SRI LANKA BOMBINGS
A man in mourning

CYCLONE IDAI
Praising God amidst the destruction

OUR VISION, YOUR VOICE
Have your say on our new strategy
Editorial

LAUGHTER AND TEARS
Hannah Watson
August 2019

daughter and tears. That’s the best way I can sum up putting together my first edition of Engage. I’m Hannah, and I’m so pleased to introduce myself as BMS’ new editor. There have been weepy moments for my new team though, as they said goodbye to my wonderful predecessor into whose shoes I now step. And I blinked back tears (not just because of deadlines!) as I sat with Roshan Mendis, longtime BMS partner who you’ll meet on page 8. He generously shared with me his experience of a day of searing, blistering grief for Sri Lanka, so that Engage readers can stand with mourning Christians in prayer.

There’s been so much laughter too. Realising that my new team are passionate, committed and so much fun has been wonderful. We joined the judging panel for our annual Action Team photo competition, giggling at a spectacular shot of a cow that you can see on page 17. And we were delighted to be sent a long-lost donation from a wonderful reader – one that’s over 80 years old (page 19). I’ve been so excited to collect so many good news stories for this issue, of BMS supporters making a difference from Uganda to Albania and beyond.

As this issue is my first, please do write to me to say hello, and let me know what you think. You, after all, are the reason BMS exists! You can find the address below – I’d love to hear from you!

God bless you,

Hannah Watson
Editor

Write to me at magazine@bmsworldmission.org
4. News
The beginnings of Church in a Buddhist village and BMS’ starring role at the Charity Film Awards

5. Your say in our future
Dr Kang-San Tan on listening to God’s word, to the World Church and to you

6. Our vision, your voice
Play a part in our future. We want your say on BMS’ exciting new strategy

7. A pilgrimage with a purpose
The marathon runner who journeyed to Jerusalem for BMS

Join us in prayer for a Sri Lanka in mourning

10. I am Innocent
The boy with Down Syndrome who knows he’s a God Plan

14. Thank you for seeing me
The people you helped without even realising

18. Letters
From the eye of the cyclone, a BMS worker describes life after Idai
These are the beginnings of Church in the Thai village of Wang Daeng: three people asking Jesus into their lives, and dozens of seekers gathering weekly, discipled by BMS workers Helen and Wit Boondeekhun. Last year, we asked Engage readers to pray for BMS church-planting in a village that was 100 per cent Buddhist. And God has been working powerfully, answering your prayers. You prayed for Ajarn Tah, a Thai Christian who teaches young people a cool combination of football and guitar. He’s moved into the village, and his students and football team are eager Sunday gathering attendees. Joining them is Suree, a new Christian who now regularly invites friends. You prayed that she would continue to grow in her faith, and she has. “It’s still difficult for Suree,” says Wit. “She was asked to perform Buddhist rituals one day and she was ashamed to say no. So, I told her to focus on Jesus.” Prayers are also needed for her husband, that he would come to know Jesus and be set free from alcoholism.

Young people there were mobilised as Wang Daeng hosted an Action Team, BMS World Mission’s gap year for 18 to 23-year-olds. You can check out their inspiring competition-winning photos on pages 16 and 17. The Thailand Action Team organised a Christmas event which had 140 people attending. It revealed a new openness to the gospel in the area. “We have absolutely experienced God’s protection and blessing over our lives,” reports Wit. “It wouldn’t be opening up like this without your prayers,” adds Helen. Nevertheless, addiction and spirit worship practices remain, and Helen and Wit feel a burden to help those imprisoned by addiction, starting with Suree’s husband. Thank you for your prayers and please continue to pray. When God’s people gather in his name, he moves mountains!

BMS worker Wit has been encouraging new Christian Suree to focus on Jesus in hard times.
YOUR SAY IN OUR FUTURE
Kang-San Tan

MS World Mission is heading into an exciting new phase of strategy-making, looking forward to seeing how God will use us to transform lives around the world from 2020-2025. As we begin to have important conversations about this next phase of mission work, we should look to first principles.

Support for mission is at the heart of our Christian discipleship rather than a secondary sacrificial response to a world in need. This is because mission is rooted within the saving sovereignty of God redeeming a sinful and broken world. It is really our participation with God in his mission, not a to-do list of achievements or ambitions for evangelism.

