THIRSTY FOR MISSION

God hasn’t finished with Europe

AND GOD SAW IT WAS GOOD
Caring for creation in East Asia

DANCING IN THE DARK
Visiting a Bangladeshi slum school

The Free Quarterly Magazine from BMS World Mission
Mission Stories / Prayer / News / Opportunities to Serve
The situation may be calmer when you read this, but as I write we are experiencing one of the most tumultuous political periods in living memory (well, mine at least!) We don’t know what is going to happen next.

But there are things that we do know. More than ever, our world needs to experience the love of Christ. Regardless of what happens with Brexit, the people of Europe are spiritually hungry, and BMS World Mission will continue to respond to that hunger (page 8). Our physical world needs to be cared for too – read Hailey Brenden’s reflective piece on the impact of climate change in East Asia (page 13).

We need wisdom in these turbulent days. That is why I strongly recommend going to Catalyst Live (bmscatalystlive.com) this November. Be inspired by a range of global thinkers, so you can serve Christ and God’s world with renewed vigour.

Have a great autumn!
Helping Ebola orphans survive

From drug trafficking to Jesus

A four-year-old Burmese migrant told his mum about Jesus and turned their lives around.

Myat’s family settled in Mae Sot on the Thai-Burma border after leaving Burma in search of a better life. Finding few opportunities in their new town, and desperate for money, Myat’s mum and dad turned to drug trafficking. Little Myat was just two years old when both his parents were thrown into prison.

Thankfully, Myat was taken in by one of our partner organisations, where BMS workers Brian and Lydia English are based. While his parents were imprisoned, the team made sure that Myat knew he was safe and loved, and regularly took him to the prison to see his mum and dad.

After two years, Myat’s mum was released and the pair were reunited. Myat’s mum is a Buddhist and grew curious when Myat began to talk about a man called Jesus, so she went to talk to our partner to find out who this person was. Over time, Brian, Lydia and others were able to answer her questions – and she gave her life to Christ and was baptised!

“It is quite the story,” says Brian. “Our work is all about showing God’s love through action. It was amazing how we were able to help this young boy and then also that his mother came to faith.”

*Name changed

The recent Ebola epidemic killed over 11,000 people. BMS World Mission is helping some of the thousands of children who were left orphaned in Sierra Leone.

It was the deadliest outbreak of Ebola in history – claiming thousands of lives, tearing apart communities, and wreaking havoc on the health and economic systems of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Now, as three of the world’s poorest countries attempt to rebuild (after West Africa was officially declared Ebola free in January), BMS is standing alongside some of those orphaned by the devastating epidemic.

Through local partners, BMS is supporting 30 children who lost their parents to Ebola and are now living with foster families in Sierra Leone’s two most affected districts. Thanks to your gifts to BMS disaster recovery, we are able to help pay for food, education, medical care and clothing for these children for the next two years – an investment not just in their survival, but in their futures.

Orphaned children are some of the most vulnerable in society. Their futures shouldn’t be defined by the tragedy of their past. Your gifts are enabling us to let Sierra Leone’s orphaned children know that, although the world’s media has moved on, we have not forgotten. Thank you.
This inspirational woman is using her story to help people with leprosy

Having battled with leprosy during childhood, BMS supported partner worker Seeta has dedicated her life to helping others suffering from the disease.

Seeta was only eight years old when she got leprosy. Along with the physical pain and damage caused by the disease, Seeta was scarred by the stigma surrounding the illness. She remembers the trouble she had making friends when she was young because of the sores and smells. Other children didn’t want anything to do with her.

When she was 12 years old, Seeta got treatment for her leprosy at Green Pastures Hospital. The hospital is specially geared towards treating and caring for people living with leprosy.

Doctors and staff at Green Pastures treated Seeta for her disease and also cared for her in a way that demonstrated God’s love. It was through her treatment for leprosy that she came to know Jesus Christ and became a believer. Transformed by her positive experience at Green Pastures, Seeta now works at the hospital – compelled to give back and help patients at the place where she found healing.

Seeta encourages leprosy patients, prays with them and helps them in practical ways like with shopping and cooking. She also helps them to preserve their dignity in small ways, like taking the time to do their hair for them.

“Seeta is able to understand the background and struggles of patients,” says Jeanie Herbert, BMS Regional Team Leader for East Asia. “It’s a great holistic approach to working in a healthcare environment – Seeta is able to express God’s love, while at the same time help with everyday needs.”

Sri Lanka floods: you are helping

Over 400,000 people were affected and three villages buried after torrential rain hit Sri Lanka causing flooding and landslides in May.

Over 1,000 badly affected families in the Colombo region of western Sri Lanka are being helped by BMS through our Sri Lankan partner. These families have received much-needed hygiene packs containing essentials like antibacterial soap, towels and bedsheets.

“Within Sri Lanka, these torrential rains and the mudslides they have caused are being seen as one of the biggest disasters to hit the country, surpassed only by the 2004 Tsunami and the civil war,” says BMS Manager for Mission Steve Sanderson. “BMS has partnered with Christian organisations there for many years and is proud to stand by the Sri Lankan people during this time of trouble.”
Syrian war: the refugee crisis continues

Life is unspeakably hard for Syrian families sheltering in Lebanon.

“There are so many kids outside the school system. If our future is built on our children, that future is not looking very bright.”

This is what a Syrian taking refuge in Lebanon told Philip Halliday, the BMS Regional Team Leader for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, on a recent visit to camps in the country.

The situation for the estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon is still dire. The majority of families are living in extreme poverty. For the 70 per cent of Syrian refugee children unable to access school in Lebanon, life consists of the endless monotony of hanging around their families’ one-room tents or working illegally to earn a few dollars a day for food. According to news reports, forced prostitution, child slavery and early marriage are huge risks for Syria’s vulnerable women and children.

It’s a bleak picture, but BMS is doing something to help. Through partners on the ground, we are supporting the local Church to reach out in love to Syrians. We’re helping to provide education for their children. We’re helping to provide food for their families. And we’re listening to their stories and offering social and psychological support.

“The Syrian war has been a long and terrible one,” says Philip. “While it is understandable that people in other countries may feel fatigued with hearing about it, I would urge readers to stay informed and engaged until there is a resolution and the opportunity to rebuild Syria. The needs are huge, as is the suffering.”

You can support our work with Syrian families in Lebanon by using Syria’s Forgotten Families in your church.

Visit bmsworldmission.org/syriasfamilies

A BMS legend retires

After 26 years of keeping BMS HQ in order, Mike Quantick has hung up his superhero cape and retired.

To the outside world, Mike Quantick may seem to be an ordinary man, but within the walls of BMS World Mission, he is a superhero. He began work at BMS in 1989 as an administration secretary and over time his job evolved into our Corporate Services Manager – taking care of everything from recruitment of staff to managing BMS properties.

“BMS was nothing like I imagined it would be,” says Mike. “It most certainly has had a positive impact on my faith.”

Mike, from the whole BMS family across the UK, we salute you.

BMS HQ
Dear Editor,

I have just finished reading the summer edition of Engage and I wanted to tell you what a great read it was. I very much enjoy the magazine, and this time I particularly liked the article I can’t BELIEVE I said that! What a funny and well-written piece which revealed an amusing insight into life as a mission worker. Sometimes we forget that they have a sense of humour and don’t only think ‘holy’ thoughts. The interview with Pam Rhodes was lovely and The adoption they thought would never happen was inspiring. Thank you to you and your team for bringing these articles and all the other content too. Keep up the good work. I look forward to the next edition.

