

International Gathering

Philippines, 9-16 July 2008

In 2008 the BMi International Gathering will be held in the Philippines — Pastor Joe Chavez's home territory.

Pastor Joe is looking forward to hosting this time and we are all expecting the Lord to lead us in fruitfulness, relationship and vision for the future of BMi in the nations of the earth.

For our international brethren (Bishop Julius Macheusi from East Africa and Pastor Samuel Babu from India) it will be the first time they have travelled to the Philippines and this is a wonderful opportunity and blessing to them as well as to the people of the Philippines. Last year Pastor Joe Chavez and Pastor Wycliffe Simiyu (from East Africa) were able to visit India for the first time and it was quite an eye-opening experience for them.

These International Gatherings are proving to be vital in building the identity of BMi in the various nations and, of course, are times of encouragement and ministry for the BMi leaders.

Already our International Leaders are beginning to set aside funds to assist with the costs of travel. It is, however, impossible for them to raise all the money needed for their fares so we are asking Australian churches in particular to assist in making up the shortfall. **We suggest a special offering, perhaps taken during our International Prayer month in April.** If each church invests just a few dollars it will make such a difference.

Peter Frogley

Philippines

The new year 2008 I believe is the year of great harvest and new opportunities to step onto the new heights of life.

In Him we move with power, strength, and wisdom as we face the attack of the enemy. To experience Heaven on earth, to make a difference and to live the life of significance.

Thank you so much for embracing us as your own in the work of the Kingdom. There has been much activity in the Philippines as seen in these photos.

PRAYER POINTS

- To establish churches in Davao, part of Mindanao, this year.
- To strengthen new churches who have joined BMi from Bohol island.
- The School of the Supernatural which is touching and changing lives.

Joe Chavez



Ps Joe and Ps Chris on top, leading the City Harvest Mission Team in building a house for a poor family in the slum. This is the first house being built to help the poor.



At the pastors' family Christmas party in December: Times' Bread Bakery donated bread and peanut butter and the children also enjoyed receiving some toys and other gifts. The City Harvest Church Leadership Team donated two cakes and a roasted pig from the BMi Pig Project.



Used clothes are sold to help raise funds for the Mission bus. Bread and peanut butter are sold to the general public, but also given away to poor families.

International Vision

BMI has never engaged in missions in the traditional manner.

Rather our focus is to assist our brethren in other nations in terms of fellowship and in projects that will help them become self sustaining and thus able to fund their own local ministry for the Lord.

From some wonderful projects in the Philippines to a Savings and Credit Association in East Africa God's people are beginning to becoming economically independent. Importantly, more and more are now able to begin supporting their local churches and pastors.

This change in missions strategy is growing world-wide and reflects a major change in attitude to our brethren in the developing world. The 'paternal approach' that has perhaps served well in the past is being replaced by what I believe is a better and more biblical model.

BUILDING TOGETHER

The members of BMI are setting out to build relationally — not only in their own lands, but also in the nations of the earth. Each of us has the privilege of being part of this International family, by visiting or giving to our brother and sisters

in another nation. The ILT encourages each BMI church to make our own international ministries the major thrust of their mission giving.

NEW POLICIES

In addition to the freewill giving of our churches to the international field, there are two initiatives that have been taken by the Australian NLT:

1. To **tithe our levies** to the international fund.
2. To apportion approximately **half the 'futures offerings'** taken at our state leadership training times to the international fund.

These monies will be available to meet emergencies that occur from time to time in the nations and to assist meet some of the official travel costs.

Members of the NLT have been assisted in official travel to BMI locations in the various nations, presently at 50% of their costs. With growth of our international outreaches it is becoming impossible for members to cover all travel costs and we trust this extra finance will help to cover all their official travel costs.

We have also explored **tax deductibility status** for BMI and will be bringing a report to our June conference.

Vanuatu

The mission to Vanuatu was a real 'God thing'.

A friend in Melbourne told me of an ex-Church-of-Christ, interdenominational medical centre in Vanuatu needing help. They were praying for help, and when contacted, we said 'yes'. We then sourced beds, trolleys, an x-ray machine and other medical needs from hospitals that had finished with them. Annette and I drove to Melbourne, loaded the container and sent it to Vanuatu.