Your partnership in supporting BMS beautifully embodies our shared participation in the mission of God, from first principles to faith-stretching targets. Some are called to go, while others are called to send: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20: 21).

FROM ‘FIRST CRY’ TO FILM FINALS

It’s not just Hollywood stars that walk the red carpet. Cue flashback to when Life’s First Cry Photography Director, Jake and Editor Jonty did just that, at 2019’s Charity Film Awards in London. BMS was runner-up in the £5 million to £50 million turnover category, alongside large charities who commission their films externally. “I’m so excited that a video about a Christian charity saving lives in a sustainable way, alongside local people, got such recognition,” said Jonty. Congratulations to Childline, whose video inspired us and went on to win. With the spotlight on BMS, more support has been raised, allowing us to continue teaching parents in Afghanistan to safely deliver babies. And that’s a prize worth aiming for.

PARTY IN A PRISON

Murderers, thieves and victims held without trial in a Guinean prison were so grateful that BMS workers Ben and Isabelle shared the Word of God with them that they threw them a party. They even gave them gifts: baskets, hand-woven with their names. Ben and Isabelle visited men in the prison every Sunday to share the gospel with them, and brought them food, soap and medicine. Men who had nothing are now seeing the light of salvation thanks to Ben and Isabelle’s powerful work.

And thanks to your faithful support, we’re exceeding our targets in that response. We’re making good progress in our ‘One million lives transformed by 2020’ strategy thanks to you. But we also need to look forward. We need to listen: to God’s word, to the World Church and to you.

To have your say in BMS’ future, just turn the page. We really want to hear from you!
Hi there!
Here at BMS, we’re in the middle of a whole series of consultations, aimed at giving a wide cross-section of BMS stakeholders the chance to speak into our strategic vision for 2020 onwards.
As an Engage reader, we’re offering you the chance to contribute directly to this process too! Fill in the tear-out form and post it to us, or you can respond online at: https://bit.ly/strategysurvey2019
We’d love to hear from you!

Mark Craig
Director of Communications

1. How effective is BMS in mission at present?
   1. Ineffective
   2. Adequately effective
   3. Effective
   4. Very effective

2. How important is BMS’ history as part of our future story?
   1. Crucial
   2. Important
   3. A little
   4. Not at all

3. Given the emergence of the Global Church and the relative decline of Christianity in the UK, what’s the most important focus for BMS’ future work?
   1. Enabling Global South missionaries to operate regionally
   2. UK cross-cultural outreach
   3. Focusing on nations which have little or no Christian witness
   4. Solidarity with global Christians facing extreme vulnerability

4. What is BMS’ key role in the future?
   1. Sending Brits
   2. Enabling local workers
   3. Working with other agencies
   4. No future

5. What do you most want to be the key focus of BMS’ mission in the future?
   1. Evangelism
   2. Solutions to poverty
   3. Advocacy
   4. Something else

7. Bearing in mind your last answer, what’s the second most important focus for BMS’ future work? (Don’t choose the answer you gave to the last question!)
   1. Evangelism
   2. Solutions to poverty
   3. Advocacy
   4. Something else

8. In the future, should BMS prioritise sending more workers from the UK overseas?
   1. Send more
   2. Send the same
   3. Send fewer
   4. Send none

9. In the future, should BMS prioritise engaging more overseas workers instead of ex-pats from the UK?
   1. Yes
   2. A mix
   3. No
   4. Don’t know

10. What kind of BMS work is most important to you?
    1. UK work
    2. Overseas work which churches can also do
    3. Overseas work which churches can’t do
    4. Something else

11. Would your church welcome and actively work with incoming mission workers, mainly from non-EU countries?
    1. Definitely
    2. Probably
    3. Unlikely
    4. No

12. Can BMS win new generations of supporters?
    1. Absolutely
    2. Possibly
    3. Unlikely
    4. No

Post this to Strategy Team, PO BOX 49, 129 Broadway, Didcot, OX11 8XA or go online at: https://bit.ly/strategysurvey2019
A pilgrimage with a purpose

