OPERATION: CHAD
Behind the scenes in a desert hospital

PHOTOS FROM THE FRONTLINE
The results of our new competition

A LETTER FROM SRI LANKA
“God is in the midst of the engulfing waters”

CORONAVIRUS
YOU RESPONDED IN:

TUNISIA
INDIA
CHAD
PERU
ALBANIA
BANGLADESH
UGANDA
AFGHANISTAN
NEPAL
MOZAMBIQUE
SRI LANKA
GREECE
LEBANON
TURKEY
Editorial

WHAT TO MAKE OF 2020?
Hannah Watson
August 2020

This year has been like no other. It’s been the year Zoom became a household name. The year we learned how to meet as church, sing hymns, and even attend wedding ceremonies online. The year we clapped for an incredible healthcare service we’ve always reserved the right to grumble about, fight for, passionately support and ardently defend, all in the same breath.

It’s been the year we did amazing things from inside our own homes (read more on page 6!) – the year we mimed hugs to friends through windows and walked past rainbows chalked on the pavements. It’s been the year we prayed for Italy, China, Brazil and the USA – for people in all countries aching for justice and renewal.

... And this year is not over yet. We’ve got months left to make of 2020 what we will, to continue in the same spirit of help and hope that God has sustained in us over the past few months. I pray that as you read Issue 48 of Engage, seeing what you’ve already done in God’s strength continues to spur you on to deeper faith and good works.

As our letter from Sri Lanka on page 18 puts it, “he is with us in the midst of the engulfing waters”. May 2020 be the year that teaches us to pray more fervently, give more sacrificially, wait more patiently, trust more fully and love more generously, seeing that our faithful Heavenly Father has been with us in the storm.

God bless you,

Hannah Watson
Editor

Write to me at magazine@bmsworldmission.org
In this issue

4. News
Finding Christ across Asia

5. Future-focused mission
Dr Kang-San Tan on three new directions towards our Highest Goal

6. The at-home heroes
Staying inside didn’t stop you changing the world

7. Behind the masks and fighting the fear
How you saved lives in the Coronavirus pandemic

13 Photos from the frontline
Our new photo competition

16 Operation: Chad takes you inside the operating theatre

18. A letter from… Sri Lanka
“Fear teaches us a valuable lesson about our own fragility”

18. Letters
How you’ve stayed connected during the pandemic
FROM DEPRESSION TO JOY IN AFGHANISTAN

Everybody believed Hamid’s illness was incurable. You helped prove them wrong.

“Nobody understood me. People were saying that I was ‘crazy’ – ‘a mad guy’. I wanted to kill myself.”

Thirty-one-year-old Hamid* had given up on life. For two years, he struggled with crippling depression. He would go into a room and lock the door to keep his brothers and four children away, or walk out into the desert to be alone. People in his community in the West of Afghanistan had no idea what was wrong with him. Finding no solution in local hospitals, Hamid’s family took him to Iran and Pakistan for treatment. He bought all the medicines he was prescribed and even had invasive operations – spending all of his money and borrowing thousands of dollars from others. Nothing worked.

According to the Afghan Ministry of Public Health, almost half the population of Afghanistan suffer with a mental health disorder. The need is huge, and yet provision for those struggling is scarce. BMS World Mission’s partner is at the forefront of mental health care in the country, and it’s through a BMS-supported community mental health project that Hamid finally found help. “[The volunteer] told me that my problem is not something that doesn’t have a cure – it’s treatable,” says Hamid, who now sits smiling and drinking tea with his brother.

Our partners referred Hamid for counselling and got him onto the right medication. Eight months on, he’s completely changed. “Before this, I thought life was nothing,” he says. “I had no joy. But now I am enjoying every moment of life. I feel happy, because I am sitting with my children. Thank God my life has changed.”

BMS partners are also working to destigmatise mental health issues like Hamid’s, so that communities become part of the solution – supporting those struggling with depression, anxiety, psychosis, and other mental health conditions.

*Name changed
FUTURE-FOCUSED MISSION
Kang-San Tan

2015-2020: A look at the past

In 2019, four years into our five-year strategy, BMS had reached more than 915,000 people with help and hope. This means we anticipate exceeding our target of impacting over one million lives by the end of 2020 – thanks to you.