Moira Ritchie

Dear Editor,

You don’t even need to get as far as the “mission field” to indulge in language faux pas [I can’t BELIEVE I said that!]. In my first few days of tropical diseases training in Antwerp, there I was going round the bakers asking for broody hens (broedjes) in place of rolls (broodjes). I could say that the Candidate Board had failed to warn me that because of language tensions in Belgium at the time, I would also need to speak reasonable Flemish before I got there.

Martin Stagles

We do not have space to include all readers’ correspondence that we receive and letters that are printed may be edited for publication.

More letters are online at bmsworldmission.org/engage
“Here is a time for everything – a season for every activity under the sun.”

(Eccl 3: 1).

It’s easy to think of seasons simply as spring, summer, autumn and winter, especially if we are anticipating the promise of spring, after a particularly cold winter. However, seasons in our country are not as predictable as we’d like them to be!

This is also true of the ‘seasons’ of our lives. We live in hope that things will always go the way we want, but that rarely happens.

We have to remember that God is with us in all seasons.

“I will be your God throughout your lifetime, until your hair is white with age. I made you and I will care for you.” (Isaiah 46: 4) So, if you are facing problems, disappointments, or worries, remember that you are overcomers when you trust Christ and he tells us not to worry, but to pray about everything.

According to our age, abilities, health and areas of influence, we all have different opportunities to serve God in our world.

There is “a time to plant and a time to harvest.” (Eccl 3: 2b NLT) We don’t necessarily have the opportunity to reap the harvest of the seeds we have planted. That might be the privilege of others, but we should remain faithful in planting seeds of hope in the lives of those around us.

Whatever the season of our lives, we are called to go into all the world to make disciples and share the love of Jesus.

As life goes on and the seasons change, we might have less energy and fewer activities, but there are always opportunities to be fruitful for the kingdom. We can pray, we can encourage, and we can cheer on the younger generation. We can make the most of every different season of our lives.

Fiona Castle OBE is an international Christian speaker and writer. Her late husband Roy was an entertainer and TV presenter.
I’m standing on a crowded street with a video camera and David McMillan, a BMS worker in the Netherlands. It’s King’s Day – a national holiday – and Amsterdam is heaving with the excitement and recklessness of a Wednesday off work. Partiers cram onto small canal boats and dance along the water, their boom boxes competing with the chatter of the crowds. And, despite the fact almost nobody looks good in it, everyone is wearing orange in honour of the Dutch Royal Family.

It feels much more embarrassing to film people here, in rich, Western Europe, than it has in Peru, India, or Nepal.

The UK population was split almost down the middle this year over the EU referendum. Jessica set out to discover why BMS World Mission is committed to continuing work in Europe – and why that decision has nothing to do with politics and everything to do with God’s love.

It’s not that the opinions of Europeans matter any more or less, only that here, finally, I could actually blend in and am instead choosing to stand out looking desperately at passers-by, hoping they’ll take pity on me and tell me what they think about Christianity. It’s pretty rowdy and I am a little bit worried that someone is going to punch me in the face.

Yes, it does seem strange to visit mission workers here, where everything is so familiar – even (sadly) the weather. But, as we interview someone who is drunk before I have even had my lunch, and he, like so many others, tells me that he thinks the values of Christianity are good but he has no
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It feels much more embarrassing to film people here, in rich, Western Europe, than it has in Peru, India, or Nepal. It’s not that the opinions of Europeans matter any more or less, only that here, finally, I could actually blend in and am instead choosing to stand out looking desperately at passers-by, hoping they’ll take pity on me and tell me what they think about Christianity. It’s pretty rowdy and I am a little bit worried that someone is going to punch me in the face.

Yes, it does seem strange to visit mission workers here, where everything is so familiar – even (sadly) the weather. But, as we interview someone who is drunk before I have even had my lunch, and he, like so many others, tells me that he thinks the values of Christianity are good but he has no need for the Church, I can see why we’re here. Europeans are not an easy crowd for mission.

Some would argue they are the most difficult crowd in the world.

It’s a question we at BMS sometimes get asked – why do you send mission workers to Europe? It can be challenging to get people on board with a vision for countries that, on the surface, look quite a lot like home. Especially when there is clearly much more widespread poverty further afield. And yet, our mission workers and partners daily meet Europeans crying out for something greater than the world can offer.

“There’s ongoing economic deprivation in certain parts of Europe, a growth in secularism, a rise of the extreme right wing in a number of places, inter-ethnic tension, organised crime, mafia activity, the marginalisation of minorities, breakdown of family, a sense of individualism…” These are the things Philip Halliday, BMS Regional Team Leader for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, who is based in Massy, France, sees every day.

“All of these things are a call to mission.”

BMS is not working in holiday destinations. While it might at first conjure up images of the French Alps or Italy’s stunning Amalfi Coast – Europe is much more than the pictures we see in travel magazines. In Eastern Europe, BMS workers Mat and Suzanne Gregory witness huge social inequality and economic deprivation. They are based in Tirana, Albania, and are serving the Roma community – whose exclusion and marginalisation is widespread throughout Europe.

“Many of the families we’re working with lack access to clean water, access to electricity, good access to education and healthcare,” says Suzanne. “A lot of things prevent people from having a full life.”

Mat and Suzanne, alongside BMS workers Annie and Dan Dupree, are working to try and help families in the Roma community access some of these resources. They are currently working closely with 16 vulnerable families – trying, for example, to help their children to get into and succeed at school when it seems like everything is stacked against them. Mat and Suzanne see a stark contrast between the lives of Albanians and those of the Roma families, with Roma children rifling through their richer neighbours’ bins for food.

MOST PEOPLE IN EUROPE DON’T PRAY TO GOD FOR FOOD. THEY BUY IT

BMS work in Europe

- Enabling church planting in Albania, Croatia, France, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine through ex-pat and local mission workers
- Supporting the impoverished Roma community in Tirana, Albania
- Providing educational support for a marginalised people group in Kosovo
- Educating Christian leaders at Masters and PHD level in the Netherlands for Europe and beyond
- Facilitating a wide range of mission in Albania by educating the children of mission workers
- Producing Christian TV programmes for North Africa in Spain
- Helping women who have experienced sexual exploitation and trafficking to escape abuse through Ella’s Home in the UK
- Supporting pioneer church planting and evangelism in the UK
While some of our work in Europe – like that in Albania, and our education project with a marginalised people group in Kosovo – is focused on helping some of the poorest in society, BMS is also working in some of the more economically developed countries and communities of Western Europe. We have pastors planting new expressions of church in France, academics educating Christian leaders for Europe and beyond in the Netherlands, and TV make-up and production specialists helping to create Christian TV programmes for North Africa in Spain.

“It would be very surprising to me if we were to send a doctor to work in Italy or a school teacher to teach in France,” says Philip. “But it’s not because of the economic impoverishment that we’re sending mission workers to Western Europe.” One of our three priorities at BMS is to work in the least evangelised places. A huge number of people in Western Europe are yet to hear that they can have a personal relationship with the living God. In France, for example, just one per cent of the population identify as evangelical Christians.

It’s the perceived lack of need for God that makes Europe one of the toughest places to be a missionary, according to Stuart Blythe, Rector of the International Baptist Theological Study Centre (IBTSC) in Amsterdam, where BMS workers David and Dorothy McMillan work.

“Most people in Europe don’t need to pray to God to have enough food for the day, because they have their shopping. They buy it,” says Stuart. “When people are struggling for very basic human needs, the concept of a God who is there to help them may make more sense than to someone who doesn’t feel they need God for anything.”

Claire-Lise and David Judkins have experienced this while they’ve been working as church planters with BMS in Brive-la-Gaillarde in France. At times they have felt like they’re hitting their heads against a brick wall. And yet they’ve also seen a huge need for the Church and the message of hope it brings. “There are ten times more Baptist churches in the UK than there are in France,” says David. “There are vast swathes of France where people don’t have the opportunity to hear the good news.