Many make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to experience the stories of the Bible, but Jo went to Jerusalem to run. Jo is stationed at an RAF base where she leads a Bible study group. Being in the military and having close ties with Afghanistan, her study group felt called to support Life’s First Cry. So, Jo decided to run the Jerusalem marathon in March to raise money for BMS World Mission – £400 so far, thank you, Jo! The group were so inspired by the feature video that they’re looking to continue raising money and to nominate Life’s First Cry as their Charity of the Year. Are you also inspired by Jo to share Life’s First Cry with your church? Go to: www.bmsworldmission.org/cry

Clean water champions

The fundraising champions of St Asaph in Wales raised a phenomenal £2,000 for clean water projects run by BMS World Mission.

Inspired by BMS worker Tim Darby’s work, digging boreholes in Uganda, the church community at St Asaph decided sell cakes, cards and jam together. They set personal goals, running marathons and doing sponsored walks. They organised coffee mornings, family fun days and even an afternoon of wacky water challenges. In May they reached their target! Thank you so much, and well done all!

Has someone you know done something wonderful to help raise support for BMS? If so, we’d love to hear from you! Email magazine@bmsworldmission.org or get in touch using the contact details on page 2.
Roshan Mendis was leading the service that day when an elder approached him during one of the hymns. There had been an attack, and a church had been the target. A terrible question presented itself: was this congregation at risk too? Minds raced as the worshippers sang. Then, news of the second attack came through. A hotel known for hosting church services had also been bombed.

Stepping outside his church as the sermon began, Roshan saw members of the police and military gathered by the gate. Roshan’s church was filled to overflowing that day, with additional seating placed outside. Not wishing to panic the congregation, he allowed the meeting to end before safely dispersing the crowd.

Three churches in Colombo and three hotels were the targets of terrorist suicide bombings on Easter Sunday morning 2019. Later that day and back at home, Roshan felt the reverberations from a blast in Dehiwala less than a kilometre away.

The implications of the bomb targets were clear – the terrible thought now a kernel of fear rooted and growing fast. They were places of Christian (and perceived western expatriate) influence.

Roshan is the CEO of longtime BMS partner organisation Leads, a relief recovery and development agency working in Sri Lanka. He’s lived through 2004’s tsunami and three decades of civil war alongside Buddhist, Muslim and Tamil people who found themselves targets of unsparing insurgent violence. He’s

Voices rise in sung worship as a procession winds through the streets. Shadows shorten as the sun rises over the beach where a crowd gathers for a morning service. 2,000 years since that first Easter when Jesus met his disciples on a beach at dawn, Sri Lankan Christians process back to church for breakfast. Then, the world splinters.

Words: Hannah Watson
survived being shot at in a case of mistaken identity – “the gun jammed” – has been caught in crossfire, and witnessed a bus being blown up by a mine. “I don’t claim to be brave,” says Roshan, “but none of those things give me the same feeling of vulnerability as now. Then, I knew I was not being targeted – but now I feel it could be me.”

Leads has worked in the aftermath of all kinds of disaster, helping children and families in distress. But they themselves are far from immune from the trauma they address. It’s part of the integrated disaster response BMS partners aim for. What happens when the staff of an organisation well-acquainted with trauma experience it so acutely, in such a new way? Leads was invited to take charge of trauma triage at a national level after the bombings, but providing psychosocial ‘first aid’ in the form of group work and activity packs for so many has wrung thin their capacity. Staff also experience secondary trauma from listening to the many distressing accounts of the day. Your support through BMS is keeping them going, and they need your prayer. As does the nation of Sri Lanka.

The Easter Sunday bombings killed over 250 people, and the backlash has been significant. Various faith-groups have been stirred to violent action. There has been increased monitoring of religious activity, and an emergency ban issued on the wearing of burqas and niqabs. The government-imposed curfews that promote safety also disrupt a suffering nation from returning to everyday life. Sri Lanka is a nation in sequestered mourning.