2020-2025: Three new strategic directions

In 2019, BMS conducted wide-ranging consultations on the future of mission with our international partners, UK churches and supporters. As a result, we set in place an exciting new strategic plan to focus on three directions:

1) Catalysing networks for multi-directional collaboration
2) Capacity building of local communities through shared learning
3) Equipping diverse groups of missional leaders

BMS will continue to work amongst the least evangelised and most marginalised regions of our world. In addition, we will initiate a new thematic focus on “People on the Move” – to engage the Church in serving among migrants.

Our impact will be lives transformed as we continue to work towards our Highest Goal: “To bring people to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and an experience of the abundant life that only he can provide.” Please join us on this exciting venture.

2015-2020: A look at the past

In 2019, four years into our five-year strategy, BMS had reached more than 915,000 people with help and hope. This means we anticipate exceeding our target of impacting over one million lives by the end of 2020 – thanks to you.

2020-2025: Three new strategic directions

In 2019, BMS conducted wide-ranging consultations on the future of mission with our international partners, UK churches and supporters. As a result, we set in place an exciting new strategic plan to focus on three directions:

1) Catalysing networks for multi-directional collaboration
2) Capacity building of local communities through shared learning
3) Equipping diverse groups of missional leaders

BMS will continue to work amongst the least evangelised and most marginalised regions of our world. In addition, we will initiate a new thematic focus on “People on the Move” – to engage the Church in serving among migrants.

Our impact will be lives transformed as we continue to work towards our Highest Goal: “To bring people to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and an experience of the abundant life that only he can provide.” Please join us on this exciting venture.
Thank you

10K champion!

When 15-year-old Ana Sophia heard her parents (BMS workers Daniel and Regiane Clark) discussing news of families in Peru who didn’t have enough food, risking their health to wait for hours at crowded markets, she knew she had to help.

Lockdown restrictions didn’t deter Ana, who trained for a 10K sponsored run in her garage. “We saw Sr. José, a man who comes to our neighbourhood to wash cars, and we could visibly see how much thinner he had become since lockdown began... a further encouragement to carry on with the fundraiser,” says Ana.

And, to her surprise, Ana kept smashing her targets – raising nearly £3,000 at time of writing! Thanks to everyone who gave. You’re an inspiration, Ana!

A wonderful job!

When Job Club turned five, and the volunteers from Basford Road Baptist Church and the Bestwood Partnership couldn’t celebrate with members over a slice of cake, they decided to do something even more special. Job Club is all about helping people overcome challenges to employment, and community-based initiatives like this have never been more important. But despite all that’s going on at home, the incredible Job Club team chose to make a donation to BMS health work overseas, alongside one to our wonderful NHS. The idea was inspired by BMS church rep Michael Abbott. Michael and Job Club – we can’t thank you enough!

Members of the BMS-supported seminary in Lima, Peru, hand out food parcels, made possible by a BMS grant and Ana’s fundraiser.

Taking a stand for Solidarity Sunday

A huge thank you to the incredible churches up and down the country who held online Solidarity Sunday services during UK lockdown. At a time of separation and disconnection, you demonstrated unity and hope, showing that your hearts were turned towards those worst affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. You generously set aside time to offer up prayers, give sacrificially, and to remember your global neighbours. Thank you.
the Covid-19 Coronavirus changed the world. As the life-threatening virus made its way across the globe, we were all forced to limit our movements and our lives to try and stop the spread of this new enemy. And yet, in that time of crisis, when you were facing struggles and sacrifices of your own, you chose to remember the world in prayer and giving. We want to say thank you for that.

BMS World Mission has been at the heart of the global Baptist response to the Coronavirus, playing a key role in co-ordinating a worldwide body of agencies and churches through the Baptist World Alliance Forum for Aid and Development (BFAD). Thanks to long-standing partnerships, when the Coronavirus pandemic began to spread we were able to find out who was in greatest need of help, and we already had networks in place to make sure the right support got to the right people – fast.