“There’s a huge gaping social, spiritual and emotional void. People are just crying out for Jesus’ love.”

David and Claire-Lise are currently planting a church that breaks with convention, but not with the Bible. Their church – about 15 to 20 strong – has grown entirely from non-believers coming to faith and being baptised. They meet together around their daily rhythms, and don’t have a public Sunday service. The long-term vision is for this church to plant, in turn, new churches – so that a church planting movement takes root in France.

“God hasn’t finished with Europe,” says David. “What we’ve found is when God has been at work and been drawing people to us it’s been pretty easy.”

Though the Church in the Netherlands is small, there is a growing opportunity for Christianity according to Teun van der Leer, Rector of the Dutch Baptist Seminary. “The old prejudices against the Church – that it is boring, that it is out dated – are gone,” says Teun. “People are sometimes really interested in what we are doing; they have a new openness.”

People across Europe are actually crying out for something greater than the world can offer. Tony Peck, General Secretary of the European Baptist Federation (EBF), says, “there is a spiritual hunger in Europe, of that I have no doubt. People want to grasp a reality that is beyond materialism, beyond secularism, which is beyond what you can see and touch and handle.”

Now is the time to seize the opportunity we have to share the gospel in countries like France, where the evangelical Church is small and where many are searching for meaning. The challenge is connecting with people living in well-developed secular societies, who don’t often realise their need for God. “The question is not just ‘shall we plant churches?’”, says Peck, “but ‘what kind of churches are we going to plant for the future?’” This is a question Claire-Lise and David are asking as they begin to realise their exciting church-planting vision in France – not being constrained by tradition but seeking the most authentic way to be and do church in their context. BMS is also partnering with EBF to support local people planting relevant expressions of church in their home countries – in places like Russia, Romania, Hungary and Ukraine.

Christian mission in Europe makes sense not only for
A life transformed in Brive-la-Gaillarde

Louise* was into Buddhism and Indian religions, she was going through a difficult divorce and she was very hostile to Christianity. Over time, Louise became good friends with her neighbour Claire-Lise Judkins, a BMS church planter in France.

At first, Louise wanted nothing to do with Christianity. “I told David once, Louise will never become a Christian – she’s too far away,” says Claire-Lise. But over time, Louise became curious about Claire-Lise’s faith and started to ask questions about Jesus. God opened her heart and began to heal her marriage. She came to know that God was real because he was changing her life.

While she was exploring Christianity, Louise started to get horrible nightmares and would wake up sweating and afraid. Claire-Lise prayed for her and encouraged her to pray against the nightmares. When she was woken again by her dreams, covered in sweat and afraid, she cried out to God and asked that the nightmares would stop in the name of Jesus. They never came back.

Louise has been reunited with her husband and has given her life to Christ – in June she was baptised. “It was a real joy for all of us,” says Claire-Lise. “God has really touched her heart.”

Please pray for Louise and all the people BMS is reaching in Europe.

*name changed

the sake of Europeans, but also for the world. With the current immigration and refugee statistics, we know that people from all over the world are living on our doorstep. This huge movement of people means that we have the privilege and opportunity to learn from Christians from different cultures, and share the gospel with those from countries where it’s impossible for Christians to openly evangelise.

“Christ came for the whole world – for people who have plenty as well as for people who are in physical need,” says Dorothy McMillan, who works with BMS in Amsterdam. While the UK’s view on Europe and our partnership with it politically may be divided, one fact remains – Jesus loved Europe enough to die for it.

BMS is sending people where there is need – and there is need in Europe. Our work on the continent is as varied as the people we work with and the places in which we serve, and we will continue to send the right people to meet specific needs for as long as God calls us to Europe.

We might be nervous about the future of our continent, but BMS worker David McMillan believes the future of Europe will not determine the future of the Church or Christianity. “I don’t think the Church relies on the institutions that we have created,” he says. “And I think if Europe is to some degree destabilised over the next generation, it may be the very thing that opens up opportunities for people to explore what’s really valuable.”

Europe doesn’t feel unstable where I am, wearing a silly orange headband in a sea of orange shirts, watching the people of Amsterdam unite to celebrate King’s Day. It feels confident and expectant, if perhaps a little misguided (when it comes to how many people can safely fit onto a canal boat, and in the bigger things). The people I’ve spoken to and seen today are people made by God in his own image who have decided they don’t need him. People who have seen absolutely no reason to believe that the Church is the hope of the world. Wonderful people – with unique gifts, joys, dreams – partying in one of the world’s most popular cities on a Wednesday evening. Having fun.

That’s lovely. But we know there is more to life. There is unconditional love and amazing hope for the future. If we don’t tell them, who will?

Words: Jessica
Start your tour in the very heart of the city – Skanderbeg Square. From here you can visit the monument of the eponymous 15th century leader and warrior Skanderbeg (George Castriot) and tour the National History Museum, with its mosaic chronicling the history of the nation from ancient Illyrian times. You can also visit the oldest mosque in the country, Et’hem Bey, built in the 18th century. Closed under Communist rule, the mosque reopened as a house of worship in 1991.

No visit to Tirana could be complete without popping in to see GDQ School, founded in 1993 by mission agencies including BMS. GDQ provides Christian education primarily to children of mission workers. You will not only see us, but also BMS teachers Jill Morrow and Janet Derby.

From 1946 till 1992, Albania’s austere form of Communism isolated her from the rest of the world. For a peek into that inglorious past, go to the rear of the art museum, just off the main square, and visit the Communist monument graveyard where you can see the remains of statues of Stalin, Lenin, etc. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, bronze busts of Enver Hoxha, the former dictator, were smashed to pieces after the fall of Communism.

Want to see how the other half lived during Communist times? All [sic] were equal, but some [sic] were more equal than others’. Visit Enver Hoxha’s anti-nuclear bunker, or Bunk’Art as it is now called. For a free alternative, look for oversized concrete mushrooms around the city. These bunkers would have had to suffice for the masses in the event of a nuclear bomb!

For a marvelous view overlooking the metropolis that Tirana is fast becoming, hop on to the cable car ‘Dajti Express’. Have a spot of lunch over the cliff edge at the Ballkoni i Dajtit restaurant. For the physically fit, walk atop Mount Dajti, the highest peak in the region. On certain days, you can even get your head above the clouds.

Wrap up the day with a drink or a meal in the Sky Tower. The 360 degree revolving tower will give you great views (and photos) of the whole city. Spot the former dictator’s residence, the national football stadium, the main park and lake, and further views of Mount Dajti. Here you are right in the heart of the ‘Block’, a former 1km squared cordoned off area, which was off limits to non-Communist Party apparatchiks. This whole area is now a bustling nighttime bar and restaurant scene. Rrugë të mbarë – have a pleasant journey!
And God saw that it was good:

creation care

as mission in East Asia

Jack is working with factories in East Asia to help save God's very good creation.

"The rich countries of the West may be able to cope with climate change, but what about the people in countries with few resources?" says Jack*, a BMS World Mission worker in East Asia. "Do we think they matter to God too?"

These are the important questions that inspire Jack to do something more to care for creation.

Jack is living and working in a beautiful country in East Asia where he focuses on making factories more environmentally friendly, supported by BMS. He manages a small consultancy company, working with the ready-made garment and textile industries. It is challenging as he works with hugely polluting tanneries.

"I'm focused on helping improve factories," says Jack. "I help them identify opportunities to make improvements to their processes and procedures to have a better impact on the environment."

