I AM ON THE SALVATION TRAIN
Sharing Jesus in the face of persecution

MOTHERS OF AFGHANISTAN
Their stories, their words

CAN YOU SEND ME?
The special people you can help us find

The Prophecy and the Golden Book
Evangelism, discipleship and fighting the darkness
here is a prophecy amongst the Karen people. It involves three brothers and a golden book. And in the depths of Burma (now Myanmar) Baptist missionaries saw that prophecy come true. You can read all about it (and how workers you support are following in the footsteps of prophecy) by turning to page 12. It’s a truly fascinating story, trust me!

I’m also thrilled to bring you a beautiful and dramatic story (with unusual layout and design) from a country where it’s dangerous to be a Christian (page 10), and to introduce you to some of the mothers you’re helping in Afghanistan by giving to Life’s First Cry (page 8).

Sadly, this is going to be the last time I write to you as Editor of Engage. I have been so inspired by the work I’ve seen, I’ve decided to leave my job here at BMS to go and volunteer overseas for a year.

I have absolutely loved my time at BMS HQ, and I am so thankful to each and every one of you who has written to me, prayed for me and encouraged me in my work here. BMS is an amazing organisation, transforming lives in so many ways in God’s strength, and you are such a huge part of that. I hope you will continue to enjoy reading about the ways you’re changing the world!

God bless you,

Jessica
Editor

Write to me or to my successor at magazine@bmsworldmission.org
4. News
Pregnant South Sudanese refugees get help thanks to you, and a miracle in Albania

5. Love, a gift for the nations
Dr Kang-San Tan on love as our motivation for mission

6. We love our amazing supporters!
Alan’s three peak victory and Ian’s 1,016-mile masterpiece

7. You didn’t forget Afghanistan
Thank you for your talks, toddler groups and Tweets!

8. Mothers of Afghanistan
Four mums share their stories

10. I am on the salvation train
We can’t tell you who or where this story comes from, but you’re going to want to read it

12. The prophecy and the golden book
You’re helping a minority hill tribe share Jesus in Thailand

16. Can you send me?
We’re looking for people who are flexible, resilient and willing to go to tough places

18. Letters
“I couldn’t do any of my work without the giving and prayers of BMS supporters, such as you”
A CAR CRASH LEFT HIM IN A COMA

Prayer gave him his life back

The doctors didn’t expect Marjo to survive the car crash. And even if he did, they didn’t think he’d be able to walk independently or have any semblance of the life he had before.

Marjo was just 18 at the time of the crash near Albania’s capital, Tirana, where he lives. The accident left him in a coma in hospital, his body in the most fragile of conditions, dependent upon feeding tubes and monitors.

Members of the Komuniteti i Besimit Tek Ura (Faith Community at the Bridge) church, that you played a part in forming, started to pray for Marjo. And he began to respond. That was in May. Now, Marjo is very nearly back to full health and is studying at university.

“When the doctors looked at his scans it seemed there was little hope of a meaningful recovery,” says BMS World Mission worker Dan Dupree, who planted the church. “But a few months later, Marjo is walking, talking and living an independent life.

“To hear members of the community call this a miracle and an answer to their prayers has been truly inspiring. Praise God!”

You played your part in this incredible healing because the church that supported Marjo was set up with the help of BMS workers Annie and Dan Dupree. The church community is one of the many ways that BMS is making an impact in Albania. We’re sharing God’s love with Roma and Egyptian communities through health, social inclusion and education ministries, too, and some of the poorest and most marginalised people in Europe are experiencing hope and seeing their lives transformed.

“TO HEAR MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY CALL THIS A MIRACLE AND AN ANSWER TO THEIR PRAYERS HAS BEEN TRULY INSPIRING”
Love, A Gift for the Nations

Kang-San Tan

A century ago, Christians relied on the wrath and judgment of God as a central missionary motive for conversion. Today, there is a growing understanding that “love as a gift” can be a far more biblical motive. We are not going to new frontiers of religions as gospel sellers, but instead living incarnationally the life of Christ as a gift of love. Such a life is post-colonial and powerful for breaking barriers of race, religion and class. “God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them” (1 John 4: 16).