Coronavirus didn’t just endanger the physical health of those who contracted it. For some living in more fragile countries and communities, being unable to work due to lockdowns left them at risk of starvation. Others faced huge mental health challenges, spiralling into panic and depression. Then there were the communities without access to soap to help stop the spread, and the BMS-supported hospitals in desperate need of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other supplies in order to continue their life-saving work. There wasn’t a one-size-fits-all solution, which is why our response was multifaceted. We listened to the needs on the ground, and your support enabled us to respond effectively.

Over the next few pages, you can read about some of the ways your giving has changed lives during this pandemic. We have in-depth stories from Mozambique and Afghanistan, and snapshots from our relief efforts across the globe. As you read about some of the heroes you’ve been equipping to make a difference – know that you’re a hero too. Your gifts and prayers have gone where you could not. They’ve spread hope. And they’ve saved lives.

WHAT YOU DID

1,593 people gave to the BMS Coronavirus appeal, raising over £230,000!

Who you helped
So far 28,000 people in 14 countries on 4 continents have been helped thanks to your support of BMS.
For Gloria, the Capaz sewing school was everything. It gave her a way to provide for her five-year-old son who can’t walk. It gave her friends — a family really — who could support her and who she could share fellowship with. It gave her the chance to learn vital skills, the chance to dream of a future, the chance to create things herself, when so few clothes carry the label “Made in Mozambique”. It gave her hope when so much was against her. And then Coronavirus happened. And it took so much away.

Within days of the first cases of Covid-19 being recorded in Mozambique, the entire country went into lockdown. You could be fined if you didn’t wear a face mask. Schools and places of work closed, and with them, the Capaz sewing school. “We didn’t want them to be together. And the whole point is that they’re together,” says Susanna Barrell, who has been serving with BMS World Mission in Mozambique since 2017, and who trains women at the sewing school. The school exists to teach sewing skills to women like Gloria, many from disadvantaged backgrounds, and give them the necessary training to support themselves and their families. But it also exists to create close-knit support groups between the women involved, so that they can empower and encourage one another as they learn. “If I was at home, I would cry every day,” explains Celina, one of the other women in Gloria’s sewing group, describing her experience as part of the sewing school. “But I’ve got a family here, I love my other sisters here.” But with the countrywide lockdown, Gloria and the other women in her sewing group were unable to meet together. Gloria, like so many of us across the world, had to experience the pain of being separated from her friends, her family, and she had no idea when they would be able to sew together again. But then, amazingly, they were given the opportunity to fight back.

“Maputo Central Hospital wanted masks, and they couldn’t source masks in Maputo,” says Susanna. “They asked me, ‘If we get donations of Capulana, could you make them?’” In a country where the healthcare system simply cannot handle a pandemic, hospitals needed masks desperately. The Capaz sewing school was happy to provide. Not only would they be helping to fight the virus that had already taken so much from them, but it was a chance to sew together again, even if they weren’t in the workshop, laughing and helping one another as they sewed. The sewing machines

For Gloria, and for so many women like her, the Capaz sewing school is a necessary lifeline.
Susanna uses her sewing skills to give the women at Capaz the training to support themselves and their families.

from the school were shared out among the women so they could sew masks from their own homes, and with the machines, they carried a small part of the group with them. They were ready to do their part to help, to sew a whopping 30,000 face masks for symptomatic patients to slow the spread of the virus.

So many masks were needed that Susanna wasn’t sure the women would be able to do it in time. If she sewed solidly, one woman could sew maybe 100 masks a day. But that didn’t take into account things like childcare. Gloria had to take care of her disabled son – there was no way she could dedicate all her time to sewing masks. But then something wonderful happened. Other women from different groups involved in the sewing school joined in: women from the local Baptist church, women with tragic backgrounds in prostitution, women from all walks of life coming together to achieve an incredible feat. In the face of a virus that threatened to disrupt and divide, these amazing women were able to stand together to fight back – even if they were apart.