Asia is exquisite. From the beautiful Bengal tigers to the heavenly Himalayas and the phenomenal faces that inhabit the land. It's a continent of awe and wonder but climate change doesn't make any exceptions for beauty and, according to The Guardian, experts warn that Asia may
be hit hardest by climate change. The impacts will be devastating. Hundreds of millions of people will likely lose their homes to floods, famine and rising sea levels. The very existence of the Bengal tiger is threatened. And the degradation of ecosystems poses threats to the economic, social and cultural stability of the continent. Although all this is heart-breaking, we can find inspiration from the Bible and hope from BMS mission workers like Jack.

“And God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let the dry ground appear.’ And it was so. God called the dry ground, ‘land’, and the gathered waters he called ‘seas’. And God saw that it was good.”

Genesis 1: 9-10

“I believe we should care for nature because God made this earth for us to enjoy and use,” says Jack. “But he also wanted us to tend and look after it. If we stop caring about nature I think it’s a sign we’ve stopped caring about God.”

Taking care of nature is important not only because God created it, but also because it has an impact on the economic, social and cultural stability of a place.

Jack has seen climate change take its toll on the terrain of the country where he lives in East Asia. Weather extremes like flooding, cyclones and storm surges are becoming more and more frequent and having destructive impacts on the land. These storms have been especially damaging to the land in coastal regions.

“Salinity intrusion is a recent issue I’ve seen,” says Jack. “Excess salt water due to the effects of cyclones is damaging land that was once used for rice growing. Because of this the land cannot support rice growing and so the loss of agricultural land has an awful impact on people.”

The main goal of the consultancy company Jack manages is to help identify energy reduction opportunities for factories. These efforts can help significantly reduce the carbon footprint of a garment factory – by up to 40 per cent.

“We advise people on corporate social responsibility, energy and waste reduction, fire safety, occupational health, chemical safety and engineering solutions,” says Jack. “We also carry out capacity building by training workers, engineers and managers.”

“So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kinds. And God saw that it was good.”

Genesis 1: 21

Sad images of monkeys, mongoose and wild boar living on rubbish dumps instead of flourishing in their natural habitats come to mind when Jack thinks of the animals he sees often in East Asia.

“I hear stories of how the wildlife has decreased over the years due to the loss of habitat,” says Jack. “I think it’s equally important to care for animals as it is to care for nature. God has the right to have everything he created treated respectfully.”

Jack has also seen how pollution in the rivers has had devastating impacts on marine life due to the dumping of untreated industrial and human waste into rivers.

“There is one river that I’ve seen that looks like a black, stinking swamp,” says Jack. “The pollution is so high that it seems there would be little chance of any marine life surviving.”

It goes beyond water. Endangered Bengal tigers in East Asia also face a grim future. According to the World Wildlife Fund, the rising sea levels that are caused by climate change are destroying their habitat along the coasts. Although tigers are a highly adaptable species, projected rising sea levels could outpace even their ability to adapt. Their very existence is threatened by the changing climate.

Jack doesn’t work directly with animals, but his work in factories seeks to reduce environmental damage, which will have positive implications for animals.

“As nature suffers it’s usually animals that are hit first,” says Jack. “It’s so
important that we don’t forget about this important part of God’s creation, they deserve to be cared for too.”

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.’”

Genesis 1: 27-28, 31

Premature deaths, illnesses and threats to the general livelihoods of people – these are just a few of the harrowing ways that people in East Asia are suffering through the consequences of climate change.

In the country where Jack works, rivers are the lifeblood for communities as they live and work. The people depend on them for fishing, washing, irrigating their crops, cooking and drinking. Yet, most rivers that Jack sees are a complete mess.

“Whether from industrial pollution or just rubbish floating on the surface, the rivers effectively have become huge septic tanks,” says Jack. “The locals tell me that when they were young they used to drink water straight from the rivers, but that’s impossible now.”

Although it’s horrific, the situation inspires Jack in the work that he does to help make factories more environmentally friendly.

One specific way that he has helped to make a difference is by working with factories to optimise their use of dye chemicals. This can lead to a big reduction in the use of water for washing during the dying process. Often a 30 or 40 per cent reduction can be achieved. This reduces the outgoing toxic effluent, which ultimately means less pollution in rivers.

As Jack leads BMS’ efforts to care for creation in East Asia, he recognises that it’s really all about caring for people.

“If you love your neighbour, you should care about climate change,” says Jack. “When we treat our planet as something to use with little regard for the consequences, then effectively we are showing little love for our creator and our fellow man.”

God saw all of his creation was good, and we have a chance to keep it that way. Our world is in a fragile state, but as people like Jack lead the way, we find hope for the future. Together we can make a difference.

“We should care for God’s creation. Everything that was created was for God’s glory,” says Jack. “It may seem like an impossible task, but if everyone in the UK did what they could, the cumulative effect would be tremendous.”

Words: Hailey Brenden

*Name changed

This article was first published for subscribers to Worth Saving, our monthly creation care email resource. To subscribe visit bmsworldmission.org/worthsaving
**ONE MOMENT IN TIME**

**BMS ACTION TEAM PHOTO COMPETITION**

EVERY YEAR, BMS ACTION TEAMS CAPTURE THEIR TIME OVERSEAS ON CAMERA AND WE PICK THE BEST PHOTOGRAPHS. HERE ARE THE WINNERS FOR 2015/16.

**THIRD PLACE: UGANDA**

“I took this photo at a youth weekend away,” says Mim Heritage from the Uganda Action Team. “The person in the photo is Lalar. She was cooking cabbage (and I love cooked cabbage!), so I asked if I could do anything to help, and if she could teach me how to make it! She did, and took some photos of me cooking it, then I took some photos of her. She was really excited by the photos so I just kept taking them, but this was the best of the bunch.”

**SECOND PLACE: UGANDA**

“We took a trip out to an abandoned train,” says Mim. “It’s quite symbolic as it was on a line between Kenya and Uganda which is now cut off. Loads of kids from the villages came with us – it’s a bit of a playground for them. It was a really hot evening and we climbed to the top just as the sun was setting. We played cards with the kids on top of the train. I took this photo just as the others were walking off it. It wasn’t staged, but I was really pleased with how it came out, particularly how the windows framed the tree.”
FIRST PLACE: MIZORAM

“It was a really misty day – it happens when the clouds swallow the hills and you can’t see far in front of you,” says Susie Greenhalgh from the Mizoram Action Team. “The kids were really excited to go on a school trip – they were screaming with excitement on the bus on the way there. This girl is the daughter of one of the teachers. I took a series of four photos – she had a lollipop and was pulling faces as she ate it. I like it because of her innocence. She looks coy and bashful.”
As we are led down the narrow, dirty street, the level of poverty becomes more apparent. It is very hot, the sun blazing down on us. We make quite a spectacle—a group of foreigners in a part of the city where you would least expect it. It is dusty and smelly. We reach a small gate in a wall, which takes a lot of bending over to get through, clearly not built for tall westerners, and are then led through a small doorway into a very dark room. After removing our shoes we are invited to sit down on the mats which they are proud to have on the floor. It takes a while for our eyes to adjust to the dingy atmosphere, as we look around to really assess the environment we have been brought to.

This is a school. It’s full of children silently sitting and staring at us. “Us” is me and my class—children mission workers from around the world. Their background could not be more different from this. There are four small windows in the room—two at the front and two at the back—allowing the only light in the room in. The bars over the windows and buildings so close on both sides mean the incoming light is very minimal. Apart from all the children, there is very little indication that it is a school. One large table, two quite small chalkboards and a few plastic chairs are pretty much the only furniture.