For BMS, love is a foundational value for all that we are and do. We are passionate about sharing the love of God with all humanity. As Christians, we are called to live in love (socially in welcoming those different from us; economically in sharing resources; and politically in ensuring just treatment between and within the nations’ poorest).

Are you expressing this gospel of love in your community? How can comparatively rich Christians participate with BMS in a divided and despairing world?

In October 2018, I visited Guinea, ranked as the world’s 13th most fragile state. In Guinea, BMS workers are seeking to demonstrate practical love through mobile eye clinics, university education, microfinance projects and community initiatives. Without your support, this work of love amongst marginalised people would not be possible. Thank you for partnering with us in love.
We want to say a huge congratulations to Alan Jones, who climbed the highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales in aid of BMS in August 2018.

Alan completed what’s famously known as the Three Peaks Challenge, which involves climbing Ben Nevis in Scotland (1,345 metres), followed by Scafell Pike in England (978 metres) and finally Snowdon in Wales (1,085 metres). Alan was inspired to take on this fundraising feat when BMS World Mission workers Joe and Lois Ovenden visited his church, Llanelwy Community Church in St Asaph, Denbighshire.

After hearing about BMS projects seeking to bring clean water to Ugandan villages, Alan decided to show his support by raising money for us, climbing the mountains in just over two days as part of a group from his fitness boot camp.

“It was a good experience, at the edge of my comfort zone, that raised money for important work,” says Alan. Thank you so much, Alan, for your incredible effort – you’re an inspiration!
You didn’t forget Afghanistan

Thank you so much to all the incredible churches who have given their time and money for mothers and babies in Afghanistan by running a Life’s First Cry service. Your generosity is going to be felt by families like Andisha and Mohammad’s – and we are so grateful to you!

A special shout-out to all those churches who let us know they were running Life’s First Cry on social media! Churches like Wollaston Baptist, Greenock Baptist, Brixington Community Church, Lydbrook Baptist, Stoneygate Baptist and Cornton Baptist. We were so encouraged by your Tweets and Facebook messages!

A massive thank you goes to Hannah Page for holding a harvest supper in aid of Life’s First Cry at Brixington Community Church in Exmouth!

A massive thank you goes to Hannah Page for holding a harvest supper in aid of Life’s First Cry at Brixington Community Church in Exmouth!

What you did

As well as running a Life’s First Cry service, Stanley Road Baptist Church in Morecambe ran a teddy bears’ picnic in their midweek toddler group, Toddler Time.

Selly Park Baptist Church’s Sunday School made a display about Afghanistan, including photos from Engage, for their Life’s First Cry service, and invited Elizabeth Lee as a BMS guest speaker. The church also put on a harvest lunch of soup, bread and cake.

Ashley Baptist Church in New Milton held an all-age Life’s First Cry service, followed by a harvest lunch. Mark Greenwood from BMS HQ joined them as a BMS speaker.

Crayford Baptist Church watched Life’s First Cry as a Church family and heard from BMS Trustee Lindsay Caplen.

“The video was so moving. Thanks for all of your amazing work 😊

-Tricia

“We found it fascinating, and would strongly recommend it.

-David

“I believe this DVD enables people to connect with world mission in a new way. A number of women expressed how they were deeply moved by the video. An elderly lady had lost a baby over 80 years ago and was able to relate to the sorrow felt by the Afghan parents.

-Wilma

If you want to run a Life’s First Cry service and are interested in having a BMS speaker join you for the event, we’d love to hear from you! Visit www.bmsworldmission.org/speakers to request a speaker today.
Mothers of Afghanistan

Four mums in Afghanistan’s mountains share how the birthing course you support is transforming lives.

“This is my daughter Chehrah.

I gave birth at home and, because Chehrah was born after we started the lessons, we knew to make the place nice and clean. And, praise God, Chehrah’s fine. She’s really well. We didn’t know much about childbirth before we had the [BMS-supported] course. Some of my other children had problems with malnutrition and things, because we didn’t really have much of an idea about feeding ourselves well as mums. This time, I found it a lot easier. I wasn’t so worried, and we had a nice place to have the baby. Chehrah was born in the night, and the next morning we went to the clinic to get her vaccinated.

