing to reach out to others, in word and deed, with life-transforming good news.

Will you stand with them now?

**Name changed to protect Abraham's identity so he can continue his dangerous, but vital work.*



STAND WITH YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN NORTH AFRICA

Pull this page out and stick it somewhere you'll see it to remind you to pray!

GIVE

By giving today, you can support isolated believers, train up disciple makers and share life-transforming good news with unreached communities in North Africa.

£40 could pay for the transport for an isolated believer to have fellowship at a Christian conference

£60 could provide vital training materials for one disciple maker in North Africa, equipping them to share the gospel among the least evangelised

£176 could fund a week's worth of training for disciple makers in North Africa

Donate at: www.bmsworldmission.org/northafrica

PRAY

These prayer requests come straight from Abraham and his team in North Africa. Please pray with them.

1. Pray for leaders in Arab countries – that their hearts would be changed and they would no longer persecute people for changing their religion or for following Jesus.
2. Pray for believers in North Africa – they face opposition on many sides, from their governments, their communities and their own families. Pray for safety, freedom, opportunities for Christian fellowship, and that they would be strengthened and encouraged in their faith.
3. Pray for BMS-supported disciple makers – for safety, for their physical and spiritual needs to be met, and for them to capture the vision of disciples making disciples, and reach many hundreds of people with the gospel.

SHARE

Please share this article with your friends, family and church community, and encourage them to pray for and give to the BMS North Africa appeal. The more people who choose to stand with their brothers and sisters in North Africa, the more isolated believers we can support and, ultimately, the more people will come to hear the life-transforming good news of the gospel for the first time.

You can visit our appeal online and share it on social media at:
www.bmsworldmission.org/northafrica

Being a Christian isn't safe. That's the reality for most of the Christians BMS works with across North Africa. But these believers know with all their hearts that following Jesus is worth the danger. Will you support them today?

HOPE SPREADS

AS HISTORY REPEATS IN LEBANON



The work BMS World Mission partner Thimar does in Lebanon to house and heal people displaced by the Israel-Gaza war can be traced all the way back to the devastation of another conflict.

From Beirut, Thimar's Alia Abboud tells the story of how almost overnight an education organisation began helping war-torn refugees – and how God's

hand was over it all.

In 2006 war erupted. Israel's bombardment of southern Lebanon, in response to a cross-border raid by Hezbollah, left almost 1 million people homeless and fleeing north for sanctuary.

Alia explains, "In 2006, we had three ministries: the seminary, the publishing house and the school. When the war broke out, we came together

as a team and we prayed. We felt God leading us to open our seminary campus and our Beirut Baptist School campus to receive internally displaced families."

Just like the gospel, that decision was as radical as it was transformative; however, Alia takes us even further back to understand just quite how transformative and radical. The Lebanese civil war, which,

Words:
Matty Fearon



Between responding to the devastating aftermath of the earthquakes in Türkiye (formerly Turkey) and Syria and helping those caught up in the Israel-Gaza War, your support for our Lebanese partner has been truly life-saving.

stretched from 1975 to 1990, left Lebanon geographically segregated along religious lines. Most of the 1 million people displaced in 2006 were non-Christians, and they were seeking refuge in Christian territory.

In certain parts of the country, fear prevailed within both communities – host and internally displaced – as people retained vivid memories of atrocities that took place during the civil war at the hands of religiously affiliated militias – both Christian and Muslim.

As Alia reveals, God’s call to host newly displaced families was the act that led to transformation. “For most of our team, they had never encountered their Muslim

neighbours. And for the internally displaced Muslims, they had never encountered Christians before.

“Yet God soon showed us that we were a people of the same nation. We have lots of things in common and that by itself was transformation for us. Most local churches cautiously observed from afar, choosing not to be involved. We had to remind them, ‘Friends, go back to scripture, what would Jesus have us do?’ At the same time, young people from these and other churches would join us, lending a hand in packing hygiene and food items for distribution to displaced families, or helping out with the daily activities we ran for children, youth, and women

at both campuses and other displacement centers. The war in 2006 really changed us, changed the direction of our ministry. We obeyed God’s leading even though we had so little clarity and that led to the founding of MERATH, our relief and development arm, which today is actively addressing needs in Syria and in Lebanon.”