We are introduced to the school and invited to mingle. These children are the first shift, the younger, lower grade children. They are quite shy and probably a bit intimidated by us. We are probably the first foreign people they have ever
seen – especially close up. We discover one little boy is only three years old. I suspect others are as old as ten. Today is a very special occasion for them, having us visit.

The children appear happy, and when we begin taking photographs they start to relax. The beauty of a modern digital camera and the opportunity for the children to see images of themselves is both a source of amusement and bemusement. It breaches the language barriers as well as the initial shyness, and the chatter becomes louder and more animated.

A presentation of some western singing and dancing, followed by an invitation for the Bangla children to join in and learn the dance, breaks down further barriers and soon the whole dark, dingy room is alive with the sound of singing and laughter. So what if half the words aren’t real? Just seeing two cultures coming together in such a way is exhilarating. The excitement on the faces of the children speaks far more than any stilted conversation ever could.

Hospitality is so important here. Even though this is a school with so little, not so much as pencils or notebooks for children to write in, they are still very excited to share food with us. A few children are sent around the room with big baskets of bananas to share with everyone. Of course to refuse would be considered very rude, even if to a western mindset it feels wrong to take from people with so little. To reciprocate we offer around homemade cookies. We’re trying not to highlight the vast differences between our lives and theirs – two worlds within the same city.

For the first shift in school, the day is over. The children collect their flip flops and leave in the different directions that will take them home. Most of them go alone, despite being only three or four years old. I can’t help but wonder, what are they going back to?

The second shift arrives, clearly older, although many of them not much bigger. Some girls are very dressed up, and are even wearing makeup – they are ‘on show’ to the bideshis (foreigners). Girls of a similar age in the UK wouldn’t necessarily wear the exuberant dresses, but these girls are the bee’s knees in their finery.

This time, as we meet and greet, we have learnt to use the camera first. The ice is broken much more quickly and soon the room comes alive with chatter. It almost seems a shame to break it up for each group to perform to their western counterparts. The local children are up first. We are entertained by a solo dancer, moving in a very graceful way to music that is not very familiar to our western ears. Although we don’t understand the words, the dance is clearly telling a moving story and has been practised to perfection, with the performer wearing a beautiful red dress and matching lipstick. We are mesmerised. After great applause we are delighted by two young girls dancing a routine together. A completely different pace to the western dancing that we offer next for the second time this morning. This time, the children are very quickly moving along in time to the music and, when invited to join in, are on their feet before the invitation can be finished. Before long the room is vibrating with dancing and singing, as East meets West in a shared love of dance.

The room is getting hotter, our eyes have adjusted to the darkness but we are all ready for some calm and a sit down.

Barriers no longer in existence, some game teaching goes on – versions of rock-paper-scissors, number games and clapping games resound around the room, with giggles and smiles from all involved. Amazing to see: both sets of children learning from each other – children with virtually nothing and children with comfortable and safe lives, united in hand games and the freedom to be children for a short period of time under the same tin roof.

It is time to leave the dark, damp room where we have been so warmly received to go back to our own bright, light, air-conditioned building, where we know there is good food waiting for us and furniture to sit on while we eat it. We are a little overwhelmed by the differences in our lives, and humbled by the hospitality given. It certainly makes us think about how grateful we should be for all we have, and the contrasting circumstances we have all been born into.

However, the smiles are genuine whoever we are.

*Name changed
You worked with students in the 1960s and now you are a professor at a Spanish university. Have you noticed a change in how students view faith?

Yes. In the 1960s and 70s in Latin America, the most influential ideology in the universities was Marxism. And Marxism had elements of Christianity that had been secularised. But it had the element of a view of history that had a hope that things could change through revolution. And then in the 1980s, things changed in the universities. There was an atmosphere of exploration of the sacred and a new interest in religious issues. I would say in the 90s it was the same. Today, in universities in a country like Spain, it is more of a postmodernist attitude. Each one of us must believe what we want – there is no objective truth.
How do you respond to that?
I have to learn to read behind appearances. Just to give you an example – in Spain, surveys say that less than 10 per cent of the population are Catholics. However, 70 per cent say that at some point they pray or they have prayed, or they would like someone to pray for them. In other words, there is a kind of confession of a spiritual need. I think you need to respond to that, because we sometimes have lost the sense of mystery and the contemplative dimension of the Christian life.

Should we be answering people’s needs, rather than responding to their arguments through apologetics, then?
No, I think we need to continue working in apologetics, because a main characteristic of this post-Christian culture is that it believes in science. Wherever you read about human beings in books or learn about them in education or even at self-help groups, scientific arguments are used.

On the other hand, in some cases, there is a conviction that there must be something more than that, that science does not give us all of the answers.

So we need to address both?
Yes, and at the same time be attentive to those who are more contemplative or to those who have a moral struggle and would like to find some way of going beyond it.

Do you see the fear of migration and globalisation as a threat to the spreading of the gospel?
When you read the New Testament, you realise that migration was there, it was part of the life of the early Church. Romans is a missiological letter, in which Paul wants to prepare a way to go to Spain.

Today, migration is also a factor that is surrounding mission work. We have in Spain many mission workers from Latin America, partly because of the language. But at the same time, we have many immigrants who didn’t go to Spain with a mission intention – they went in search of jobs. But because they are believers, they are strengthening the churches and contributing to the mission of the Church in Spain.

Sometimes forced migration can be decisive in mission situations. When I see Syrian refugees on the television, I think of Syrians in the second century who evangelised what today is France – the evangelisation of Gaul was done by Syrian merchants. They also went as far as India – the oldest church in India comes from the efforts of Syrians. Some Syrian refugees will be vehicles that God will use to accomplish his mission today.

If missionaries are coming to the UK from all over the world, how should the Church respond and support them?
I think a key phrase in the epistle to the Romans is the one in which we find the exhortation “Accept one another, as you have been accepted by God through Christ.” (Romans 15: 7) This acceptance of the other Paul mentions several times. This mutual acceptance becomes the mark of a Church that goes beyond the human differences that separate people. I think that the Church has to become a sign that it is possible for there to be the cooperation and coming together of people from different languages and cultures because of their faith in Christ.

Miroslav Volf, a Croatian theologian [and former Catalyst Live speaker], has written a beautiful book called Exclusion and Embrace. In it he says that, humanly speaking, we tend to define our identity by the exclusion of others, but as Christians we need to learn to embrace, not exclude others. And I guess that is one of the great lessons for the Church today in places like the UK or Spain.

Christians are often encouraged to listen to voices from the Church in the Global South. How do we do this effectively and what are the advantages of doing so?
I think we need to realise that in some aspects the Church is going to be counter-cultural. It is going to have to be intentional about letting those who are not heard be heard, and letting those viewpoints or those feelings that express other cultural sensitivities and perceptions express themselves. I’m glad and thankful for the Lausanne movement because that is what happened in the Lausanne movement. In 1974, there were some people who believed that an evangelisation of the world could be accelerated by sending around the world a model that they had developed of evangelism and mission. What happened in Lausanne was that by the openness to listen to new voices, from Africa, from Latin America and from Asia, a new perception came of the things that had to change in Christianity at that point, especially in relation to the source of responsibility of the Church among evangelicals.

Samuel Escobar was talking to Chris Hall

See Samuel Escobar at Catalyst Live in Birmingham (16 November) and Reading (17 November). Order your tickets at bmscatalystlive.com
Having a youth leader or minister is pretty common at Baptist churches in the UK. In Paraguay, it is not. Churches in the South American country have largely avoided any work with teenagers. This was partly because of traditional, rigid ways of doing church which leaders found hard to change, and partly because they didn’t fully understand teenagers. The generational gap there today is increasing. Most adults grew up during a period of dictatorship and were used to repression, authoritarianism and corruption. All today’s teenagers and young adults have known is democracy. They are more tech-savvy, individualistic, keen to question authority and fight for change.

