



Maintaining the Testimony

For many of us missions is about sending money, and whilst that is important, it is inadequate. We need to give something of ourselves to our brethren in other lands.

It seems to me that just sending money can well be, in the long term, a hindrance to the gospel, as people become dependent on money rather than on the Lord and building relationship with their brethren in other lands. Thus we wish to focus on ministry relationships overseas, as we do in Australia.

Many of us will have the opportunity to visit other nations and leave behind something of the savour of Christ. Regular teams have been going to India and the Philippines for some years, but there is still opportunity to develop visiting teams for Africa, Vanuatu and hopefully soon to New Zealand. BMI presents a great opportunity for people in our churches to experience missions, discovering perhaps for the first time what it is to live in another culture.

In April our NLT leader Pastor Mark Crawford visited Pastor Isaac Sugianto in Yogyakarta, Indonesia as a follow up to the visit by Pastor Peter Frogley last year. Mark reports:

I have just arrived in Melbourne back from Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It was a good trip and I was kept busy with about nine preaching times in about eight days, plus sightseeing

and meeting people. I also spent quite a bit of time with Isaac's son Larry and got to know him well, which I think will help us build for the future. Isaac re-iterated that he wanted to be in relationship with us in BMI. I am hopeful they will be able to come to our National Leadership Gathering next year.

In other news, John Dean has relocated to New Zealand (see his story inside). Greg and Annette Phillips are heading off to Vanuatu in October. John and Jenny Barnes are making a quick trip to India in August to help set some matters in order to facilitate the ongoing development of the work there. Peter Frogley plans to visit the Abbotts in the UK as well as the Murrills before going on to Africa to spend a few days with Pastor Julius Macheusi in Kenya later this year.

Peter Frogley



Praying for the mayor of Talisay city, Philippines



Recent baptisms in Bacolod, Philippines

India

Christ Special School was established in 1993 to provide for the educational, physical and spiritual needs of physically disabled children in the rural area of Sankarapuram in the State of Tamil Nadu, India. It was started with the vision to reach physically disabled children with Christian love. It is a residential school where boys and girls study from years 1 to 10. Most of the children are first generation learners from very poor families. The school not only caters to the needs of the children but also relieves their parents to engage in other activities like full time work and care for other children. The school operates with Christian ethos. Morning devotions and scripture classes form part of the daily activity.

The school and boarding home is being run on faith and prayers. Six teachers and three non-teaching staff have been employed to take care of the children. Currently the school is being run in rented premises but we have recently purchased some land and have started to build a school/home for them in a lovely rural setting. Though the government provides grant for boarding, it is not sufficient. Moreover the grant depends on the government budget and over the years it has been diminishing. The school maintenance expenses including the teachers pay are met by the management. After the sudden demise of Mr Starling Sugirtharal (founder and manager) in 2003 in a tragic road accident it has become difficult to raise donations. It was he who maintained contact with the local people. As the efforts to hand over the school to some other



Building site for Christ Special School and Home

organisation with similar vision has not materialised, the trust members decided to continue the ministry and run the school with the faith that the Lord will provide. As many of the children are from Hindu background it is a wonderful opportunity to reach the parents and their villages through these children.

House of the Rock Church Gisborne have gladly grown in our relationship with our Indian brothers and sisters since first visiting there in 2006 and we have seen the Lord provide amazingly so that land could be purchased and now a permanent building has begun to be built. A couple from House of the Rock Church along with David Abbott from UK are visiting with them in August.

We hope to see the building mostly completed in Dec /Jan 2010 when a team from Australia next visits.

Child sponsorship being subsidised by the government is only \$25 per month and staff support is \$50 per month.

John & Jenny Barnes

Fiji

Pastor John Dean in Suva, Fiji has been having a very difficult time with the recent coup. The result has been that many of the Indian minority in Fiji are leaving for other places—many to New Zealand and some to Australia and elsewhere. To his great discouragement, John's Indian church has been decimated as a result. As it has become clear he could not continue in Fiji, he has decided to follow a large part of his congregation to Auckland, New Zealand. He recently wrote:

All is well by the grace of God, and we are in best of health.

Four families in church are left and we have been having our services as normal. Everyone is aware of what is happening and they seem to have plans to carry on the fellowship in different homes. Some time in the future three other families will leave for Melbourne.

My daughter and her family will be joining rest of us (in New Zealand) sometime in the New Year because they are still waiting for their visa. In the mean time they will rent a flat near the school the children attend.

This is not easy and I never intended to end this way but there again God may have something more for me in New Zealand. I will be traveling on 14th June to New Zealand to join our other daughter in getting a bigger flat or house to rent. We will be staying together till we start church and will be able to stand on our own feet as the church prospers financially. I will be back in Fiji sometime in August to check about the property and it will be interesting to see what progress has been made. As I see it, it will be little time before a church will be planted, but as you are aware I have settle things in Fiji first.

Pastor John Dean

East Africa

BMI East Africa continues to progress despite economic difficulties and some poor governmental decisions. Bishop Julius and Christine are as always reaching out into new territory with the gospel, but are in need of regular support from Australian churches to assist with transport and communication problems. Peter Frogley will be visiting the churches in Kenya in November and is looking forward to spending time with leaders in planning and seeking the Lord for the future of the church in East Africa.

The Bethesda Savings and Credit Association continues to be a blessing despite having been slowed by the credit crisis. This crisis has more tragic effects in poorer nations as they have little or no protection against changes in financial markets. There is greater need therefore for investments in the BMI SACCO and we encourage our members to consider investing in this worthy endeavour.

Peter Frogley



Beginning work on the foundation for the new Bethesda Girls High School



Great Britain

The later part of November was my first ever visit to Haiti. Of all the third world countries I have been to this was by far the poorest.