Those needs in Lebanon have come to the fore all over again. Since 7 October, as a direct consequence of the conflict in Gaza, worrying tensions simmer in the south, where cross-border shelling persists, occasionally resulting in civilian casualties and serious damage to crops and property. Over 91,000 people have been displaced from towns and villages near the border, and

“
WE HAD
TO REMIND
THEM
‘FRIENDS,
GO
BACK TO
SCRIPTURE:
WHAT
WOULD
JESUS
HAVE US
DO?’
”



Thimar has distributed

the following to Lebanese people displaced by the Israel-Gaza war:



11,000

blankets and mattresses



540

food parcels



16,000

hygiene kits, nappy packs and feminine pads

the people of Lebanon live in constant anxiety that the conflict may escalate further and spread to the rest of the country.

Thanks to your prayers and financial support, Thimar are supporting those internally displaced families with assistance so that at least the most basic of human needs are met, including providing food, mattresses and blankets, and hygiene items.

The work is all too familiar now to Alia, "We have suffered crisis after crisis. We had the desperate economic crisis in 2019, then the pandemic, then the devastating explosion in the Port of Beirut and now the consequences of 7 October."

Amid all the darkness, Alia sees God's light overcoming. "I am seeing God do what he does best, which is redemption. God is changing our churches and

is changing us. He is stretching us way beyond what we would think possible. And at the same time, he has helped our churches realise that our mission is not within the Church, it's beyond the walls of the Church. The Church must be the agent of hope in every crisis, whether in Lebanon or Syria.

"There's a rise in the sense of hopelessness and despair in both countries. What is needed is hope. And who but the Church can share hope? We understand that our role in the community is very contagious. When members of the Church come and share with others what God is doing in the lives of the people we're serving and in our own lives, others want to be part of that."

Your support puts Thimar right at the heart of bringing that hope, but it comes at a

cost, and Alia says your prayers are needed more than ever.

"Our church partners are tired. We need to keep our eyes on the Lord and we need energy and more people. One of our main challenges today is emigration: the younger generation – the qualified doctors, nurses, educators – leaving the country. We need people who see God at work here and feel passionate about wanting to be part of it."

I ask Alia if she has any last prayer requests for the readers of *Engage*. "We have just celebrated 25 years and our CEO, Dr Nabil Costa, says that 'God has been preparing us for the past 25 years for what is to come in the next 25 years'. So my last prayer request is just this: for wisdom to see what God would have us do in the next 25 years." •

“
WE
OBEYED
GOD'S
LEADING
EVEN
THOUGH
WE HAD
SO LITTLE
CLARITY
”



DISASTER IS IMMINENT

Words: **Laura Durrant**

It's the 3rd November 2023 and the world is falling down. Your house in rural Nepal is not built to withstand this force, you know that for certain.

You can't help but remember back to eight years ago, to the devastating earthquake that rocked your country then. Stop. You can't think about that now. Breathe. Run. Grab your children and run.

It's the 3rd November 2023. A 5.7 magnitude earthquake has struck Western Nepal. Mercifully, it wasn't as powerful as the 2015 quake that struck near Kathmandu, Nepal's capital city. But 150 people are dead, hundreds more are injured. And worst of all, thousands of people have been made homeless, right before the winter. Jajarkot and West Rukum, where the earthquake hit the hardest, are remote regions where poverty is rife. "It's one of the least developed

parts of the country," explains BMS World Mission worker Alan Barker. "The houses are mostly traditional mud or stone buildings... they just weren't suitable for resisting an earthquake." It could take months, probably years, to fully recover. And while immediate aid is incredibly valuable, it's not going to help a whole village rebuild. Alan recounts a story from one of his colleagues who spoke to a recipient of emergency aid: "The guy said, 'Well, I'm very grateful for this.' But then he turned around and pointed to his collapsed house and said, 'But what about this?'" And more than that, people understand that disasters like these are getting worse. With the threats of climate change and environmental degradation, no-one knows what disasters the future might hold, or when they'll strike. What hope would you have if you were in their shoes?