Carol González and her husband César feel called to bridge the gap between the Church and teenagers, to make young people feel included and share the gospel with them in a way that applies to their lives. They started youth work at their Baptist church in the capital Asunción ten years ago and have expanded to minister to young adults too. This has led to them taking on a national Baptist role in 2012 (supported by BMS World Mission), organising Christian camps for teenagers and providing training for ministers and churches on how to reach their young people more effectively. They have also given talks to help parents too.

Carol and César have seen the lives of many teenagers transformed by the love of Christ through their pioneering youth work. Pray for them as they continue to change lives and the Church’s approach to young people in Paraguay.
PLACES: Europe

While the UK may have voted to leave the European Union, God’s mission continues across the continent in many ways. The largely rich and secular communities in European countries present a number of challenges for mission workers. Claire-Lise and David Judkins are BMS church planters in France. Annie and Dan Dupree and Mat and Suzanne Gregory are serving the Roma community in Albania. David and Dorothy McMillan are supporting the work of theology students from across the continent at the International Baptist Theological Study Centre in the Netherlands. We also have workers in Kosovo, Italy and Spain.

PROJECTS: Bringing justice in post-conflict Uganda

It has been over ten years since the conflict in northern Uganda ended, but the legacy of war still permeates the region. As people return to their home towns, many find that others have laid claim to land they believe to be theirs. This means farmers cannot invest in working and improving the land for fear that it will be taken from them.

BMS is working with the Ugandan Christian Lawyers’ Fraternity in Gulu. Our workers and partners are running legal workshops and land mediation meetings and providing legal aid for the most vulnerable – demonstrating God’s love and compassion as they do it.

PEOPLE: Claire Bedford

Claire lives and works at Guinebor II Hospital near N’Djamena, the capital of Chad. In her recent prayer letter she wrote about the presidential election: “It was a tense time and there were potentially going to be some security concerns. The Christian community prayed regularly for peaceful elections and I’m pleased to say that they did pass relatively peacefully. The existing president won the vote and now starts his fifth term in office."

Despite not enjoying the heat, Claire is still able to get involved in what’s going on in and around the area. “The expat ladies English Bible study meets in N’Djamena on Tuesday afternoons. It is such a blessing as it helps me to get to know others who live and work here with a variety of organisations.”

PRAY FOR:

- wisdom among the legal team
- those who have not yet been able to secure their land rights
- continued healing of communities following the conflict

You can find out more about this work at bmsworldmission.org/missionprojects

PRAY FOR:

- BMS workers in Europe
- leaders of nations and the European Union – especially in times of change
- new and creative opportunities for mission across the region

PRAY FOR:

- ongoing security and safety in Chad
- the staff and patients at Guinebor II Hospital
- good health and strength for Claire

Get regular prayer points and resources from BMS at bmsworldmission.org/prayer

Aidan Melville is sub-editor for the BMS Prayer Guide
You want to serve God in overseas mission. You see an opportunity on the BMS World Mission website which looks good. But what about the family? You can think of many reasons why you could never take them overseas. It appears impossible.

It may not be as bad as it seems, however. Yes, there are sacrifices and downsides to being mission workers abroad with a family. But there are ways to mitigate them and serving overseas can have huge blessings that can easily outweigh the difficulties. Below are five of the common dilemmas many families face when deciding to serve with us and how they may not be as big of a reason to say no as you may think.

1 What do we do about schools?

It is natural that you would want a decent education for your children. In some countries, BMS can arrange for them to attend an international Christian school. Justin and Lucy Chadwell, the children of mission workers Cynthia and Ian, attend Kathmandu International Study Centre (KISC) in Nepal and really value the excellent teaching there.

“If I had to go to school somewhere else, I wouldn’t get the personal investment the teachers put in me here,” Justin says.

We cannot guarantee to find you an international Christian school for your children, especially if you are serving in a more remote location. But sometimes home schooling, or being part of a small group of children from different missionary families meeting together to study, may be the options available. We will do all we can to get your children an appropriate education that will enable them to reintegrate into UK schools or the higher education system eventually.

2 What if our children get sick?

In the UK, we highly value the quality and free access of the NHS, but what do you do if you’re serving in a developing country where health provision can be patchy? Staying healthy overseas begins at training, learning the small tips (like sleeping under a mosquito net). In addition, all mission workers are covered with comprehensive emergency medical insurance that, in the event of a serious emergency, will repatriate an individual to the best facility. There is also access to professional medical advice available 24 hours a day from a BMS health partner. Sometimes it does mean planning ahead and trusting in God. For Lucy* serving in Guinea, they do have provision but it is not close.

“I’ve got the phone numbers of three American missionary doctors,” says Lucy. “There is a mission hospital a few hours away we could go to if we needed to. Beyond that, it is praying and asking God to look after them. You just have to trust God.”

3 Will we fit in?

An advantage of serving overseas, says Cynthia Chadwell, is that you don’t quite fit in. “Living as a minority in a majority culture is a life and mindset changing thing,” she says. “We have an understanding that the whole world is
not just like us. It is very varied and there are people who have a lot less and get by on a lot less than I have or I will ever have.

“That is a positive thing and gives perspective on all kinds of situations. I am really grateful that our kids have that perspective on the world.”

We will do all we can to help you and your family learn the language and more about the culture of the country where you will be serving, so you have the best chance of building relationships and settling there.

4 Won’t we get homesick?

A factor for many families is children missing their grandparents and other close family members. For the Chadwells, who were used to Ian’s parents living close by, going overseas was a difficult decision to make.

“For my parents, the wrench of taking two relatively young grandchildren to Nepal was quite hard initially,” says Ian. “But they came out to see us two years later, and seeing us in situ, seeing the kids in their new environment flourishing and being happy – that was a great reassurance to them.”

Through visits, Skype calls and other communication, you can keep in contact with friends and family and lessen the impact of homesickness on both sides.

5 Won’t we miss out on UK life and culture?

The consensus of mission workers is yes, you do miss out on UK life and culture, but what you gain is much more.

“There are many things the children can’t do – all the wonderful museums in the UK, soft play, all that kind of thing the children do miss,” says Helen Douglas, serving in Nepal with husband Angus and their three children Caleb, Charis and Esther. “But there are so many benefits: our children have a much broader understanding of the global Church and of the world, social justice and the richness out there rather than a white, middle class view of the world. Although there is a counting of the cost, there are wonderful benefits, so I wouldn’t trade for being back in the UK.”

BEFORE YOU DECIDE

So what advice do our mission workers give to those families thinking about taking the plunge into global mission?

Think everything through. A lot of people say, “Oh well... God will provide,” which he does, but you also have to prepare yourselves for what is to come, because then you face the challenges when they do arise prepared for what’s coming. It is important to be prepared as an individual but it’s important as a family as well.

Angus Douglas

You need to understand your family as individuals. At the end of the day, it is a matter of trust – if God has got a calling on you and your family then he is good enough and trustworthy enough to take care of your kids as well, because they are an integral part of your calling as a family.

Ian Chadwell

Get people around you praying about it. There are times here when it is hard, we look back on what people have said to us, helpful Bible verses, and that keeps us going. And have confidence that you can do it. It is hard but if we can do it, anyone can!

Lucy

*Name changed

We are interested in hearing from anyone interested in serving with us from a variety of circumstances, including those with families. Check out our current opportunities at: bmsworldmission.org/vacancies
KIDS CARE
My home away from home in Lebanon

We’re off to Lebanon on the next KIDS CARE adventure! Children will get a chance to learn about caring for refugees and people in need.