“I’m happy to be a mum. It’s a nice thing. I am really hoping I can bring my children up well, and that they will be healthy.”

“My children didn’t all survive.

I’ve given birth to about ten children in all, but three of them passed away from tetanus. Us women used to keep carrying really heavy loads all through pregnancy. We wouldn’t be eating and drinking very much. And we’d give birth down in the barns.

“The birthing lessons have really made a difference to the way we look after ourselves when we’re pregnant. The men are really helping, they’ve had the lessons as well. They’re the ones who are saying, ‘don’t do the heavy lifting’. They’ll bring water into the house, they’ll make sure their wives get a couple of hours extra sleep during the day. This has really made a difference to the way that men behave.

“And it means our children come into the world healthy and whole. They are not passing away from hepatitis, pneumonia, and tetanus.”

All names changed for security reasons.
“Eight of my children passed away.

I have eight living children as well. The others died from bleeding, from other complications, from getting sick after they were born. Even my children who survived had problems when they were young. One of my sons had problems with diarrhoea and deafness for about two years when he was younger, he’s still deaf in one ear. Another had problems with his heart, and other complications. We took him to the clinic and they managed to save his life. He’s a nice, big man now. This was before we had any of these lessons we have now.

“It’s really great being a mum. It’s a really joyful feeling. Our house feels much better. It really made a difference that my husband went on the course as well. He was a real help when I was expecting – he helped around the house and we’ve been more in agreement. It’s brought us closer together. I am really happy now.

“What we’ve learnt here is the reason that my children are alive. The lessons you have given have made all the difference in the world.”
I CAN'T TELL YOU MY NAME.

Or the name of the country...

...where BMS World Mission has sent me.

So many Christians have been imprisoned here and the stories of torture and killings are well known.

So, I hope you'll forgive me for being cautious.
I want to tell you about a man I have been speaking to. I consider him a friend. I have been talking to him about life and death, and about heaven. I have been saying to him that one day, after we die, I would love to see him in heaven. That not everybody can just turn up there. That there is a door and the key is Jesus Christ. That knowing Jesus Christ will mean that we can see each other again in heaven.

WHEN I TOLD HIM THIS HE NODDED.

SAID NOTHING.

I NEVER KNOW IF MY WORDS WILL HAVE AN EFFECT, BUT I TRUST THE LORD.

A few weeks later, my friend contracted tuberculosis. He came in to say goodbye before he went for treatment. I took hold of his shoulder – he was so thin it was just bone – and I said to him: "Do you remember what I said about seeing you again, in heaven?"

He was quiet for a while. And then he said to me: "I am on the salvation train."

I don’t know if he had been a believer before we spoke, or if the Lord used my words. It doesn’t matter. He is on the salvation train. I will see him again one day. Praise be to God.

This is a story from one of our workers in a country we cannot mention. Please pray for God to keep using BMS workers to make Jesus known. And pray for believers in nations where persecution is the law. Pray that they would come to know a new law, one of love and freedom to worship.
There is a prophecy among the Karen people. It involves three brothers and the truth hidden within the pages of a golden book. It is said that there is one God and that God can be found through the words written in the book. The prophecy states that the book will reach the Karen people in the hands of the youngest of the three brothers. A white man. It is said that through the book, the Karen people will know God.

For thousands of years, the Karen held onto this prophecy. On their wrists, they wore a bracelet, a symbol of their bondage to dark spirits. When the true God revealed himself to them, they would cut their bracelets. They would be free.

And so they waited. Holding onto this prophecy until the 1800s when a Baptist missionary arrived in Burma (now Myanmar) to preach the gospel. He brought with him a Bible. Its gilt pages glistening gold in the light of the sun.
The Karen are a minority people group in Thailand. A hill tribe. They live mostly in villages in the mountains. They have their own national dress. Their own flag. Their own language. They even have their own national anthem. But they don’t have a country. They’re dispersed around the world. Many of them fear they will lose their Karen-ness. That eventually, their people will be lost forever.