And you, our wonderful BMS supporters, have been part of that fight too. Your generous support for our Coronavirus appeal paid for their labour, meaning that these women have had the means to support themselves through lockdown. Your generosity means that Gloria didn’t have to worry about how she’d feed her son during a global pandemic. And while it hasn’t made everything better – life is still not as it was before lockdown – you’ve given these women something incredibly valuable. You empowered them when it looked like everything important had been taken away. Your support gave them hope that when they are able to come back together, they can come back stronger, knowing just what they are capable of.

CORONAVIRUS HEROES

Gloria and her amazing sewing school family smashed their target of 30,000 masks, sewing an incredible total of 31,550! They could not have done that without your support.

Thank you!
Reducing fear. Stopping panic spirals. And spreading positive messages so effective they’ve been adopted by the Government. Here’s how you’ve enabled heroic Afghan mental health professionals to save lives.

You left your family, your home and your country in search of a safer life in Iran. Now, out of nowhere, a deadly virus has gripped your new hometown, and you find yourself with hundreds of other young men, fleeing back to Afghanistan in fear for your life. You’re shoved in the back of a pick-up truck, pressed together. Breathing each other’s breath. You think by leaving you can escape the virus, but you’re bringing it with you. There’s nowhere left to run.

Earlier this year, thousands of Afghan migrants fled back across the border from Iran, trying to escape an early epicentre of the Covid-19 Coronavirus. Many of them ended up in camps. The overcrowded conditions were the perfect place for the very virus they ran from to spread. And misinformation working its way across social media meant that people diagnosed with Coronavirus believed they’d been given a death sentence. “People killed themselves because they felt so hopeless,” says BMS World Mission doctor Catherine*, who heads up our partner’s mental health work in Afghanistan. “And in a lot of those cases, they were young people, who I’m pretty sure wouldn’t have died.”

Others fled the Covid-19 wards they were held in, terrified. They hadn’t seen a doctor. They hadn’t been fed. They weren’t able to contact their families. So they ran – but they couldn’t escape their panic, or their diagnosis. They spread it further. Even the expert medical workers trying to help weren’t immune to the fast-spread despair. “One of the frontline medics himself tested positive,” says Catherine. “The police came in the middle of the night to take him away, and he...
became suicidal in the unit.”

But, in the midst of all this anxiety, you were there to help. In the first few weeks of the crisis, you provided full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to frontline medical workers, as well as for the mental health team. You also helped train these medics in looking after their patients’ mental wellbeing as well as treating their physical sickness – preventing the panic spiral that caused some people to tragically end their lives.

People on the cusp of suicide were given hope. Like the frontline medic who considered ending his life. “Our counsellor was able to put on PPE and go and talk to him face-to-face for a few hours,” says Catherine. “They talked him down from it really.”

In the UK, medical workers have rightly been praised for their heroism, risking their lives to serve people suffering with this highly infectious virus. But in Afghanistan, some frontline workers have found themselves ostracised by their communities, who are terrified of contracting Coronavirus. You’ve helped psychologists to support these medical workers through telephone counselling, as well as patients and their families, distributing credit so that people are able to phone their hotline for help.

And after realising that doctors were struggling to break the news of a positive Coronavirus diagnosis to patients in a helpful way, the BMS-supported mental health team took over the news-breaking service in the city’s hospitals. They gave patients facts about the recovery rate from Coronavirus, and reminded people of the mental tools they already have to cope with trauma. Because men and women in Afghanistan are much better equipped to cope with stress than many of us in the West – having lived with insecurity and conflict for most of their lives. In the face of this new, invisible enemy, people needed to be reminded of the mental strength they already possessed to get through times of crisis.

That’s why the mental health team also created billboards and printed materials to spread positive messages about how to cope with the stress of Coronavirus, as well as encouraging good hygiene practices. The billboards told people that they should speak to trusted friends and family members about how they were feeling. That feeling sad and scared and angry is normal in times of crisis. That taking time to relax is good for reducing stress. These messages were adopted by the Afghan Government and promoted across the country. They’re helping people realise it’s okay to feel how they feel. And they’re helping to reduce dangerous behaviours that result from panic – like people fleeing Covid wards.

All this has been possible thanks to you. “It’s easy to get sucked into focusing on the UK, but it’s really good to lift your eyes to the world,” says Catherine, who believes the speed at which BMS supporters responded to help those in need was instrumental in making a difference.