In the mission adventure story, children will meet a ten-year-old Syrian refugee named Yara. They will learn about the work that BMS World Mission is doing to help support Yara and her family as they rebuild their lives in Lebanon. Children will also be able to discuss ways to help refugees and people in need within their own community.

We’ve included loads of fun activities. Children can create a mosaic flag, organise a sponsored bike ride, and snack on pitta bread and hummus. You’ll also be able to show them a great BMS all-age film called Syria’s Forgotten Families to give the group more motivation for giving and prayer!

If you’d like to join us for this edition of KIDS CARE, you can download all the resources you need from bmsworldmission.org/kidscare

One million lives transformed

BMS World Mission has a plan. A plan to transform one million lives by 2020.

Hopefully all of you received a copy of our new strategy document with your last magazine and have had a chance to read and reflect on it. We are inspired and driven by it and we hope you are too.

Now is the time to spread the word to the rest of your church and we have a few ideas:

1. The strategy document is designed to be an eye-catching poster, so you can display it somewhere in your church.

2. We have a customised PowerPoint created especially for you to use in a church meeting. You can use all of the slides or just choose some of them.

3. There is also an inspiring video to watch and share.

All of these resources can be found at bmsworldmission.org/onemillion

Transforming the lives of a million people is not going to be easy and we can’t do it without you.
**Fundraising**

**Give a car**

Do you or someone in your church have an old car that you are looking to get rid of?

BMS World Mission has joined a scheme run by Giveacar, which is a UK-based fundraising organisation that specialises in auctioning or scrapping old cars for charitable causes.

You don’t have to pay to have your car towed away or fixed at a garage and, even better, you can help raise some money for God’s work.

Giveacar provides a free service, available throughout the UK. They arrange the collection of the vehicle and, depending on its age and condition, they can either send it for environmentally safe disposal and recycling at an authorised treatment facility, or to a salvage auction.

Scrap donations raise an average of £35 and auction cars can often raise much more. Every penny BMS receives is vital for our work in bringing God’s hope and healing to a hurting world.

For more information, call Giveacar on 0207 736 4242, quoting BMS World Mission, or go to giveacar.co.uk/charities/bms-world-mission

**Christmas gift tags**

It’s often the little gifts that mean the most.

When you spend £1 per Child’s Life gift tag the proceeds go towards BMS World Mission’s children’s work. Just £1. That’s enough to make a difference in the life of a child caught in the poverty cycle. It could mean a day’s schooling and a nourishing meal for a poor child in Peru, or life-saving medical treatment for a vulnerable child in Chad.

Just one gift tag. It couldn’t be easier.

You can find more information in your BMS Christmas catalogue or by visiting bmsworldmission.org/tags

Gift tags sold six per pack (£6), two packs for £10

**Caption competition**

Have you ever thought about running a caption competition in your church? This is a fun way to raise some interest and money for BMS World Mission. Here’s how it works:

1. Email your partner mission worker and ask them to send you an interesting, unusual or humorous photo from their location.
2. Display the photo in your church or put it in your church newsletter/magazine.
3. Invite people to submit a caption for a donation to BMS. It can raise some money and is a great way to get people talking about your partner mission worker.
4. The funniest answer wins a prize.
5. Don’t forget to reveal what is actually happening in the photo!

We have lots of other fundraising ideas. Just visit bmsworldmission.org/fundraise

**Got change?**

Just a reminder that BMS World Mission collection boxes are available to order and are a simple way to raise money for BMS. You can have one at home, work or church. The boxes are made of a durable and recyclable plastic, strong enough to hold your coins and be reused repeatedly.

To order your boxes go to bmsworldmission.org/collectionbox or call Pam Fitzgerald on 01235 517617
**UK: CONTROL YOUR ANGER**

Anger is a rational and emotional response to a perceived injustice and a desire for retribution, punishment, or at least calling to account. It is flawed if it puts emotion ahead of reason, in any of seven ways:

- if its judgement is incorrect, and there has in fact been no such injustice
- if it leaps to conclusions, apportioning responsibility to the wrong party
- if it inverts its emotion and, in order to maintain a sense of control, blames oneself, thus reversing anger and turning it into guilt
- if the punishment envisaged is disproportionate, and ceases to be an act of love, for example if it exhibits vindictiveness rather than becoming a means of restoration and eventual reconciliation
- if it wilfully remains ignorant of its own power, and reacts intemperately and self-indulgently to discharge a sense of powerlessness
- if it ignores the realities before it, and acts out of a prior narrative that has made pre-judgements about rights and wrongs
- if it insists on acting for a wronged person, thus exacerbating their diminishment, rather than with them to empower them as an agent in their own right

But if it does none of these things, and puts reason before emotion, anger can be a helpful, indeed sometimes necessary, stimulus to turn appropriate perception of injustice into suitable calling to account. Bill Clinton described the civil rights historian John Hope Franklin as “A happy angry man and an angry happy man.” This describes a good kind of anger that sees and responds appropriately to injustice, but does not allow bitterness to cloud its judgement over all other matters, and never forgets the purpose of anger lies in eventual restoration of relationship. Nelson Mandela could be described in similar terms.

**UK: PUT REASON BEFORE EMOTION**

As hard as it is, anger can force us to address difficulties that can ultimately strengthen a relationship. In the wider world, Jubilee 2000 debt relief, refuges for victims of domestic violence, and evangelistic initiatives to reach those who have never heard of the amazing, saving love of God – all of these and more can be the fruit of anger when it’s tamed and controlled, and used for God’s glory.
KOREA/USA: PRAY THROUGH YOUR RAGE

Anger is a Christian virtue? It is a tricky question. I believe that wrath is part of God’s attributes. The prophets in the Bible express God’s infinite wrath against injustice done to the weak and the marginalised in society, in moments of special revelation. That kind of anger still has a place today. How can you not be angry when you look at what’s happening in the world? But you have to be careful because anger can be expressed in wrong ways. As human beings, anger is always tainted with a lot of fleshly things. It is unlikely that we will have a holy moment of anger that is sustained. In our prayer lives, we need to sense where God is angry. God’s anger is accompanied by messages of judgement, but there is always the hopeful message of restoration, like the redemption of the cross. We have to recognise that we’re angry, take that anger before God and ask the Holy Spirit to guide us through it. Ultimately, our anger should not just to be managed or be released from, but to be transformed through prayer and then expressed in terms of proclaiming and implementing the power of the gospel. Otherwise, it remains an anger that can consume us. When you process your anger in front of God, you realise the burden of being a Christian in a society that is sinful and that you have also participated in that sinful society. You walk away with a renewed sense of calling, that even if you may not see visible results of your efforts, you trust in God’s guidance and empowerment expressed in history. It can strengthen your resolve to keep doing what you believe is led by God. That’s how we handle anger.

Miyon Chung is a global diaspora theologian and a speaker at Catalyst Live 2016.

ISRAEL-PALESTINE: USE YOUR ANGER

As the Church, we have two choices: to respond in fear or love. How do we, the body of Jesus, respond? Do we follow him by building higher walls and fanning the flames of an ‘us versus them’ mentality? Or, do we follow Jesus by, like him, being a bridge who reminds those around us that God so loves the world and we are all created in his image?

After the 2014 Gaza War, a group of Israeli and Palestinian female followers of Jesus felt angry and frustrated, not only with the political situation, but with the overwhelming (mostly male) rhetoric that did not represent them. They channelled their anger into constructive action by creating an alternative space to voice their points of view, a blog called Another Voice.

Here they responded by sharing fears, their attempts to love in spite of all odds, and going against the status quo. It is one response to anger and conflict in context and I will share more about this particular group at Catalyst Live in November.

