ONE MILLION LIVES, AND WHERE WE GO NEXT
A dive into our plans for the next five years

THE DISEASE THE WORLD FORGOT
Fighting leishmaniasis in Chad

GOSPEL FRUIT
Stories of Christ’s name proclaimed across Peru, Uganda and Asia
Editorial

WHAT KIND OF FUTURE DO WE LONG TO SEE?
Hannah Watson
April 2021

With vaccine rollouts making steady progress in the UK and spring finally here, 2021 has had quite a promising beginning. And no doubt you’ve been mulling over what the months ahead might hold as we slowly move out of the current lockdown. When it comes to the future, I’ve often heard people saying they hope that the pandemic will leave us more appreciative of what we already have. Others have said that, now the pandemic has shone a light on many lingering inequalities in our own society, they hope we can take up with renewed vigour the hard work of tackling them together. No matter how you are feeling, I hope you can find stories in Issue 50 that encourage you.

Because at BMS World Mission, we are so grateful and thankful for the innumerable blessings God has shown us, and that has been the theme of lots of prayers in the year so far at the BMS office. For many of our brothers and sisters across the world, this difficult time has also been a wonderful opportunity to draw others to Christ – and you can read joyful stories of that on pages 16-18 in the magazine. But we also know that we live in a broken world – one where we see inequality and wrongdoing wherever we look. As Christians, we want to help our neighbours who are suffering, whether that looks like calling for vaccines to be shared more fairly across the world (page 4), fighting disease in Chad (page 13) or standing up for the legal rights of our Ugandan neighbours (page 10). As for a future that will be better? It’s so reassuring to know that achieving that future isn’t ultimately all down to us. We have a God who says in Revelation, “I am making everything new!” I hope that promise encourages you as you read on, and as you consider the rest of the year that lies ahead.

God bless you,
Hannah
Editor

Write to me at magazine@bmsworldmission.org

www.bmsworldmission.org
FIGHTING FOR A FAIRER FUTURE

BMS World Mission petitions the UK Government on equal access to the Covid-19 vaccine.

You stepped in and helped when the pandemic threw the world into chaos. And when the opportunity came to rebuild a fairer future, you rallied together to make your voices heard too.

A global pandemic requires a global response – that’s been BMS’ position since the start of the Covid-19 crisis. So, when the 241 member bodies of the Baptist World Alliance shared that they’d be calling on world leaders to make equal access to the Covid-19 vaccine a priority, we wanted to do all we could to ensure that we distribute vaccines at cost around the world [and] make sure everybody gets the vaccines that they need.

As the campaign moved forward, encouraging news hit the headlines. The first deliveries of COVAX vaccines arrived in Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire, with many more countries to follow.

BMS World Mission also joined the People’s Vaccine Alliance, a growing movement of health and humanitarian organisations urging that when safe and effective vaccines are developed, they are made available for all people, free of charge. At the time of delivery, the Campaign for a Covid-free world had amassed thousands of signatures. It was sent to Downing Street with prayerful confidence – that this contribution can and will have a positive impact on Government decision-making.

Covid-19 campaign timeline

31 JAN 2020
Call for prayers on social media.

20 MAR 2020
The BMS Coronavirus Appeal launched.

15 JUN 2020
£200,000 raised for Covid-19 relief work.

12 FEB 2021
Over £300,000 raised and more than 37,600 people in 24 countries reached with vital support.

7 APR 2021
Thousands signed a petition calling for action, delivered to the UK Government.

LOVE-LY NEWS FROM WANG DAENG

Baptisms and a Valentine’s Day outreach have been a cause for joy in the Thai village of Wang Daeng. Around 70 people gathered in BMS World Mission workers Helen and Wit’s driveway for an evening of chicken noodles, music, dancing and gifts. “A local pastor gave a short gospel presentation about the amazing love of God in sending Jesus,” explains Wit. He and Helen now plan to follow up with a number of people who raised their hands after praying a prayer of repentance to God for the first time. But there was more good news to come – a week later the village also celebrated five baptisms of people who came to faith during lockdown!