400 miles away, BMS-supported worker Sahara Mishra is hard at work. She's works in disaster preparedness and creation stewardship at our partner Human Development Community Services (HDCS) – and she has her work cut out for her. Before the 2015 earthquake, there was very little in the way of disaster preparedness in Nepal, which makes Sahara's role even more crucial to keeping the people of Nepal safe.

But what exactly does disaster preparedness look like? For Sahara, it's all about people. Part of her role is to meet with communities across Nepal to show them what a disaster actually is, and teach them to be prepared for any eventuality. It's not just earthquakes people have to worry about – fires, floods and landslides are all real and frequent threats to ordinary people's livelihoods. And knowing how to cope with each



Thousands of people became homeless in the earthquake last November. Your generous support means they can rebuild.



Sahara is passionate about helping those in need in Nepal. Thank you for making her work possible!



Praise God that communities are prepared to respond to all sorts of different disaster situations.

“ YOU CAN EASILY CAN TURN WHAT COULD BE A DISASTER INTO A NORMAL INCIDENT.



potential disaster could literally mean the difference between life and death.

A key part of Sahara’s training is making sure that communities are prepared to respond with whatever resources they have to hand. For example, fires are common in Nepal due to widespread use of gas cylinders. But it doesn’t only take a fire extinguisher to put out a fire. “If you know how to extinguish that fire locally, using a broom or using bedsheets,” explains Sahara, “You can easily can turn what could be a disaster into a normal incident.” Sahara runs people through emergency drills, they learn how to build shelters, and she even teaches them some basic first aid. And that’s the real key to saving lives:

empowering people to use what they have and equipping them to look out for each other. And when disasters hit among the people Sahara’s trained, they’ll be ready.

Sahara’s also been able to help with the long-term relief response to help rebuild in West Rukum and Jajarkot. Thankfully, a hospital run by HCDS was able to respond to the crisis immediately. And thanks to your support, Sahara’s confident that they’ll be able to rebuild. Because BMS supporters like you choose to give generously to our disaster recovery fund, we were able to give a grant of £15,000 to help the rebuilding process. Your support means that homes and water systems will be rebuilt, people will be able

to access mental health support and vulnerable people have been given support to make it through the winter. Sahara’s also hoping to run disaster preparedness training with affected communities in the area, so that they’ll be prepared if the worst happens again.

It’s the beginning of 2024, and life is still very hard. But there’s hope on the horizon. You’re rebuilding your home, your community. You know the road ahead will be a hard one, but you’re not afraid. You have your family and community beside you, and you know there’s people like Sahara you can call on to help. But most importantly, you know that the next time disaster strikes, you’ll be ready. •



A letter from Ukraine

Your prayers and generous giving have provided relief and pastoral care to survivors of the war in Ukraine since 2014. Two years on from Russia's full-scale invasion, Pastor Igor Bandura reflects on how churches are sharing Christ's love even in the depths of war.



Dear friends,

Nothing is more worthy than life and freedom. On 24 February 2022, an 180,000-strong army of Russian soldiers tried to take away our life and freedom when they attempted to completely occupy our country. The heroic resistance of Ukrainians continues to this day.

On the streets we see people with war-tired looks, suffering from amputations and post-traumatic stress disorder. At times we feel powerless in the face of such a large enemy. But as Psalm 124 says, "If the Lord had not been on our side... they would have swallowed us alive when their anger flared against us."

An important task of the Church today is to care for survivors of war. Churches are forming chaplaincy groups to visit defenders in their places of deployment,

hospitals and rehabilitation centres. Churches are taking care of families, helping them rebuild or find temporary shelters. We want churches to become a model of encouragement, healing and bringing people back to life through the love of Jesus Christ.