We were able to cover expenses for shipping the container which arrived on the island of Ambae, Vanuatu. Local Christians were rejoicing over God's provision. The next year Paul Crossman and I visited Ambae where Ps Amos Hakwa greeted us with the other members of the committee from the medical centre with leis of flowers. Ps Amos was Apostle of Vanuatu Christian Fellowship and we spoke there on the Sunday. They invited us to return for a conference with the combined churches on the island and we returned with a team of seven.

Ps Amos was a great man of God with whom we developed a flourishing relationship — until sadly Ps Amos passed away

just three months later. We had promised Ps Amos to help roof his son-in-law's house and, wanting to honour that request, contacted Eston Hakwa and organized another container of tools, building materials, bicycles, roofing iron, a generator, etc. A three week visit in 2006 enabled us to complete the roof, cement the floor and wall the inside. The house is almost complete. Whilst there our relationship with the Church and Ps Eston grew and we agreed that the partnership would continue.

In 2007 John Barnes, Neville Telford and I returned to Ambae for a time of sharing and fellowship with the Church during which time we discussed membership with BMI. Upon application Vanuatu Christian Fellowship was accepted as a member of the BMI.

Ps Eston and his wife Morraine and Ps Tensley Vira came to Australia at our invitation and attended the SA Leaders Gathering and were welcomed to fellowship in BMI. Even though freezing in our winter for six weeks they enjoyed visiting Australia. There are many needs there, including a boat for transportation, and we are also helping them set up small businesses. Please pray for God's supply for our new brethren.

Greg Phillips

East Africa

On 29 December, when the presidential election results were announced, people refused to accept, believing the current president had rigged the vote.

People resorted to violence, murder and looting houses in most towns and cities, Bungoma being one of them. For the past ten days we have been living in fear behind closed doors, with no food supplies as shops were closed down or burned or looted.

Members of one ethnic (tribal) group have been targeted and their homes burned and people killed. Up to today it is reported that about 487 people have died, but the government is concealing the truth. Our neighbors in Mt Elgon are removed from their homes and killed daily, but it is not reflected in the mass media. Two of our pastors in Kitale and Eldoret have fled for fear of their lives.

In Bungoma, we are at the moment safe but the displaced people are living in Bungoma High School as it has been turned into a refugee camp. As the situation is at the mo-



Houses have been burned to the ground in the recent riots in Kenya

ment most businesses have been disrupted, but we believe strongly that the situation will calm down and life will return to normal. We appeal for your support during this time of uncertainty.

Julius Macheusi

Testimonies from the Savings and Credit Association (SACCO)

Nelson and Hellen Mutula, who took a SACCO loan and invested in a **retail shop**, say their business from a humble beginning is growing steadily. They said that during the violence last week, though they had closed their business (for fear of being looted), they were able to sell through the back door to their neighbours and friends. The family says that the loan was a blessing to them as they are now able to generate some income for themselves and at least have an offering to take to the church on Sundays. Their future plans are to diversify their business.

Calistus Matere Barasa took a loan of 12,000 Kenyan shillings (AUD\$185) for a **brickmaking business**. It costs 2 shillings (3c) to produce burned bricks and the sale price is 5 shillings (8c), making a profit of 3 shillings (5c) per brick. His business has been growing steadily and he is able to finance the loan without problems. He plans to increase production which means increased income and employment for the unemployed in the church and his community.



Hellen Mutula inside her retail shop, established by a SACCO loan

India

The work of JJ Missions School/Naioth Children's Home in Rajahmundry, India, is a blessing to many poor and destitute children in 40-plus surrounding villages.

The work is headed by Samuel Merupu and his family, whom we have been privileged to know and partner with for the past 11 years.

The motivation for the work in India of course is the gospel and transformed lives. During our recent visit in November our hearts melted and we cried as we saw the changes in many children's lives. We were a team of 17 from Australia, for half the team it was a first time. Around 200 of the 300 children are sponsored and it was great for those who had sponsored children to meet with them. We want to share with you Pudi's story as he shared his testimony with the team this trip.