UK CHRISTIANS PROVIDE CRUCIAL HEALTHCARE IN YEMEN

You’ve helped keep healthcare clinics running during the Covid-19 pandemic and a humanitarian crisis.

Yemen has been in a state of crisis since its civil war began in 2014, and the situation has grown even more precarious with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. But thanks to the generosity of BMS World Mission supporters, we’ve been able to support vulnerable health clinics in this fragile nation. You’ve helped provide crucial PPE to healthcare professionals and enabled medical workers to give people the healthcare they desperately need. Thank you for doing something truly incredible!

From the General Director

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM 2020

Kang-San Tan

As I reflect on what BMS World Mission has learned from 2020, I’m struck that the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed many underlying health and socio-economic disparities all around the world. In particular, poorer communities in densely populated areas, the homeless and refugees are finding that already desperate situations have become even more challenging.

Despite such hardships, our global partners have humbled us through their costly discipleship, undivided faith and sacrificial mission. Just as the terrible Antonine Plague during the 2nd century led to the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire, Christians in Nepal, Lebanon, and Albania are finding new ways of doing Kingdom work that are effective, appropriate and sustainable. These local Christians “shine like stars in the sky” and “hold firmly to the word of life” (Phil 2: 15-16) as they value community over personal freedom, embody faith in sufferings and become beacons of hope amid large-scale uncertainties.

Though the pandemic continues to spread, BMS looks to God to work mightily through these wonderful local partners to create self-sustaining, self-replicating and self-led mission movements. We look forward to new opportunities for mutual learning, evangelism, and collaboration, because we believe that mission post-Covid is a calling for the whole body of Christ.
One Million Lives

TRANSFORMED

In Issue 49 of Engage, we told you ‘You did it!’ You transformed one million lives. Now we want to tell you how.

The numbers are in. Over the last five years, your support of BMS World Mission has transformed 1,300,538 people’s lives. You hit, or exceeded, every single ambitious, God-inspired target we set in our ‘One Million Lives’ strategy back in 2016, with the exception of our target for justice ministries (which we explain more about on page 10 of this issue).

We promised you a breakdown of how you brought hope, help, healing and transformation to more than one million people across the globe. And here it is! On these pages you’ll find snapshots of the huge impact you’ve had across BMS’ seven key ministries from 2016 to 2020.

Once you’ve been inspired by the amazing things you made possible over the last five years, turn the page to see where we believe God is calling us to serve together next!

● CHURCH
You shared the gospel with more than 500,000 people – taking the good news to unreached communities in Bangladesh, to professionals in hyper-secular France, to the Karen people in rural Thailand, and to people in Cambodia, India, Israel-Palestine and more...

Key fact: you helped the BMS team in India plant over 10,000 new house churches!

● EDUCATION
You opened up a world of new possibilities for over 52,000 children by providing them with education. You helped refugee children who fled violence in Syria and Iraq get back into the classroom, and gave disadvantaged children in Mozambique and Bangladesh the chance to go to school.

Key fact: a teacher training document written by BMS worker Annie Tanner has been adopted by the Nepali Government, ready to be used to train teachers across the country.

● DEVELOPMENT
Clean water, skills to grow food, hygienic toilets, training for entrepreneurs, chicken rearing, micro-loans, solar-powered solutions...

These are just some of the ways you helped 152,735 people build more sustainable futures.

Key fact: Fereshta* and her entire community in Afghanistan’s mountains now have clean water flowing in their village. “Quite a few children died from getting sick and weak from diarrhoea,” Fereshta reflects. “We’re not getting sick anymore.”

● JUSTICE
Your support of BMS justice ministries helped more than 92,000 people. Women in Thailand broke free from sexual exploitation and learned new skills to support themselves. Schools in Uganda were equipped to protect their students from abuse. And imprisoned teenagers in Mozambique received legal support.