What is your response to conflicts in your context?

Shadia Qubti is a teacher in reconciliation in Israel-Palestine and a speaker at Catalyst Live 2016. Book your tickets at bmscatalystlive.com

The views expressed here are the writers’ own and do not necessarily reflect those endorsed by BMS World Mission.
Is the UK Church engaged enough intellectually, or is there an anti-intellectual stream as one might see in the US? I think it’s quite dangerous to generalise about anti-intellectualism in the US Church, just because the US is such a huge country and the Church there is so incredibly diverse.

There is a tendency sometimes, in evangelical churches particularly, to focus on what the Bible says. And that’s great, because we need to be going back to the Bible all the time. But as well as reading the Bible, we have to be able to read other books. We need to read the Bible through the lenses of what experts in society, culture and economics have to say, and read what these experts say through the lens of the Bible. And the danger is that if we take out the dialogue between them, then we end up with a very lame approach to and understanding of culture and how the world works.

So is there an anti-intellectualism in the Church? I think there is always that risk, because we end up talking to ourselves about ourselves, about our own concerns, and we don’t hear the wider conversation. So yes, there is a danger.

As a journalist, you have not shied away from controversial stories, for which you have received a certain amount of flack. How important is good, critical journalism for the Church? I think it’s hugely important. I think of some of the stories I’ve worked on where I have been personally criticised. I’ve looked into my heart and thought: “should I have written this? Was this a useful thing to do for the kingdom of God?” And invariably I’ve come back to the view that it’s the job of a journalist to bring things into the light which people might prefer were hidden.

It’s easy I think for [Christian] journalists and the Church in general to want to sweep things under the carpet to a degree, because they think it doesn’t reflect well on the Church. And I think that’s a completely indefensible way of looking at things, to be honest. Because we are about truth and we’re about light. Nobody wants to wallow in the Church’s failings, and nobody wants to gratuitously do our dirty washing in public, but if there is wrongdoing, if there are questions that need to be answered, then we just need to be honest enough and brave enough to face up to these things.

You’re going to host BMS’ Catalyst Live events this year. What do you like most about them? The Catalyst Live events I’ve been to previously I’ve found enormously stimulating, in that they bring people together to hear top class teaching and really challenging, exciting speakers. We talked earlier about whether there was an anti-intellectual current in evangelicalism. Well, I think events like Catalyst Live really give the lie to that, because hundreds of people come together to be stretched – they want to be challenged, they want to have their minds opened and helped to think. And I think that’s really important.
**REVIEWS**

**Not in God’s Name: Confronting Religious Violence**

Jonathan Sacks

Book ISBN: 978-1473616530

Hodder & Stoughton

Rating: ★★★★★

Jonathan Sacks’ intelligent book addressing 21st century religiously motivated violence is a must read. Carefully constructed, it describes the phenomenon as “altruistic evil” – evil committed in a sacred cause in the name of high ideals. As such, he argues it isn’t just a religious phenomenon, as Stalin, Hitler and Pol Pot exemplify.

Rather, he argues, humans are social beings who form groups, and within our group we are altruistic. Between groups, we are aggressive. Religion comes into play because religion is the most powerful force for creating group cohesion.

Part two of the book is taken up with a brilliant exegesis of the Genesis narrative of Abraham’s family. Reading the texts through Jewish eyes is a fascinating experience.

In a moving chapter on the Scapegoat, he understandably asks why the Jews have been targeted throughout history, though I regretted, here and elsewhere in the book, the absence of a clear acknowledgement of Palestinian suffering at the hands of Israel.

He ends with a cry for Jews, Christians and Muslims to stand together against the pedalling of all forms of hatred, arguing that the real 21st century clash of civilisations is not between religions but within them.

**Review by** David Kerrigan,
General Director of BMS World Mission

**The Heavens and the Earth**

Stu McLellan

Book ISBN: 978-1473637337

Hodder & Stoughton

Rating: ★★★★★

The theory behind the recent fashion for adult colouring books is that they are a technique for mindfulness and stress relief: if you’re not very good at silent meditation, a simple, repetitive, creative activity can bring some of the same benefits.

Illustrator Stu McLellan’s *The Heavens and the Earth* colouring book applies this theory to meditation on Scripture. Each page or spread includes one handwritten verse or short passage incorporated in a line drawing inspired by nature and everyday life. Many of the illustrations, such as the collection of different dwellings illustrating “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Mark 12: 31) prompt further reflection on the words and how they might apply in real life contexts.

Compared to some of the intricate mindfulness colouring books on the market, Stu’s very attractive drawings are loose and free flowing, with lots of white space. You may require some imaginative colouring if you’re going to avoid wearing down your green and blue pencils. The book is, however, beautifully produced and would be a lovely present to receive, especially for a friend who might find creative spiritual reflection more palatable than a wordy presentation of the gospel.

**Review by** Ruth Whiter,
Communications Co-ordinator at the West of England Baptist Association

**Stranger to Stranger**

Paul Simon

Album

Concord Records

Rating: ★★★★★

When Paul Simon was in his mid-20s, he wrote great songs like Homeward Bound – a few guitar chords, good melody and clever lyrics. Fifty years later, none of us would argue if he churned out a few crafted songs in the same ilk.

Not Paul Simon. As his career has gone on, he’s become more and more adventurous. Be it the South African township sounds of Graceland, or the South American rhythms of The Rhythm of the Saints, he has always pushed the envelope of his soundscapes.

Simon is at it again with Stranger to Stranger, bringing us fresh, vital sounds and rhythms. Once the musical intrigue has grabbed your interest, Simon layers on rhymes, sleights of poetic hand and a great comic’s timing. Into all of that comes social comment, spiritual questioning and introspective reflection. It’s all-encompassing, intense and altogether enjoyable.

Simon’s been rather obsessed with the spiritual in recent records. Proof of Love is about a pilgrimage he made to a spiritual healer and Insomniac’s Lullaby is a bit of a prayer.

As Paul Simon hits his mid-70s, his songs are of more soul substance than anything he has ever written. Heart, soul and mind tingling!

**Review by** Steve Stockman,
Poet and Presbyterian minister, who will be speaking at Catalyst Live 2016

**Seminarty Dropout**

Shane Blackshear

Podcast

Missioalliance.org

Rating: ★★★★★

An American with a slightly nerdy voice interviews, from his Texan home, Christians you have mostly never heard of. That is a basic, if unflattering summary of Seminary Dropout.

It doesn’t sound promising, but this podcast is a hidden gem. You may not know many of his guests, but Blackshear has a knack of picking a diverse range of theologians, Christian writers and activists to talk to – people who not only reveal much about the Christian landscape in the United States, but can also challenge us here in the UK.

Blackshear really does his homework before each interview, and his insightful questions often elicit fascinating responses. Recent episodes worth listening to are Soong-Chan Rah (episode 128), a Korean-American professor who is championing lament in the Church; Michelle Higgins, who delivered a controversial talk at the mission conference Urbana (episode 125) and Shawn Duncan on the church’s role in helping the urban poor (episode 118). Blackshear has also spoken to the better-known NT Wright, Rob Bell, Max Lucado and Shane Claiborne. If you like reading Mission Catalyst, I thoroughly recommend listening to Seminary Dropout.

**Review by** Chris Hall,
Editor at BMS World Mission
Christian thought leaders from around the world, asking challenging questions, with fascinating answers.

Chaired by: Mark Woods
Baptist Times, Methodist Recorder, Christian Today

Christians needn’t fear ideas.

9am-5pm
16 November 2016: St Martin in the Bull Ring, Birmingham
17 November 2016: The Concert Hall, Reading

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