In spite of the national religion being voodoo and witchcraft, schools were wide open for the gospel. I ministered in five schools and on arrival all lessons stopped and all pupils and staff assembled in a meeting area where I was free to say whatever I wanted, make appeals, bring out those who responded and minister and pray individually with all. There were no time limits or restrictions.

After ministering we handed out free snacks to everyone there to bless their stomachs as well as their souls. Each afternoon we had meetings in the host church. This building consisted of half-filled foundations rod sticking up to hold up a tarp to shield from the sun. This was taken down of course after the meetings. Here the numbers increased daily. With schools and the church meetings we reached over two thousand children in four days. The number who responded was huge but only God knows what really happened inside.

The beginning of this year was Australia where new doors opened and I had the fullest itinerary I have ever had. Every meeting saw exciting responses from children and adults in

family services or child leader training seminars.

One miracle I would like to share. I had a children's ministry day in a very small Anglican church building outside of Canberra which had no air con and no way to get a through draught if there was any wind. That morning the weather forecast was for above normal temperatures. As we drove down the hill to the church the forecast was true and the leaders thought of cancelling it as the children would melt. But when we got to the church there was a wind blowing across the fields and the direction it was coming it went straight in through the front door of the church. This meant in the meetings they all sat comfortably and were able to listen, more so than the year before when it was cooler weather. God made His own air con for His children.

I have just returned from my first visit to Bolivia, South America. I was ministering mainly in an orphanage called the Ark, housing forty-seven mostly ex-street boys aged from five to twenty though the majority of them were in the lower and middle age bracket. Winning their hearts and trust was the first step and during that winning time over half were still very open and responded freely to repentance, baptism in Holy Spirit etc. but the deeper needs couldn't be addressed yet.

The final meeting was where we really broke through with trust so another visit is very urgent. That final meeting God really showed those boys how much He really loved them

David Abbott

Vanuatu

Vanuatu is doing well. The container that we sent arrived on the 3rd of August and the goods were distributed immediately over three islands: clothing, tractor with bucket and slasher, bikes and a new motor bike for Ps Easton were a real blessing. Thanks to Nigel and Gail and Mt Gambier Christian Centre for their great work in getting the container up and going. It is much appreciated.

Greg Phillips

In October Pastor Greg and Annette Phillips from Bethesda Christian Outreach in Adelaide will be visiting the church in Vanuatu.

Opportunities

1. East Africa

REGULAR SUPPORT NEEDED

All of our national leaders, except Bishop Julius Macheusi in East Africa, are in receipt of regular support from Australia. We would like to encourage one of our churches in Australia to support our African leader on a regular basis. Contact Missions Office for details.

BETHESDA SACCO

Bethesda Savings and Credit Society is providing opportunities to invest in the work of our churches and members 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 secure initiative is a new approach to supporting churches overseas and is highly recommended.

VISITS

Opportunities exist in East Africa for short- to long-term mission visits. Our churches would benefit from a visit from an electronics/sound system whizz, building workers, dentists, doctors, nurses and assistants. Short term visits of up to 3 months would be ideal. Be a blessing to the growing church in East Africa.

2. India

Sponsors are needed for children and staff at Naioth Childrens Homes in Rajahmundry, and Sankarapurm India. Sponsorship is available for these two Children's Homes for \$35 or \$20 per month.

The annual missions trip to Indian orphanages will depart during on December 27, 2009 and be for approximately 3 weeks. You will visit two orphanages and three different locations. There will be opportunities for village ministry, a medical clinic and a varied skill-based program for the children. Contact John and Jenny Barnes for more details. Confirmation will need to be made by October 2009.

3. Philippines

Some of the needs in the Philippines churches are funds to build a church on newly acquired land in Bacolod and for a bus for *Mission Possible* children and the completion of the campsite at Patag.

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

Philippines

The increase of favour in the Philippines has recently added to the work of the BMi churches on the island of Negros. When Mark Crawford was there recently, Joe Chavez had organized for him and several other leaders to meet with the mayors of three cities. During the meeting each of the mayors discussed how BMi can help them in their city and how they wanted to partner with us. They allowed the pastors to lay hands on them and pray for them and their work. This was also a ground-breaking time with meetings with Government officials such as the Bacolod City Chief Medical Officer and the Provincial Livelihood Program Director.

The meetings also allowed for the advance work for the Medical Mission Team which will be in Negros from the 22nd-29th September, 2009. The team consists of Dr John Loewen and Dr Chris Courtney from Phoenix, Arizona, USA; nurse practitioner Ardene Ballonado from California; Annette and Mark Crawford, Helen and Peter Atkinson and Felicity and Ian Shepherd from Australia complete the team. The team will be involved in consultations, treatment and education amongst the areas where BMi has been working in the cities of Bacolod, Talisay and Silay.

Mark Crawford

Finances

Overseas Support

BMI International Office does not necessarily want all overseas giving to go through the office accounts. It is sometimes more convenient to make direct transfers or take cash when visiting. It is, however, helpful and indeed important for the BMI office to be informed of monies going to BMI locations. This helps ensure that your money goes to the right place and is not doubling up on someone else's giving.

Tax Deductibility

This is a reminder that we have explored tax deductibility status for BMI and discovered it is very difficult to get tax deductibility for overseas situations for the type of projects we are usually involved in. Most people who are interested in tax deductibility are either in business or have larger amounts of money. Thus our advice, from the experts, is that the same benefits can be achieved by setting up a Family Trust which is able to distribute moneys effectively tax exempt. Such a Family Trust also has many other benefits for families wanting to make wise use of the moneys the Lord entrusts to them. It may be wise to see your lawyer to set up such a Trust.

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