Key fact: Covid-19 made providing legal advice in Uganda a huge challenge – but BMS-supported paralegals still made an amazing impact. Find out more on page 10.

● LEADERSHIP
You’ve equipped Muslim background believers for fruitful ministries in the Middle East, provided education for leading theological thinkers from across Europe, and supported the training and empowering of pastors in Peru, Nepal, Bangladesh, India and beyond. In total, you’ve supported more than 87,000 leaders.

You did this: “I was handed the keys to an empty church, and then – nothing, I had no preparation.” Humberto accidentally found himself the pastor of a church in the Peruvian Amazon – with absolutely no training or support. You enabled him to attend a BMS-supported training course for river pastors that transformed his ministry and equipped him to lead his small church with confidence and wisdom.

● HEALTH
You trebled our goal for the number of people we wanted to reach with life-transforming healthcare. Over 307,000 people were helped by the BMS health workers you support! You fought child malnutrition, removed bullets, delivered babies, treated cancer, provided desperately needed mental health support, and so much more.

Key fact: you enabled the medical team at Guinebor II hospital in Chad to perform 6,115 operations over the last five years.

● RELIEF
You jumped in and provided vital relief to more than 104,000 people through your support of BMS. In the rubble of the Beirut explosion, in the rising waters that swept away homes in Bangladesh, and in the fear and fighting that forced people living in conflict zones to flee their homes – you sacrificially stepped in, providing food, shelter, pastoral support, and help to rebuild.

Key fact: you provided relief and support for over 37,600 people in 24 countries during the Covid-19 pandemic.

TOTAL: 1,300,538 people’s lives transformed

Please note, although we’ve done our own tallying as our partner reports have come in, until our auditors have processed all the reports, these figures do remain provisional.

www.bmsworldmission.org

*Name changed to protect identity
BMS believes that every person should have the opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus Christ, and that no-one should be forced to live in poverty. That means we will continue striving to serve the world’s most marginalised and least evangelised people. We’re still committed to working with people from fragile states such as Afghanistan, Chad and Syria, too – but our focus will shift to also now working with people on the move. As poverty, religious persecution, environmental changes and conflict force people to flee their home countries, we will come alongside families and communities where they are on their journeys.

The way we reach out to the people we’re called to serve may look a little different too, as BMS people we’re called to serve may look a little different too, as BMS people we’re called to serve. Wherever they are on their journeys, that’s leading BMS World Mission in the years ahead. It’s a privilege to unite with our global brothers and sisters, living in the UK and around the world, to work with our local partners and trusted partner organisations and come alongside local Christians in their work of discipleship, evangelism and mercy ministries remains a key part of BMS’ strategy and identity.

Our strategy for 2021 and the years ahead. It’s a privilege to unite with our global brothers and sisters, living in the UK and around the world, to work with our local partners and trusted partner organisations and come alongside local Christians in their work of discipleship, evangelism and mercy ministries remains a key part of BMS’ strategy and identity.

That means we will continue striving to serve the world’s most marginalised and least evangelised people. We will encourage indigenous expressions of mission, resourcing and supporting ministries that are headed up by local leaders, and that are alleviating poverty and sharing the gospel with communities in need.

With your support, we will also continue sending mission workers from the UK to where they are needed. Their vital work building capacity, providing support to our trusted partner organisations and coming alongside local Christians in their work of discipleship, evangelism and mercy ministries remains a key part of BMS’ strategy and identity. Our strategy for 2021 and the coming years will build upon the amazing work you’ve been a part of up until now. It’s not a reset. It’s growth. We are learning from the lessons our global colleagues and partners have taught us over the last two centuries, and particularly in the last few decades, to make larger steps towards sustainable transformation for the world’s most marginalised and least evangelised people, and for those forced to be on the move.