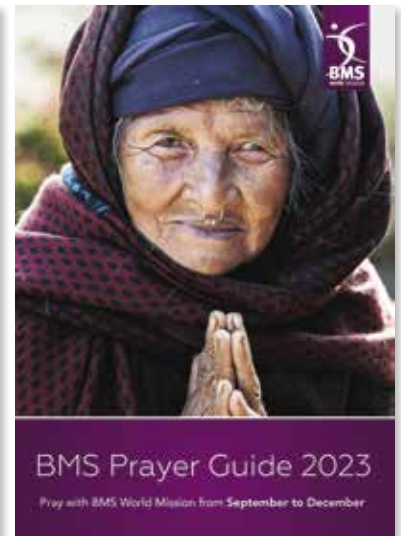
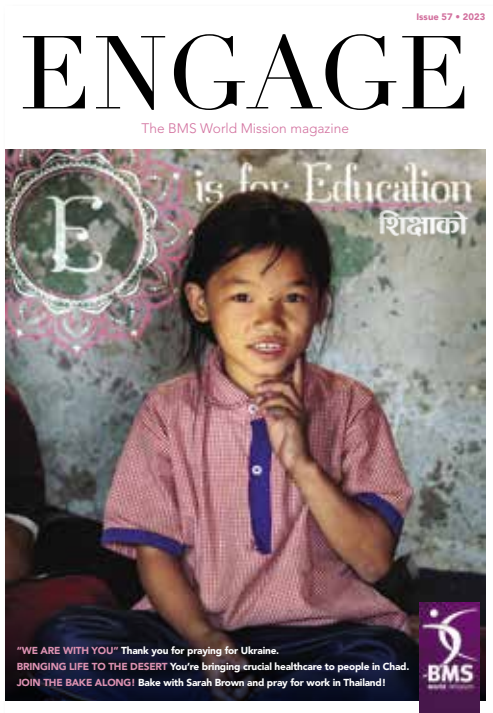
Millions of Christians around the world are standing with us. We bring our prayers to God for every one of you and for your support. Our prayers are also for God to stop this lawlessness as immediately as it began. God will demonstrate his glory and justice; his love will heal every wound and his peace will bring freedom and prosperity.

Thank you,
Igor Bandura
Senior Vice President of the Baptist Union of Ukraine

“
GOD'S
LOVE WILL
HEAL EVERY
WOUND AND
HIS PEACE
WILL BRING
FREEDOM
AND
PROSPERITY
”



LETTERS FROM... THE UK



Update on Nepal

Dear Laura,

Thank you for *Engage* magazine; it is so good to read of all the work BMS World Mission is involved in around the world. Perhaps you could let me know how things are going with the work Joy Ransom has been involved in in Nepal?

May God bless all the work that is being accomplished through BMS and partners,

Mary and Peter Hulme

From the Editor

Dear Mary and Peter,
Thank you so much for your kind words and for your support of BMS!

I hope the news piece on the work Joy Ransom was involved in included in this issue of *Engage* has encouraged you that this work very much still continues.

God bless,

Laura

Guidance for prayers

Dear Laura,

I was interested in the people on the front cover of the *Prayer Guide*, particularly of the last two issues – the young girls and the old lady. They really spoke to me and I have cut them out and put them on my kitchen wall. They both looked so intelligent and wise. I wanted to know where they lived and a bit about them and how they were chosen by BMS. I have prayed about them but would like to know more about what I should pray for and I'm sure that there are more people who feel the same as me.

Linda Williams

From the Editor

Dear Linda,

Thank you so much for your dedicated prayers – pictures can really be so inspiring!

I'd love to help guide your prayers, and will think about how we can get more information about the people on the covers of *Engage* and the *Prayer Guide* in the magazines.

God bless,

Laura

Get in touch! If you've been inspired or challenged by anything you've read in *Engage*, we would love to hear from you! Use magazine@bmsworldmission.org to get in touch with our Editor, Laura!



Share **abundant life**,
for generations.

Leave a gift in
your **Will** today.

Call: 01235 517615

Email address: legacies@bmsworldmission.org