Roshan’s fellowship met for the first time as a church on 12 May, three weeks after the attacks took place. Not all were ready to attend. John 16: 2 came to mind: …in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. “The sense that it can happen to anyone, anywhere is very high,” says Roshan. The psychological implications for ordinary people reverberate far beyond Sri Lanka’s borders. The loss of at least 38 foreign nationals in the blasts is keenly felt. Tourism will undoubtably suffer. Before he gives talks, Roshan plays a slideshow of richly colourful photographs: wildlife, nature, culture. “A reminder that Sri Lanka is still a beautiful country.”

There is another photograph that did the rounds of the news outlets after the bombings: a statue of Jesus spattered in blood. It speaks to Roshan not of injustice, but of sacrifice. “It encapsulates a level of pain in what we are called to do.” Roshan has to tell the story of Good Friday, of taking up our cross. But Good Friday is never the end. For Christians, the message of Easter is forgiveness. The response of the Christian community in Sri Lanka has been a powerful means of witness, of ‘living by the Bible’ and ‘turning the other cheek’ noted by Buddhist and Muslim neighbours.

Roshan’s prayer is that his country’s leaders will act with wisdom and integrity and that families seeking answers from the crucible of their pain will find answers. As for us, the global Church, Roshan believes Christians should lobby for our freedom of religion – now as one of the most persecuted faith groups. And we should also be quick to listen to the World Church, supporting local believers as they lead mission, so that Christianity is no longer seen as a western imposition. So that Christianity is no longer seen as a threat.

Please pray for Sri Lanka. Pray for its Christians and all its people. For wise leaders and peaceful communities. Pray for Roshan and his team, and for BMS work all over a world that hasn’t yet embraced the hope offered by that first Easter.

Thank you for giving

On your behalf, BMS was able to respond quickly to the Easter atrocities, providing £10,000 worth of support to Roshan and local Christian trauma counsellors. That was only possible because of gifts to our Disaster Recovery ministries. Find out more at bmsworldmission/mourning-sri-lanka
Down Syndrome is not a disease. I am a God Plan.
am Innocent and they wanted me to die. At the hospital they called me a “waste of oxygen” and chased my mum away. I had been into the ICU 19 times. I am Innocent. I have Down Syndrome. I am a God Plan. My mum tells me I am a God Plan.

I am Innocent and my father disowned me. Told my mum to “throw” me. To abandon me, in Gulu in Uganda, where we live. I am Innocent, I get infections easily, I took a long time to walk, a longer time to eat or drink than other children. I am different.

My grandma said that I look different, called me abnormal. Asked my mum to throw me. Her family disowned me. Told my mum to “throw” me. To abandon me, in Gulu in Uganda, where we live. I am Innocent.

I am Innocent and while I did not, could not, write these words, I’m important too.

INNOCENT IS NOT ALONE.

Innocent has friends. There’s Misheal, five years old, who cannot take herself to the toilet, and Viola, whose neighbours wouldn’t pick her up or let her play with other children because they thought that Down Syndrome was contagious. There are many other children like Innocent, who are beautiful and friendly and joyful and kind, and who have been rejected by family and neighbours and society. Whose parents have suffered depression and financial hardship because the people around them have not understood what Down Syndrome is.

“Sometimes doctors have told people that there’s nothing to worry about, that their children will catch up,” she says. “The fact is, these children can learn. But they do need the support and input.”

That’s why Lois started the Gulu Down Syndrome group. To share knowledge, to connect parents with a local school that integrates children with special needs into its classes so they’re not excluded. To let parents know they are not alone.

“I’ve done a lot of the diagnosis,” says Lois Ovenden, a BMS World Mission worker based in Gulu. “People notice that there is something not typical, but they won’t know what it is. And sometimes doctors won’t give the diagnosis, even if they know it.” You can understand why. In Uganda, as in many countries, there is a stigma attached to disability, and reactions range from fear and disdain to blame. And there are practical problems too. Care is time-consuming and expensive. The children themselves can be challenging, as every one of their mums can testify.

Lois has met so many mums because their children had developmental problems. She’s a speech and language therapist working in a local clinic, and children like Innocent and Misheal and Viola will be brought to her because they have not yet been able to speak. And it’s Lois who has broken the news to their parents.

“They love with a fierce and unconditional love that tells the world that their children are a gift not a curse, that their children matter and they won’t abandon them, however tough it is.” They are her inspiration. They are each other’s lifeline. And they have grown in love and support.