We’re excited about where God is leading BMS World Mission in the years ahead. It’s a privilege to unite with our global brothers and sisters, living in the UK and around the world, to work with our local partners and trusted partner organisations and come alongside local Christians in their work of discipleship, evangelism and mercy ministries remains a key part of BMS’ strategy and identity. Our strategy for 2021 and the coming years will build upon the amazing work you’ve been a part of up until now. It’s not a reset. It’s growth. We are learning from the lessons our global colleagues and partners have taught us over the last two centuries, and particularly in the last few decades, to make larger steps towards sustainable transformation for the world’s most marginalised and least evangelised people, and for those forced to be on the move.

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What’s next?

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The most marginalised

The least evangelised

People on the move

Covid-19 influenced this craft sale in more ways than one!

Undeterred by lockdown

With lockdown forcing many of us to rethink how we do things, it’s a good job that Doreen and fellow church members at Upminster Baptist Church are a creative lot! "We were moved by the video about the BMS World Mission hospital in Chad," explains Doreen, "so decided to put on a craft sale with proceeds going to that appeal." However, Tier 2 restrictions meant plans had to be adapted. “Then, a tour of crafts, and orders were taken online or over the phone. The fair raised £673.30 to support the life-saving work of medical staff at Guinebor II hospital in Chad. Proof that perseverance really does pay off!

Every penny counts

Determined not to let a little thing like not having a BMS Birthday Scheme Secretary stand in his way, 85-year-old Stan put aside loose change from every shopping trip for a year. On his birthday, he topped up the amount and sent it to BMS to be used for medical and health work across the world.

And, when combined with Stan’s prayers each time he put change to one side, his gift is life-changing! Thank you so much for inspiring us, Stan!

On your bike

Having lived and worked overseas as part of an Action Team, Dan recently completed a 100-mile bike ride to raise money for BMS’ work around the world. “I chose Operation Chad, because I appreciate our NHS so much,” says Dan, “and this hospital is doing the same for people in Chad.”

It was Dan’s grandad who gave him the idea. “We would get on our bikes to go to the chippy which was only two minutes down the road,” explains Dan, “and would end up doing a 25-mile ride!” Including rests, Dan’s cycle took around 12 hours to complete and raised an amazing £1,425. Let’s hope there were chips at the end! Find out more about BMS gap year placements by searching for ‘Action Teams’ on the BMS website.

Thank you
You may have noticed...

...that our final figures for our justice ministries on page 6-7 fell a little short. In this article, we wanted to explore the reasons why.

This account from Uganda is a snapshot of the challenges that Covid-19 has posed to legal systems everywhere, as huge backlogs of cases have been reported around the world. It also explores the reasons why we think our partners in the world think our partners in the world.

In one of Anania’s cases, a wealthy landowner paid off corrupt police officers to arrest his brother. Luckily, Anania was alerted about the man’s situation, and that he’d been unlawfully detained for three weeks. Anania asked John, UCLF’s CEO, to write a letter to the police station demanding that he have a fair trial. The man has since been released.

You look smart!” John Osapiri, CEO of UCLF tells me as we make our introductions over Zoom. “Thank you!” I respond. “I thought I’d wear a jacket, knowing I was going to be talking to lawyers and paralegals today,” It’s minute five of my online meeting with the team from this BMS World Mission partner and onscreen I look visibly chuffed that my efforts to scrub up have been noticed. “In Uganda, we are told that Friday is the day to dress down Friday. Great, I think. Dress down Friday is one way to work even more challenging. The Ugandan paralegals have to work even more challenging.

The paralegals at the Uganda Christian Lawyers Fraternity (UCLF) have been living out their motto, even in a global pandemic. Words: Hannah Watson • Illustration: Joshua Mutton

BMS. I should have guessed! Even getting the dress code wrong couldn’t put a dampener on today’s chat though. I’m here to speak to the team about how they’ve found ways to keep standing up for justice, even as Covid-19 crept its way across the globe. As someone who loves courtroom dramas and who secretly hopes to be called up for jury duty, my respect for the team is already sky-high. But as we wait for John’s colleagues, Duncan and Anania, John fills me in on how Covid safety regulations have made their work even more challenging.