“This has really helped our relationship with the Government of Afghanistan who are very, very positive about us. It gives us the power to do even more in the future.”

*Name changed

Thank you for standing with the people of Afghanistan during the Coronavirus pandemic – reminding them of the incredible resilience they already possess, and equipping brilliant mental health specialists to save lives in one of the most fragile places in the world.
5 ways you’ve made a difference
1. Food for the hungry
2. Protective equipment for frontline workers
3. Soap and hygiene items to help stop the spread
4. Medical provision for Coronavirus patients
5. Keeping other life-saving medical work going during the outbreak

Peru, £7,000
You’ve provided hundreds of vulnerable families across Peru with food parcels.

Albania, £9,160
At-risk families received food and basic necessities thanks to your gifts.

CHAD, £30,000
You’ve helped set up a satellite Covid-19 hospital in the north – where medical provision is extremely limited. You’re also enabling the life-saving work of Guinebor II hospital to continue safely. (Read more on page 16!)

Tunisia, £7,000
You gave families in need access to food through parcels and vouchers.

UGANDA, £10,100
You’ve improved food security in the north of Uganda by providing families who exist on subsistence farming with seeds. You’ve also given at-risk families in the west of the country food parcels and soap.

Mozambique, £22,996
You’ve helped BMS’ sewing community make 30,000 face masks for frontline workers. You’re also providing soap and hygiene lessons for low-income families, and giving educational support to 2,900 children.

Sri Lanka, £5,000
You’ve provided food parcels for families who lost livelihoods under lockdown.

Afghanistan, £17,000
You provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to frontline workers at the beginning of the outbreak in Afghanistan, and you’re giving ongoing mental health support to patients, medical workers, and families.

NEPAL, £17,000
You’re supporting the running of hospitals, providing PPE and hygiene supplies, and providing at-risk families with food parcels.

Bangladesh, £13,000
You’ve given 500 vulnerable families food and hygiene supplies.

From the thousands of people you have helped so far... THANK YOU!

If you gave to the BMS World Mission Coronavirus appeal, if your church joined us for Solidarity Sunday, and if you’ve prayed for the world, if you sent an encouraging message or invited one of our workers to join in your church service – you have made a difference. Thank you so much for standing faithfully with people in need in any way you could during this crisis. You’re a hero and we are so very thankful for you!

www.bmsworldmission.org
Photos from the frontline

See mission through their eyes.

FIRST PLACE

Meadow in the Highlands, taken by Nathan*, Afghanistan

This stunning shot was taken of a meadow in a rural district in the heart of Afghanistan. The distinct colours, and the image of a family playing in the stream in the distance shows a drastically different Afghanistan from the one we normally imagine. It challenges us to see the beauty in the most difficult of situations. Congrats to Nathan!

*Name changed
SECOND PLACE

Messing About on the Water, taken by Phil Proctor, Bangladesh

This delightful photo shows some of the older siblings of the preschool children that Phil and his wife, Louise, work with in rural areas of Bangladesh. “It was a big distraction for the lesson!” says Phil. That may be, but also a great opportunity to see what life is like for many children in Bangladesh. Great job Phil!

The Wonderful Wooden Ferris Wheel, taken by Toby Vokuhl, Nepal

Have you ever seen anything like this before?! This wonderful image of children playing on a Ferris Wheel reminded Toby of God because of the joy and delight the children are expressing. “Both are emotions we see in God,” he says. What a wonderful sentiment, and what a wonderful photo to go with it!

Driftwood on the Indian Ocean, taken by Mark Barrell, Mozambique

A stark contrast from the rest of the winners, but the judges felt that the story this photo told was too striking to ignore. The empty beach and the sun-bleached driftwood reminded us of the threat of global warming, and how damaging climate change could be in a vulnerable country like Mozambique. Thank you, Mark, for using your photography to express this story.

What does God’s image look like to you? How do you see the natural world? What part of your work do you want BMS World Mission supporters to really see?