For the Karen people BMS World Mission is partnering with, Christianity is inherently part of the Karen identity. Karen as a written language has come through missionaries – through the Bible, the golden book.

While other religious texts cannot be read in Karen, the Bible can. Culture, language and faith are inextricably entwined for Karen Christians – if one of them is lost, they all will be. With your support, BMS is helping the Thai Karen people protect their identity. You’re standing with them as they make our faith known and save their culture.

You’re helping them fulfil their prophecy.

The cool young brothers

It’s the young people that will be the first to go. Karen villages are generally beautiful, idyllic places, relatively remote and cut-off, so in order to access higher education young people must move to Thai cities. They leave their villages – where avocados and passion fruit grow in abundance and their parents work as farmers – to study in Chiang Mai or Chiang Rai. These are big cities where you can easily get swallowed up. You study in Thai. Communicate in Thai. You’re suddenly thrown into a completely different culture. And many older Karen people would see this new culture as godless. Thailand is a Buddhist nation. It’s made huge advancements in technology. Cities are littered with cars and bars. It’s a million miles away from the life these young people have grown up in.

BMS is supporting five Karen youth leaders to come alongside Karen students in Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, building community with them,

“I want to keep our language and I want to restore it again”
connecting them with churches and making sure they don’t lose themselves and their identity in the chaos of adapting to life in the city. “If we don’t take care of them they might lose their faith,” says Chirasak Kutae, one of the BMS-supported youth team. “We have to follow them and bring them back to keep their identity. To keep their faith.”

The youth team also work in Karen villages in the ten associations of the Thai Karen Baptist Convention (TKBC). They encourage young Christians and invite them and their friends to attend sports events and camps. Over the last four years, 3,748 young Karen have been involved in the youth team’s sports events – 1,247 of whom were not Christians. And amazingly, through their witness, 78 young people have found Christ!

Fortunately, not all young Karen people are at risk of losing their language and culture. The young leaders studying at the BMS-supported Siloam Bible Institute in Chiang Mai are special. They’ve moved to the city – yes. But they’ve chosen to study the Bible. And they’ve chosen to study it in Karen. Many of them have a specific vision to go back to their villages and work as pastors and children’s leaders. By supporting them and their teachers, you’re helping to keep the Karen culture alive.

Vitoon is in his fourth year studying at Siloam. He plans to go back to his people when he finishes his studies. “I want to keep our language and I want to restore it again,” says Vitoon. “Many Karen people don’t know God yet. They’ve never heard about Jesus. I want to plant churches in the mountains, amongst Karen people.”

You may wonder why Vitoon and the other Karen people you’re serving when you give to BMS are so desperate to preserve their culture. Prateep Dee (also known as Timu) is the General Secretary of TKBC and believes that every culture and every language is a gift from God. “Culture is a God-given thing. God has given value and beauty to each nation,” says Timu. “If we lose our identity, that is something very serious, because it is something God has given.”

Because of the Christians, the evil spirit and the demons have walked away

The evil-spirit-fighting warrior sisters

It’s not just young Karen people you’re standing with when you give to BMS. You’re standing alongside women, too. The women in Karen villages are beacons for everything that
is beautiful in Karen culture. Handwoven traditional dress, hospitality, singing. A simple life of farming, family and fellowship. But they’re also strong. Brave. And isolated. Many of the older generation are unable to speak Thai, while their grandchildren are barely able to communicate in Karen.

If you were supporting BMS in 1988, you helped send Jacqui Wells to Thailand to work with our Karen sisters. When she arrived, the women of TKBC told her they had been praying for more than 12 years for someone to come and help them start work among the Karen women. They saw Jacqui as an answer to those prayers.

Jacqui spent more than 20 years working alongside the women of TKBC, with BMS support – helping to set up a network of evangelists who would encourage the women in village churches across northern Thailand and help them to engage with their communities. This work has had a huge impact in places like Maeka village.

“Before the women’s ministry started here 25 years ago, only six families were Christian,” says Plerka, a member of the church in Maeka. “Now, every person has become a Christian. Fifty or sixty families.

“Before, there was a very strong evil spirit working here, and many people did not dare to stay in this village. But now, because of the Christians, the evil spirit and the demons have walked away. They are not living here anymore.”