UCLF was founded on the vision that justice is for all – like Stephen*, or any of the 146 others who gave their lives to Christ through the work of the paralegal team, Duncan is keen to set the scene, so I understand what conditions are like for people when they’re detained. Duncan works at a city-centre police station in Kampala, and as in any judicial system, including the UK’s, it can be subject to overcrowding. Its holding area, in the basement, was designed to accommodate around 40 to 50 suspects, but as we speak, Duncan tells me there are about 200 people held there. Within the main chamber, there are side rooms where notorious or dangerous offenders are held, or perhaps suspects who are awaiting trial, arguably some of those most easily forgotten during a global pandemic. The paralegal services (headed up by Anania and assisted by Duncan) are one strand to the work, reaching out to police stations and courts to ensure that everyone understands the legal processes, but more fundamentally, so that suspects understand they have rights, beginning from the day of their arrest. The amazing fruit that Duncan and Anania have seen this year is made more exciting because during the pandemic, the paralegals haven’t had access to prisons. The Ugandan Government has understandably been cautious about the virus spreading inside: “One lawyer is not working,” Duncan tells me there are about 200 people held there. Within the main chamber, there are side rooms where notorious or dangerous offenders are held, or perhaps suspects who are awaiting trial, arguably some of those most easily forgotten during a global pandemic. The paralegal services (headed up by Anania and assisted by Duncan) are one strand to the work, reaching out to police stations and courts to ensure that everyone understands the legal processes, but more fundamentally, so that suspects understand they have rights, beginning from the day of their arrest. The amazing fruit that Duncan and Anania have seen this year is made more exciting because during the pandemic, the paralegals haven’t had access to prisons. The Ugandan Government has understandably been cautious about the virus spreading inside: “One lawyer is not working,” Duncan tells me. “So you work to the best of your ability to make sure that your client won’t leave that way, Duncan tells me. “So you work to the best of your ability to make sure that your client

Covid-positive. Your client likely came from outposts around the country, held in a cell made from iron sheets. Then, they might be in the station for five days, unable to sleep and just standing or squatting. If you went in healthy, chances are you won’t leave that way. Dayan tells me. “So you work to the best of your ability to make sure that your client

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Justice

When Anania and Duncan began doing prison visits, some police officers thought they might be spies. It was only when they began offering workshops for members of law enforcement that the officers saw their incredible offers of help were genuine. The workshops cover some of the differences in handling criminal and civil matters. Learning to solve many problems outside of court has been revolutionary, leading innocent people to be released.

Duncan is now ready to tell me about Stephen, one of his clients at the station. “It takes God to give you grace when you interact with people,” he begins. “Some can abuse you, or use each and every kind of language…!” But it was the realisation that most of the suspects had committed crimes that they had not intended to commit that prompted Anania and Duncan to start telling them about Jesus and why he loves them. Most people want to argue that they’re being held on false allegations, and Duncan obliges them, if it means the person slows down and starts listening to him. But then, he’ll face up to their situation, and asks them whether they truly confess Christ.” As Duncan remembers it, they didn’t even make it to his office, but Stephen prayed to become a Christian right there in the stairwell. Some ex-suspects and former prisoners now even attend Duncan’s church.

The work is exhausting, with each paralegal attending to about 150 cases. And it’s undoubtedly become more challenging during the pandemic. “We want to thank God for BMS World Mission,” says John, “because this programme is very necessary right now, as we are speaking. There are many human rights abuses, and people are being arrested on a daily basis, and so there is a need for the paralegals to be there to provide support to the prisoners. But also, we have been taking this opportunity to share Christ, and so many people have been saved.” For Duncan, it’s the words of Jesus in Matthew 25 that keep him going: “I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

“The work is revolutionary, leading innocent people to be released.”