These are the questions we wanted our mission workers to ask when we invited them to take part in our brand new BMS Photo Competition. It’s unlikely that many of us will visit the frontline of mission ourselves. We won’t meet the people our mission workers work with on a daily basis and we won’t see up close the struggles so many people face every day the way our mission workers do. Which is why we wanted to share these photos with you. They’re beautiful and creative, but most importantly, they give a rare insight into the life of a mission worker, and the beauty they see in the incredibly challenging situations they often find themselves in.

Please do enjoy these photos for what they are, but remember the stories behind each one. Remember that your story is connected to them too, and that without your support, none of these pictures would have been taken.

CATEGORY WINNER: Natural World

The Wonderful Wooden Ferris Wheel, taken by Toby Vokuhl, Nepal

Have you ever seen anything like this before?! This wonderful image of children playing on a Ferris Wheel reminded Toby of God because of the joy and delight the children are expressing. “Both are emotions we see in God,” he says. What a wonderful sentiment, and what a wonderful photo to go with it!
1. Tents from the IDP Camp, taken by Nathan, Afghanistan

2. Capulana Girl, taken by Lizzie Barrell, Mozambique

3. Travelling the Wetlands, taken by Louise Proctor, Bangladesh

4. Baby at a Worksite, taken by Nathan, Afghanistan

5. Nepali Man, taken by Andy Saunders, Nepal

6. The Blind Woman, taken by Andy Saunders, Nepal

7. Lightning over Maputo, taken by Lizzie Barrell, Mozambique

8. Digging up the Mountains, taken by Toby Vokuhl, Nepal

RUNNERS UP

1. Tents from the IDP Camp, taken by Nathan, Afghanistan

2. Capulana Girl, taken by Lizzie Barrell, Mozambique

3. Travelling the Wetlands, taken by Louise Proctor, Bangladesh

4. Baby at a Worksite, taken by Nathan, Afghanistan

5. Nepali Man, taken by Andy Saunders, Nepal

6. The Blind Woman, taken by Andy Saunders, Nepal

7. Lightning over Maputo, taken by Lizzie Barrell, Mozambique

8. Digging up the Mountains, taken by Toby Vokuhl, Nepal
Her tiny hand is coming back to life. In the new operating block at Guinebor II (G2) hospital, the entire room is riveted by the sight of the little girl on the operating table, her delicate fingers slowly unfurling as her bandages are unwound. The surgeons’ expressions are inscrutable behind their masks as they assess their work. Then Theo, the hospital’s bright young surgeon-in-training nods. The skin grafts have taken hold.

The little patient is called Fatimé, and she’s three years old. Her hand, once enclosed by gnarled scar tissue, has been opened up, and her fingers are visible for the first time since the terrible day when, as an infant, she’d picked up a burning coal from the dying embers of a fire. The burn had fused her hand into a balled-up fist, an injury she’d carried untreated for years. When the surgical team meet her, she holds her arm as though hoisted in an invisible sling, carried protectively against her belly.

Managing injuries like Fatimé’s that have gone untreated for months or even years is not unusual for the team at Guinebor II, but it does pile on the pressure. Patients who have been moved to seek treatment after hearing about the hospital’s reputation are hopeful for life-changing interventions. Many of them travel for hundreds upon hundreds of miles, make difficult or dangerous journeys from neighbouring Cameroon or Sudan, arrive on the back of motorcycles while very ill or in labour, or work through huge anxieties about moving away from traditional healers to place their trust in the hospital.

Fatimé’s family overcame all this and more when they took a leap of faith to bring her to Guinebor II. Their brave decision will be transformative for their daughter’s future. The team are confident that with physiotherapy, she’ll be able to regain movement in some of her fingers, allowing her to provide for herself with practical work when
she grows up, and — importantly in Chadian culture — greatly increasing her chances of marrying if she wishes to one day. Fatimé will undoubtedly face huge challenges throughout her life, but this surgery represents one more open door, one more chance to flourish.

A wonderful feat has been achieved, but for the surgical team, there’s no patting each other on the back. Another patient is waiting and although it’s past lunchtime, these guys aren’t in the habit of taking leisurely breaks. The staff at the hospital are conscious that it’s G2’s reputation that leads families like Fatimé’s to seek the care they need, and no-one is more aware of the need to pour hard work, excellence and love into every patient experience than Hospital Director, Kalbassou Doubassou.