Because of your giving, we continue to fight the darkness in Karen hill villages, through evangelism, discipleship and the spiritual growth and prayer they encourage. You’re funding ten women to work as evangelists among the associations of TKBC, as well as someone to oversee the work.

“Because the evangelists come and teach the word of the Lord, that’s why our faith grows and grows,” says Plerka.

The Father’s workmanship, hand in hand

There is a prophecy among the Karen people. It involves three brothers and the truth hidden within the pages of a golden book. It is said that there is one God and that God can be found through the words written in the book.

When you give your support to BMS, you’re helping the Karen people fulfil their own prophecy. They have a vision to spread the gospel throughout Thailand – and you’re walking with them, hand in hand. Taking the golden book to places where its pages have never been read. Shining the truth and cutting through the darkness.

“We are the workmanship of the Lord and it is beautiful when we work together,” says Timu, head of TKBC. He’s speaking to me, but his words are meant for you, wherever you are in Britain, and whatever way you’ve helped make BMS work possible. “We are so thankful that you are part of our ministry,” he says. “Because our ministry is your ministry – it’s the ministry of our one true God. And one day we will be in the presence of God, and he will say: ‘well done children for working together for my glory.’”
Can you send me?
Skills, sacrifice and sending the right people

You could know the next BMS World Mission worker.
You might even be one of this special breed.

Words: Jonathan Langley

I’ve lied to many people about mission. Not in this magazine or any BMS publication, but right to their faces. It’s time to confess.

When I’m speaking in a church or meeting supporters at a BMS event, people sometimes say things like: “I couldn’t serve with BMS abroad,” and I say: “Nonsense! Of course you could! I’m sure you’d make a wonderful BMS mission worker!” But, the truth is, I have no idea if they would.

BMS mission workers are special. Not fundamentally different from you or me, but uniquely suited, prepared and placed by God to be of service to the world through his Church. They are people with the right character, the right experience and the right skills to live (an often difficult) life in places where a special type of help is needed most. They are, in a very real sense, the best the Church has to offer. And not just the UK Church. The World Church is producing mission workers ready to be sent or used mightily in their own countries, and BMS is sending, resourcing and deploying them for the kingdom.

And we still send people from the UK, too. The changing world we live in means, however, that we send a different type of person to do a different type of job. BMS has always sent people where they’re needed most. Doctors, teachers, pastors, engineers and agriculturalists have for generations gone with BMS and transformed lives in places where the doctors and the agriculturalists were thin on the ground.

Today, we recognise that in Africa and Asia, in South America and the Middle East, and in many parts of Europe, there are local people ready to do an array of jobs. What they need is to be released. What they often need is training and expertise – not just to learn core skills, but to learn how to train and mentor others. Increasingly, our partners in the Global Church and in umbrella mission agencies around the world are looking for supervisors, managers, directors and people to train trainers – to take the mission of our God into the world in ways that have the deepest impact for the neediest people, and transform individuals, communities and nations.

That’s where our sent mission workers come in. They’re people at a stage of life (and their careers) where the sacrifice of mission is potentially greatest, but whose potential impact on entire countries is biggest. People with wisdom and experience, leadership skills and a passion to raise up local workers and leaders to take essential work forward. People who want to do the work of God so well that they are prepared to do themselves out of a job.

Are you one of these people? Do you know someone who might be? Are you midway through your career or at a senior level and looking for a way to turn your knowledge and experience into service? We are looking for people like you. Managers. Supervisors. Leaders and facilitators, training specialists and co-ordinators with a willingness to set aside their

Never say never!
Different contexts need different things. One country needs leaders, another partner has no access to people who can deliver help directly. If you don’t fit into the skillset described here, it’s still worth checking out our current vacancies. We need everything from teachers to pastors. Visit www.bmsworldmission.org/vacancies to find out if we need you. And if you’re still not sure, please do get in touch for a chat.
hard-earned comfort and status for the sake of Jesus Christ. People willing to live as servants and guides among the communities they’re sent to – witnessing and leading with humility, and ready to learn from our sisters and brothers in the Global Church.