Pudi suffered from Polio as a young child and was left with crippling in both legs and could only crawl. He came from a poor Hindu family who became Christians. Their village pastor asked his parents and Pudi if he would like to go to a children's orphanage. Pudi tells us that he remembers really weighing it up as he was reasonably happy and did not know what change it would mean for him. He came to Naioth children's home in 1997. After about a year he was taken to Chennai to have an operation on both legs. It meant staying there for 18 months in plaster and callipers with them adjusted weekly to stretch and straighten his legs. This was a very painful time for him. It was then that he made the decision to trust Jesus with his life and serve him.

He is now 19 and is just completing first year of college. He can walk but needs crutches some of the time. He loves the Lord and is very thankful to know God's love and provision. He is taking Biblical studies with a local pastor and is a great source of strength for those living with him. He is known for his gentleness and kindness and wants to serve the Lord by telling other children in the villages about God's love. He shared that when he was back in his village he could not see many possibilities for his life. Samuel always encourages the children to use the home/school as a launching place for their lives. That it is not the end but the beginning. Pudi took this to heart and has a desire to visit Australia one day.

Please pray for this work and for Samuel and his family as they are having some personal struggles at the moment.

John and Jenny Barnes



Fiji

Our church is struggling as people leave for overseas, mainly New Zealand, to escape the upheaval that has resulted from last years' coup.

This brings a lot of discouragement to me, but I am hanging in by the grace of God. Church planting is difficult because of lack of stability and people losing confidence in the government. We indeed had a good Christmas with our daughters joining us from New Zealand.

Your prayers will help a lot as your churches continue to pray for us.

John Dean

Hong Kong

Phil and Pam Murphy have been working in Hong Kong for many years as credentialed pastors with BMi. Both Philip and Pam have been battling cancer.

Tragically Philip passed away on 25 January 2008 and his family are on their way to be with Pam at this difficult time.

Here is Pam's message from 15 January:

Philip has completed all the treatment that the medical professional could offer and as surgery is not an option with his

situation, they are now providing pain relief. The situation with both of us is providing opportunities to speak of God's grace and power to an amazing network of support.



I had follow up appointments with my surgeons this week and they are really pleased with my progress. I'm back teaching part time now and really enjoy being in the community.

Thanks for your prayers and for standing with us in faith as we await the miraculous.

Pam can be contacted via email at spuds@netvigator.com.

What can we do?

Opportunities for giving

EAST AFRICA

The great need at this time is for resources to assist many of our brethren in Kenya to rebuild after the senseless rioting that has devastated many homes and properties robbing people of food and income. This is an urgent request and we trust each church will respond in generosity.

Bethesda Savings and Credit Society is providing opportunities to invest in the work of our churches in East Africa. Deposits are interest bearing (currently at 6%) so investors can profit or choose to reinvest in the ministry in East Africa. This initiative is quite secure being monitored on a monthly basis by government authorities. Please contact the International Coordinator Peter Frogley for further details.

INDIA

Sponsorship for children and staff at Naioth Children's Home in Rajahmundry and Sankarapuram India. Sponsorship is available for these two Children's Homes for \$35 or \$20 per month.

PHILIPPINES

- Land Property for BMI, SOS Building and Facilities, Training Centers, Sport Centers, and other facilities.
- Bus for Mission Possible for Future Generations children.
- The completion of the Campsite at Patag.

If you are able to assist in these areas please send your gifts to BMi Missions Office, PO Box 777, Launceston Tas 7250.

Opportunities for service

PHILIPPINES

Trips to the Philippines are in planning stages and new participants are welcome. Contact the BMi office in Tasmania for details.

EAST AFRICA

Later in the year, when things have settled in Kenya, there are two opportunities for enthusiastic preachers, teachers and workers to visit churches in East Africa.

1. There are plans for a small team to visit our BMi churches in the villages around Bungoma. There will be opportunities to preach and teach in village churches (a wonderful privilege not to be missed); to minister in various schools which are open to gospel presentations; and to assist with various construction projects and training programs for young men and women.
2. For more experienced ministers the Annual 'Word of Faith' conferences are planned to be held in village locations within a few hours drive of Bungoma. This visit will be during the first week of December 2008.

Please note that all overseas ministry within BMi should be organised through Peter Frogley, the International Coordinator, to avoid clashing with others.

Churches and individuals are encouraged to contact the International Coordinator about opportunities to visit our international locations in various capacities. You may wish to start a team, or join an existing team who are already planning a visit.

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