Kalbassou performs up to six operations a day – as well as leading weekly all-staff meetings, praying by patient bedsides, and making operational decisions (an especially fraught job with the worrying arrival of the Coronavirus in Chad in the spring of this year). Often, he’s woken in the night to perform an emergency C-section, and still manages to be back on his feet for the next morning’s ward rounds. In a country with one doctor for every 25,000 people, taking a holiday isn’t really an option. So, every night, Kalbassou’s exhausted prayer is that God will give him the energy to get up and do it all again, to heal as many patients as the Lord has blessed him with, so that in this hospital, they might meet with the God who gives him strength.

“I’ve seen God really moving, because people come to the hospital really desperate, and they move out of the hospital full of joy,” he says, smiling. “So I’m grateful for God’s work.”

In the week spent filming at G2 hospital for Operation: Chad, BMS’ 2020 Harvest appeal, Kalbassou’s team treated pregnant mothers with HIV, children with cerebral malaria, young men with terrible leg ulcers and a baby with pneumonia. Kalbassou knows full well that none of this would be possible without the support God has blessed him with. And so his message to UK Christians is simple. “You can save a life,” says Kalbassou. “You can bring someone to Jesus: that’s for eternal life. So there is a lot to give.”

“Being the head of the hospital is another miracle, because I didn’t expect it,” says Kalbassou. “But by God’s grace, I am doing the work.”

Fatimé’s father places a loving hand on the bed rail of her trolley as she’s wheeled towards the operating theatre.

This year has reminded us that strong healthcare systems are a blessing we cannot overlook. To support Operation: Chad, our 2020 Harvest video appeal, watch the DVD you received with this issue of Engage and share it with your church family. It costs BMS over £240,000 a year to keep G2 hospital open. Thousands of patients rely on its care. You could provide life-changing medical treatments for patients just like Fatimé. In an age of Coronavirus, please don’t let this hospital close. Head to www.bmsworldmission.org/oc to give today.

The BMS magazine
A letter from Sri Lanka

Roshan Mendis, Head of Asia Pacific Baptist Aid and longtime BMS World Mission partner, has lived through three decades of civil war, and was leading a church service the day of the horrendous Easter bombings in his country. This is what God has taught him about fear, suffering and the role of the Church in crisis.

I recall reading James 1 the morning after our daughter passed away, questioning God, and also realising that God was bringing about something in my own life. Teaching and perfecting me through the grief and sorrow. Isaiah 43: 2 has also been a powerful verse to remind me that God is in the midst of the engulfing waters that he promises to bring us through – not out of. When we are in a trial, it seems like it will never end, but God is a God of all time; he knows exactly how long it will endure and give us the strength we need to get through.

I have learnt that as we accept tough times, God is able to take that very pain and transform it – fulfilling his Word in working out all things (both good and bad) for good as we stay faithful to him.

Food packages delivered by our Sri Lankan partner in response to the Coronavirus lockdown.

LETTERS FROM... THE UK

During lockdown, churches up and down the country took to Zoom and other virtual platforms for their regular Sunday Services, as well as for Solidarity Sundays (read more on page 6). We were so pleased to hear really positive feedback from so many about the ways in which you’ve adapted and thrived despite the huge challenges of moving online. Thank you for staying connected!

Ideal for lockdown

We used some of the [BMS World Mission] material for our service. It was excellent. We will be sharing some of the testimony videos through the week, via Facebook and WhatsApp, to keep ‘the pot boiling’ on donations towards the appeal. I have been impressed with the proactiveness that you have shown, and the quality and variety of videos you have produced. They are ideal for this lockdown period where churches are hungry for material to ‘slot in’ to their services.