We’re looking for people who are flexible and resilient, and who have the ability to love and laugh when situations might push others towards cynicism or grumbling. People who stay the course, who build deep relationships that give them the right to persuade and advise, and ultimately to challenge attitudes and cultures. People whose characters influence the world for good.

But it’s not just about experience and character. An important part of what makes a BMS mission worker special is a willingness to go where these attitudes and skills are needed most. BMS responds to the most critical needs of the Global Church, sometimes sending financial and logistical support, and sometimes sending people. We’re called to work in fragile states and where the gospel is least heard, as well as with the poorest of the poor. That means life for mission workers can be hard. Suffering for the gospel is as real now as it was for the heroes in the Church of Acts and for the missionary heroes from the past. We just have better ways of supporting, resourcing and protecting our people today. But it’s not a holiday.

We’re looking for people willing to serve in tough places – like Chad, Afghanistan, Guinea and even some we can’t speak about publicly. People with a passion for empowering others and the skills to build capacity in organisations, individuals and communities, while witnessing to the love of Jesus. We’re looking to make high-level, sustainable and effective change, so that God’s love might be better known and fully experienced through local believers for generations to come.

WE’RE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WILLING TO SERVE IN TOUGH PLACES
Dear friends,

Life here in the Peruvian Amazon is very interesting. Firstly, when we go to do missionary work, we go out in small boats to communities where there isn’t any electricity, or the things you can find in a city.

When I visit river communities, I adapt myself to how people live, which means no mattress to sleep on, only planks of wood. What I try to do is inspire people to move forward in both their Christian life and their economic life. I give them the message that we have a living God who wants to pick us up when we fall.

What we provide is integral training, so that we look at pastors’ intellectual, spiritual and family development, and also the influence they have within their community. This is very important work and it motivates me every day. One example – we helped a pastor from a village called Samito, on the Nanay River.

The pastor didn’t have anything at the start of the training, but he now has a bakery, which he operates with his family, and he also makes boats for people to rent. Wherever I go I see the powerful hand of God, and as long as I live I will do what God wants. It’s my joy to live for him. I want the Amazon to know Jesus Christ. There is a lot to be done here and, even though I am 67, I have the strength and ideas of a young person, and I want to carry on.

I couldn’t do any of my work without the giving and prayers of BMS supporters, such as you. I give thanks to God for all that you do. I really am so grateful. I would really appreciate your prayers for my health and also for my wife. Please pray too for my colleagues, our work, and the communities we serve. May God bless you today.

Thank you.

Pastor Luis

“I WANT THE AMAZON TO KNOW JESUS CHRIST”
LETTERS FROM... THE UK

Compassionate and honest

Dear Jessica,

I just want to say how impressed I have been by the Engage issue focusing on BMS World Mission’s project for pregnant women and infants in Afghanistan. Your article was both really packed with information but also compassionate and very honest about the challenges facing these remote mountain communities. I read highlights of your interview and reflections as part of our harvest service; along with the Life’s First Cry film.

Thanks for producing such thoughtful resources.
Margaret Bainbridge
Macclesfield, Cheshire

Exciting and informative

Thank you Jessica, production team and contributors for the excellent and colourful edition of Engage issue 42. I read it from cover to cover more or less in one sitting and found it really exciting and informative. The articles on Thailand, Brazil, Afghanistan and Lebanon gave a wonderful ‘picture’ of BMS World Mission serving in such contrasting situations and provided opportunities for meaningful prayer.

I’m looking forward to the next issue of Engage!
Stephen Bull

Get in touch!

If you’ve been inspired or challenged by anything you’ve read in Engage, have been busy raising money for us, or have anything else you want to share, we would love to hear from you. Get in touch using one of the methods on page 2!

Thanks for having your say in our magazine battle on Facebook!

Engage 22 Catalyst 37 Too polite to say 😏 3

Note from the Editor: there is no way this can possibly be true.

To all of you who gave a ❤️, thank you. You have excellent taste! We are so glad you enjoy reading Engage. Do let us know what you think of this issue, and if you like Engage better than Mission Catalyst, we need to hear from you as soon as possible!
LIKE WHAT YOU’VE READ IN ENGAGE?

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