Innocent’s mum is called Alice. She’s part of the group. She says that what
Viola’s family wanted her to die. Her mum Lucy’s response? “Love your child.”

more support, and more hope. More to say. There are things they want you to know.

Misheal’s mum, Mary, wants you to know that Misheal is normal. Viola’s mum, Lucy, wants you to know that she is proud of Viola. And Alice wants to tell you that she loves Innocent.

“It was God’s plan to give me this child,” she says. “That’s why I have my son, and I love him.”

Lois’ hope is that, with more awareness and provision,

You can help.

October is Down Syndrome Awareness Month, and while we give thanks that many children with Down Syndrome around the world are getting the support they need, the world’s poorest and most marginalised parents are struggling to help their precious daughters and sons. That’s why groups like the one Lois started are so important. To help parents help each other and help themselves.

You can support the work Lois does every month by becoming a 24:7 Partner with BMS.

Just go to www.bit.ly/247partners to set up a direct debit that could focus on Lois’ work or provide support where the need is greatest. And if you already give regularly, thank you for making work like this possible!

she most wants other people to understand is that she didn’t choose this. And that she accepts her little boy, as all mothers do: as a gift from the Lord. She wants them to understand that Innocent is not infectious. That he is God-given. Precious. Innocent.

“Down Syndrome is not a disease,” Alice says. “It is a God Plan.”

The message Alice has received from the Gulu group and from Lois is one that empowers mothers to help each other: with knowledge, with support and with a Christian message of love. And it’s working. Spreading. More mums with more knowledge,
children with Down Syndrome in Gulu and beyond will be able to realise their potential and be welcomed and valued members of society. “Our hope is that families will know the blessing these children can be,” she says. “Working with them is a huge privilege.”

And as the message spreads, more people are feeling that privilege. Following a World Down Syndrome Day event that Lois and the group organised in March comes the news that another group might be set up further north. And this group, by God’s grace, will need Lois less and less, as the mums learn to rely on each other and as the community continues to be transformed by the mustard seed of their faith, their hope, and their love for their children.

I AM
INNOCENT.

I am not a mistake. I am not diseased. I am made in the image of God. I am a person and I have joys and loves and quirks and funny little habits. I have a mum who loves me. I have friends to play with under the mango tree. I have trouble speaking and I did not write this but I have help. We have help. We have the children and the mums, we have Lois and the doctors, we have a chance to learn and to grow to do something with our lives. We want you to see us. We want you to see us as you see yourself. We want you to see the God Plan.

Imelda wants her little girl Tracey to have a good, bright life.
Recognise this little girl? She’s smiling – she wasn’t the last time you saw her. She was one of Albania’s invisible children, the children the world was willing to overlook. But you stopped and saw her, and when you did you acted. You gave generously to our Albania appeal. You brought little girls like her in from the streets. You took little boys whose only lessons had been in how to beg to a preschool group, where they can learn and play in safety. You provided literacy classes to their parents at our BMS-supported community centre, where they saw the value of education for their children. You stopped and saw this little girl, but there are other people you’ve helped without even realising. People like Rita.

Rita*, a Kosovan refugee, had lived in a refugee settlement in Tirana, Albania for so long it almost felt like home to her and her family. But a severe head injury changed all that. Rita was so badly injured that she couldn’t move. She couldn’t leave her bed. She might as well have been left to die.

Kafja e Rremes is known as ‘the armpit of Tirana’. It’s a community forgotten by the city that surrounds it. Children beg on the streets. Many of their parents are illiterate and struggle to find work. Elderly people are like ghosts, isolated and lonely. “Older people disappear into apartment buildings, behind big concrete walls,” says BMS World Mission worker Mat Gregory. “There’ll be a rumour that someone’s living in that house, but nobody else will help them.” But thanks to your support, BMS is there. Mat, along with fellow BMS workers Annie and Dan Dupree, is serving with BMS in Kafja e Rremes. From physiotherapy and food banks to literacy classes and litter picking, they are serving the poor of Kafja e Rremes from the heart of their ministry in a church and community centre, whose name literally means ‘at the bridge’. And that’s why they’re in Kafja e Rremes: to build bridges between people and break down the walls that divide them.