Steven, via Facebook

BMS ambassadors

At Orpington Baptist Church we connected with Peter and Louise Lynch in Bangladesh.
GOD CALLS US TO BE THE ANSWER TO OUR OWN PRAYERS

I think it is important that Christians are seen as people of hope and service. The Church must realise that its role is not in the building – in corporate worship, but our worship, our service, is in the public spaces and in the community. The Church must be to their neighbours the hands and feet of God, offering practical help. In addition to prayer, I believe that like Nehemiah experienced, God calls us to be the answer to our own prayers.

In my experience, fear is a normal feeling... the key is how we respond to fear. Fear teaches us a valuable lesson about our own fragility, and the fact that we don’t have the capacity to deal with the challenge before us. Covid-19 is one such example in which we realise our own limitations. This forces us to reach out to some other source for strength. Fear forces us into realising both our interconnectedness, and our dependency beyond ourselves.

Every blessing,
Roshan Mendis

WHAT IF YOU KNEW
HOW TO MAKE THE GOOD YOU DO GO FURTHER?

If you could make a simple choice which would mean more lives were saved and changed all over the world – because of you. What if you could be sure that in uncertain times, you were doing everything in your power as a BMS supporter to bring hope?

When you join our family of 24:7 Partners, you can.

On page 11 of this issue of Engage, BMS worker Catherine* says the speed at which BMS supporters responded to help people at crisis point in Afghanistan was instrumental in making a difference. We were able to take quick, decisive action to back the Coronavirus response there, and all over the world, because a community of BMS supporters give a regular monthly gift.

Our family of 24:7 Partners could do even more with your help. Could you join us?

When you make the incredible promise to give regularly, you keep funds topped up so that when the unexpected happens, we’re not caught out. So that when a global pandemic strikes, you’re right there with us, saving lives from day one. And so that in the everyday mission work of building resilience, opportunity and gospel hope that you enable all over the world, we can make plans for tomorrow, and for the next day, and for years to come.

Today, you could decide to make the good go further. Don’t miss this chance to do something amazing, and become a 24:7 Partner.

*Names changed

in our online service this morning. Apart from problems with Zoom it worked wonderfully well. What a joy they are and great ambassadors for BMS World Mission.

Martyn, via Facebook

Great message

Fabulous resources for Solidarity Sunday... We had a dedicated online service yesterday... loved it!! Great message on 1 Thessalonians too. Thank you so much.

Kath, via Facebook

Pass it on

Thank you Hannah for such a beautifully written and illustrated magazine. Inspiring stories. Could I have a few more copies to pass on?

Dorothy Watkins
Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit

Service User Number

4 1 0 1 2 5

To the Manager: Bank/Building Society

Branch Address:

Postcode:

Name(s) of account holder(s):

Bank/building society account number:

Branch sort code:

Reference (to be inserted by BMS):

Instruction to your bank or building society

Please pay BMS World Mission Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguard assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with BMS World Mission and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature(s):

Date:

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

Please detach this form and return using the Freepost envelope provided, or send it to
BMS World Mission, PO Box 49, Didcot, OX11 8XA
Yes! I would like to make the good go further as a 24:7 Partner with a monthly gift of £

Please complete both sides of this form and return in the Freepost envelope provided. To sign up online, go to www.bmsworldmission.org/partners

Title and name: 

Address: 

Postcode:

Please complete if you’re happy to receive news and updates by phone or email.

Telephone:

Email:

Our family of 24:7 Partners is really important to BMS, and we’ll send you communications by post unless you ask us not to. You can change your communication preferences at any time by emailing supporterservices@bmsworldmission.org or by phone on 01235 517638. If you are already receiving updates from us then we will continue to communicate with you in the ways you’ve asked us to.

Gift Aid it Make your support worth even more!

I want to Gift Aid my donations to BMS World Mission from the date of this declaration.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in that year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I will contact BMS to cancel this declaration if my financial circumstances change in the future.

Please let us know if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or address, or no longer pay sufficient income and/or Capital Gains Tax. Your home address is needed to identify you as a UK taxpayer.

Date
2020 has not been an easy year, but through it all, YOU have done amazing things.

To show our appreciation for your incredible sacrifices, generosity, acts of kindness and love, we asked BMS staff to send in hearts of all kinds, shapes and sizes. Every photo in this collage has a team behind it saying, 'thank you – we think you’re amazing!' And we do!