**WE HAVE BEEN TAKING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE CHRIST**

Duncan tells them, “But you can’t do it in your own strength. You need the grace of God.” Duncan knows that many people accept Jesus’ forgiveness in the cells, but few reject his message and then return once they’re free. Stephen was one of the few.

“He was out, and happy,” says Duncan, “but then he phoned me and said I promised you [I’d come back]. I need to confess Christ.” As Duncan remembers it, they didn’t even make it to his office, but Stephen prayed to become a Christian right there in the stairwell. Some ex-suspects and former prisoners now even attend Duncan’s church.

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“Name changed”

**Orphan disease** /ˈɔːf(ə)n /dɪˈziːz/

1. A disease whose treatment or prevention has seen little investment by pharmaceutical companies, because any financial incentives for manufacturing new medications to treat or prevent it are small.

2. Orphan diseases may also include neglected tropical diseases, defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a group of diseases concentrated almost exclusively in poor populations in the Global South. Among these diseases, which affect more than one billion people, are dengue fever, leprosy, onchocerciasis (river blindness) and leishmaniasis.

If you haven’t heard of leishmaniasis before, don’t worry, you’re not alone. Think of malaria, and you’re getting close, except that this microscopic parasitic disease is restricted to a much narrower geographical region, populated by the particular species of sandfly that transmits it. “In world-terms, it’s not an important disease,” says Mark Hotchklin, who, alongside his wife Andrea, has served as a surgeon in Chad for the past ten years. “Visceral leishmaniasis kills something like 20,000 people in the world every year, whereas malaria will see something like 10,000 deaths of children in Chad alone.” And while the problem is of a totally different order in terms of numbers, when you live in an area that is affected by leishmaniasis – and patients start showing up to the hospital with worrying symptoms – it becomes less about the global statistics, and entirely about what you can do to help this person. “Really, you could argue that in terms of numbers, you should focus on malaria and forget about leishmaniasis,” adds Andrea. “But, I suppose, we’ve been in the right place at the right time.” Mark vividly remembers the day he was called to see his first leishmaniasis patient. It was 18 March 2018, and a child with a high fever had been brought to the hospital. It was an unusual case that left the staff team puzzled, but Mark was reminded of the leishmaniasis patients he’d only ever come across three or four times while working in the Chadian capital of N’Djamena. The little 12-year-old boy who had been brought to Mark was already extremely ill, and while Mark was confident of his diagnosis, he didn’t have access to any of the tests or medications he needed to treat the child.
The difficult truth

Because leishmaniasis has been categorised as an ‘orphan illness’ – restricted to the poorest parts of the world and not financially lucrative to create up-to-date medications for, you might be led to think its prognosis isn’t serious. And while eight in ten people will be naturally inoculated against the disease, visceral leishmaniasis (one form the disease can take) attacks the internal organs of the 20 per cent who aren’t. Those who do go on to show symptoms will start to experience a feverish child. “The trouble is that these tests will give you a positive reading, even if you’re one of the eight in ten who is immune to leishmaniasis,” says Andrea. A positive reading means the team have to think hard about whether to start someone on the treatment plan of daily injections, which can span from 17 days all the way up to 30. This is because the treatment plan has lots of negative side-effects, partly due to leishmaniasis’ status as an orphan disease. Little research has gone into creating newer, more effective drugs, and with Andrea’s rough estimate that around five per cent of those who go on the treatment plan could die from those side-effects, you start to appreciate the enormity of the decision Andrea and Mark have to make.