When BMS physiotherapist Annie first visited Rita, she was shocked at her condition. Not only was she stuck in bed, unable to move, but she had also developed a life-threatening pressure sore. She was left in the care of her family, but her son has learning difficulties and her husband, Jeton*, wasn’t given any advice about her condition or aftercare. They couldn’t get her to the hospital for the physiotherapy.
she needed. They didn’t understand the danger Rita was in or how they could help her.

Annie’s known Jeton for a while through a church group. Through their friendship, Annie discovered Rita needed help, but that doesn’t make asking for it easy. It’s hard, too, to build relationships in a community where people don’t trust their neighbours, let alone outsiders. In a neighbourhood caught up in historic cultural tensions, why would you? But the BMS team working there know that when you’re building bridges, it takes time, energy and love. When people come to them with a problem, they don’t just send them away with a quick answer. “I say to people, ‘How can we work together to help you with this?’” explains Annie. This is the attitude at the heart of BMS’ work in Kafja e Rremes: it’s not about providing a quick fix; it’s about working together to come up with a long-term solution that is a blessing to everyone. It’s the bridges being built between the people of Kafja e Rremes that hold the community together.

You’ll probably never meet the people living in Kafja e Rremes, but your support has changed their lives. In Rita’s case, it’s literally saved her. “If we hadn’t been there, the best outcome would be she’d still be in bed,” says Annie. “The reality is she may have died.” Thanks to you, Annie has been able to visit Rita regularly and provide her with vital physiotherapy. Rita can now get out of bed. She can get dressed on her own. She recently made dinner for herself and her family for the first time in months. That might not look like a miracle, but not all miracles look like incredible feats. Sometimes a miracle looks like a woman with her family, broken but healing, who knows that help is only on the other side of the bridge.

Not all miracles look like incredible feats

It’s this way of thinking that has inspired so many of the projects BMS has set up in Tirana. Like playgroups at the BMS-supported community centre for children as young as three who would have been begging on the streets to help provide for their families. There, they can laugh and play together and just be ordinary children. Like literacy lessons, where parents who have never been to school are being taught to read and write for the first time. They’re seeing the value of education, and why it’s important for them and their children. Like community groups for isolated elderly people, where they can exercise, play games or just talk to each other. They don’t have to be alone anymore. And your support has made all this possible.

Your generous giving is building bridges and transforming lives in Kafja e Rremes. Thank you for remembering those the world has forgotten.

*Names changed.*
A universe captured in a single image. A moment that charms and delights. A new angle to challenge perspectives and prejudices. A showcase of God’s stunning creation. These were the criteria BMS judges used to examine hundreds of photos and find the winners of our 2019 Action Team photo competition. Action Teams are the BMS World Mission gap year for 18 to 23-year-olds. Every year BMS holds a photo competition to showcase the range of beautiful countries BMS works in and to display Action Teams, well, in action! Well done to the Action Teams – it took many hours to pick a top ten. Enjoy pausing over each of these stunning images and reading the stories behind the shots.

2nd place: Kolkata flower market
The colours, the busyness, this photo has it all. You can almost hear the hustle and bustle that this shot so perfectly captures. Well done, Team Kolkata.
Winner: Temple in Jaipur

The striking purple headscarf contrasts with the muted background, framing a Hindu woman going to worship. Taken by Team Delhi, it artistically illustrates the religious context in which they were working with BMS projects in India.

3rd place: Letting go into the New Year

Team Thailand thanked God for their most memorable New Year’s Eve yet whilst letting go of their lantern. The judges loved the sense of movement here, and the contrasting colours.

Runners up

Be still and know that he is God. Team Kosovo took this photo on a boat trip on Lake Skadar. We were moved by this snapshot of tranquility in a part of the world that has seen so much unrest.

Peek a Moo. Capturing a cow chewing in action is an achievement, and the lines of the wall and bridge frame the animal beautifully. It’s a humorous photo, well-executed by the Team Delhi.

In the park. The light in this photo so beautifully highlighted the man tending to God’s creation – a carefully considered shot from Team Delhi.

Forest trees. We loved how the autumn colours contrasted with lines of blue sky. This change of season was taken by Team France, reflecting a season of change in their lives.