To make that crucial decision, they’ve developed a rigorous protocol to follow with each patient. They begin by taking on board what the patient says, ascertaining whether they’ve had a fever and how long it’s gone on for. Then, they’ll admit them to the hospital and monitor them, using a test to rule out malaria and treating them with antibiotics. Without any improvement from that, they’ll do the test for leishmaniasis and start them on the medication. Wonderfully, because the Ministry of Health has been involved since the beginning, the expensive treatment course is free for patients. A cohort of doctors has also been sent to examine Mark and Andrea’s work and suggest how it could be replicated across the country. “They were really impressed,” explains Andrea. The WHO has come on board too, and samples of the Leishmaniasis strain have been sent to Cameroon for testing, so the most effective medication might be found. When the treatment plan is rolled out, affected areas of Chad will have the possibility of treating people with leishmaniasis for free, including, hopefully, at the BMS-supported Guinebor II hospital in N’Djamena. Andrea and Mark estimate that without the treatment hub they’ve created at the hospital, most patients they see would end up seeking help in Libya. “Lots of things have fallen into place that have allowed us to do more than we would have ever imagined we could do,” says Andrea. Another positive consequence of the programme has been a huge increase in confidence in the hospital, with the wards filling up and patients staying for the whole course of their treatment, something that wasn’t a given previously. Two things are undeniable: Andrea and Mark are quite clear that this astounding achievement would not have been possible without God’s provision and without your support. “It is such a joy to see a child who has come in so sick go home laughing and running around,” reflect Andrea and Mark. “Thank you for enabling this to happen.”
God has used your prayers to do incredible things. Last December, you prayed in faith for the Christmas outreach work being done by BMS World Mission partners in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India and Thailand. You prayed for safety for our workers, that the Holy Spirit would give them the right words to share the gospel message, and most importantly, you prayed that hearts would be open to receive Jesus. Read on below to see the fruits of all God has achieved...

**Heaven rejoices**

**Cambodia**

The hostel Rev Jaldhua works at in Cambodia isn’t just student accommodation – it’s a lifeline. “100 per cent of our students could not be supported by their families,” says Rev Jaldhua. The affordable accommodation at the Horaios hostel in Phnom Penh gives young people from rural villages a chance to move into the city and access higher education they wouldn’t be able to otherwise. Not only that, but the hostel has strong Christian foundations and a number of students have become Christians during their time there. This work was already changing lives, but Rev Jaldhua knew God was calling him to keep sharing the gospel message in Cambodia.

That’s why he and his team planned their Christmas outreach programme. Thanks to their warm friendships with current and former students from the hostel, the team decided to visit them and their families. For the students who had become Christians but weren’t from Christian families, this ministry was especially important. “When students are going to get baptised, they will ask their parents. If they don’t allow it, they will not get baptised,” says Rev Jaldhua. This wasn’t just about sharing the good news: it was also about their faith being accepted by their families.

Staying with different families in different villages, they shared worship and food together. Rev Jaldhua brought gifts of rice, cooking oil and sugar to share with the families. And it was clear that God was opening doors.

One such door was at the home of Chanvatey*. While his daughter, Sokna, had become a Christian during her time at the hostel, her father hadn’t yet accepted the gospel. But after the Christmas outreach, after opening his home to Rev Jaldhua, Chanvatey’s heart also began to open to the joyful message he was hearing. “He said ‘Jesus is very good,’” says Rev Jaldhua. While he might still be seeking, Chanvatey is curious about Christ and the transformative love he makes possible. He’s recently been back to the hostel to visit his daughter and hear more about Jesus. Rev Jaldhua has promised to visit him again, and keep sharing the gospel.

We know heaven is rejoicing over this news. Chanvatey’s on the cusp of understanding why his daughter and her husband faithfully attended the church in their village. However, the unimaginable happened again last year with the diagnosis of a devastating brain tumour. Leena would have to undergo a risky operation, and there was a high chance she wouldn’t survive. But she and her husband put their faith and trust in the Lord. They went forward for prayer at a Christmas outreach event, knowing that God had his hands on them whatever the outcome. Leena recently went through her surgery and, incredibly, has been completely healed. And that’s not all the good news – since Leena’s healing and the Christmas outreach events, her whole family have accepted Jesus!

*Names changed.

**On the wheels of prayer**

**India**

Despite the threat of persecution, BMS World Mission worker Ben Francis and his team often face, nothing will stop them from going to villages across India, helping those in need and sharing the love of Jesus. But no matter how far Ben goes, the prayers of BMS supporters always help him go further.

“Last year was a very hopeful year,” says Ben. “So the Christmas story became the story of hope for mankind.” Despite a difficult year for India with the Covid-19 pandemic, cases had been dropping over the Christmas period, allowing for more people to gather together. Ben and his team were able to reach villages across India, helping those in need and sharing the love of Jesus – his mission was to bring hope. Despite the threat of persecution, Ben and the Christmas outreach events, the good news – since Leena’s healing has opened the door, through the helping of people in need.

*Names changed.
Dear friends,

One of the biggest problems we’ve faced this year has been Covid-19 (and it’s a struggle that hasn’t gone away). Our goal was to focus on “My Great Commission”, even in the circumstances of not being able to carry out activities as normal. We learned that God does his work of redeeming and growing us over and above all difficulties and adversity.

The internet (even with its limitations) has helped us to continue with ministry work, and we can also reach homes we’ve never reached before. Sharing God’s Word has become more accessible for lots of people, since problems like travelling long distances are overcome, and people can also manage the schedules of coming to Bible studies more easily. In the midst of difficulties, we had new converts. There are eight people who came to faith, of which five have been baptised!

One of our stories that has had a great impact is the testimony of Edwin Tapia. For the last four years or so, his son João has been a student at [the school I help to run], Los Patriotas, and we were always praying for the salvation of João’s family. Eventually his mother, Marthita, and his sister, Briseth, attended our church because they were sympathetic towards the faith, but then in July, João’s father, Edwin, became very seriously ill with Covid-19. His condition was very serious, and he was about to pass away. The church prayed non-stop for Edwin’s health and salvation. There were many nights where we shared the Word of God and the plan of salvation, in fear that he may soon pass away. The fight was very hard, the prayers were constant, and praise God, Edwin recovered his health: but above all, the greatest blessing is that João’s whole family became Christians!

Please do pray for a number of married couples in our church, for the consolidation of our leadership team, and for the youth and children’s ministries in Cusco and Pisac.

Thank you,
Pastor Amilcar

Pastor Amilcar worked as an architect before taking up his ministry at El Puente Church.

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A letter from Peru

Pastor Amilcar reflects on the challenges and joys of this past year ministering at ‘El Puente’, a church BMS World Mission has supported from its inception in 2009 until the end of 2020. Wonderfully, the church is now financially self-sufficient, with a strong and growing congregation of local believers in the Peruvian city of Cusco and a neighbouring town, Pisac.

A positive contrast

Dear Hannah,

I want to thank you for Issue 49 of Engage. At a time of difficult and depressing news from across the world, the smiling faces captured in this BMS magazine, along with the uplifting stories of lives changed and people supported is what I personally needed. It was exciting to read of how money is channelled into growing the kingdom through love. As a retired minister who promoted the work of BMS, it’s good to receive encouragement in such a positive way. It stands in such contrast to mainline media. Many thanks.

Rev Jim Simpson

A holistic approach

Dear Hannah,

I just wanted to write to you to say how much I appreciate the work you’ve done with this well engaged magazine…. It is fantastic to see how BMS World Mission is putting into practice a truly holistic approach to mission. The magazine is well presented, very informative, inspiring and educational. It is really a great tool for BMS. Please be encouraged.

Paul Davies
Bourne Baptist Church

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!
Whether you feel a clear call to serve overseas, or are just beginning to discern how God might use your skills, our Explore Days are for you.

Coming along to an Explore Day is the best way to see how BMS World Mission can equip you in your passion to serve overseas. To find out more, search ‘Explore Days’ on the BMS website.