Eiffel Tower. It’s Paris, but not as we know it. This was taken by Team France, reflecting our need to view the religious landscape of this European metropolis from a new perspective.

Guinea pig kitchen. The black and orange tones in the forefront of this picture intrigue you, before you realise this is a kitchen. Team Peru captured a great angle on Peruvian cooking.

Children in the church with no roof. This really is a moment in time, captured by Team Peru. Each child’s expression is unique and characterful, whilst their bright clothing stands out.

Head to www.bmsworldmission.org/actionteams to find out more about how you, or the young people in your community, can be part of the Action Teams adventure.
A letter from Mozambique

Anibal Ramos works with BMS partner, the Baptist Convention of Mozambique (CBM) in his native Beira, supported by BMS World Mission. He’s played an important role in the relief efforts in the wake of Cyclone Idai.

Dear friends,

After the cyclone, I went out in the rain to see how people were. There was rubble everywhere. We lost everything – everything we had worked for over whole lifetimes. From one day to the next, it was gone. Our stores and crops were destroyed by the cyclone, so our immediate worry was food. But what’s affecting us most is a lack of hope. Smiles have disappeared, heads are hung low.

Thanks to the aid churches are sending to Beira and Maputo, some feel like they have the strength to start again. At CBM, we have begun to collect and distribute food. Those we can feed are no longer worried. Instead they can focus on gathering the materials they need to rebuild. The problem is that materials are expensive, and most people have lost their jobs because so many businesses were destroyed.

People aren’t sleeping. They want to get back up again. They want to work. I try to speak hope into people’s lives. We can lose material things, but we can’t lose faith in God. He is our refuge. We have so many reasons to praise God. I praised God amidst the destruction, because he had protected us – we thought the cyclone was going to be much bigger than it was.

I ask that you continue to pray for us – don’t forget about us and continue to give what you can. Then, even when the media has forgotten about us, we’ll keep smiling, because you have remembered us.

Thank you.

Anibal Ramos

You gave an incredible £82,000 to help people like Anibal in the wake of Cyclone Idai.

Thank you for giving people in Beira the strength they need to start again.

Give before disasters happen. Support BMS disaster recovery ministries and ensure that help is there when people need it most:

www.bmsworldmission.org/disaster-recovery

This Baptist church in Beira lost its roof. You can give before disasters happen. Support BMS disaster recovery ministries and ensure that help is there when people need it most. Search ‘Disaster recovery’ on the BMS website.
“Humans of South Sudan” – a bit of political correctness?

I associate human with the animal kingdom – another branch of the animal world. What is wrong with “people” of South Sudan? Otherwise, I found the article excellent and motivating. As I did the other features. Thanks.

Bill Dalgleish

Editor’s note: Hi Bill! Thank you so much for your letter. We hadn’t thought of it in that way and you raise a valuable point. The title was aiming to reference the very popular “Humans of New York” online photo series, which seeks to break down barriers and build empathy. We’re sorry if we missed the mark!

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 two!

The man who prayed for a year

Editor’s note: Stuart is a friend of BMS World Mission who worked in Brazil for a long period of time. Conrado wrote this note to him, which Stuart kindly shared with us.

Dear Pastor Stuart,

I wish you grace and peace.

I regularly receive Engage and the BMS prayer guide. In 2018, I prayed nearly every day, as you can see from my notes. Please thank BMS for sending the magazines and let them know that I intercede for BMS and their mission workers’ prayer requests every day.

Best wishes,

Conrado Pfannmüller
São Paulo, Brazil

Long-lost donation

This ‘vintage’ collection box came from the home of a late church member. Opening the flap and squinting to see inside, I was surprised to see that a coin was stuck under the top. The coin proved to be a 1937 penny. I am sending you the penny, with our apologies for our tardiness in sending the donation on to BMS, and, for good measure, I am returning the collection box!

M. E. Blake
Surrey
South Sudan’s conflict survivors are already helping themselves. Stand with them, so they can help others. You can give. You can pray. You can show the South Sudan’s Conflict Survivors DVD you received with Engage in your church.

Let’s not forget our South Sudanese brothers and sisters this year.

www.bmsworldmission.org/survivors