

ENGAGE

The BMS World Mission magazine

SOWING ABUNDANT LIFE IN BANGLADESH

Help share the Word of God in Bangladesh this harvest.

NEW PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU

Meet the new mission workers your church can partner with.

LIFTING UP PALESTINE

Read more from our Palestinian partner about how you can pray for the conflict.



SEEK
FIRST
THE
KINGDOM





WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

BMS World Mission is inspired by our heart to bring the gospel where it's not known, to bring hope to a troubled world and to bring help for the journeys of the displaced. We respond to suffering and injustice with the promise of abundant life in Christ.

Through your support and alongside our trusted partners, we send UK Christians and equip local disciples in over 30 countries across four continents. Our highest goal is to see people come to faith in Jesus Christ and experience life in all its fullness.

Have something to say in response to this issue of *Engage*?



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Use the freepost envelope included in your mailing to send us a note, a cheque or anything else in response to this issue!

We look forward to hearing from you!



Editorial

CELEBRATING ISSUE 60!

Laura Durrant

August 2024



I'm so excited to share the 60th issue of *Engage* magazine with you! I know so many of you have been regularly reading *Engage* and its precursors for a long time – and all of us at BMS World Mission are so grateful for your dedicated and faithful support!

Whether you've been reading *Engage* since the days of the *Missionary Herald* or you've only just picked it up, I hope you find the stories inside engaging and encouraging. None of the work in these stories would be possible without your generous support and prayers and I hope you'll stick around to hear even more stories in *Engage* for many years to come!

In this particular issue, you'll read about refugees finding hope in Cyprus (page 7), you'll meet new people working in mission that your church can partner with (page 14), and my personal favourite, you'll find out more about how you can help sow abundant life in Bangladesh this harvest season (page 10).

Thank you so much as always for reading *Engage* and I hope you enjoy reading Issue 60! If you have any feedback or thoughts to share with me, you can get in touch using the email address below – I would love to hear from you.

God bless,
Laura
Editor



Write to me at magazine@bmsworldmission.org

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You might spot these icons on the pages of *Engage* – they're there to show you which ministry area the work comes under.



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Hundreds of thousands of people needed aid after the earthquakes in Afghanistan last October. Thankfully, you stepped in.

RISING FROM THE RUBBLE

More than **1,500 people were killed in the terrible earthquakes that struck Herat, Afghanistan, last October.** But thankfully, BMS World Mission supporters were there to give a lifeline to those in desperate need. Here's how your giving to our disaster recovery fund made an incredible difference.

Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 2021, people have been living on the brink, with intense food insecurity, major restrictions on women's ability to work and a lack of aid entering the country. A roof over your head can mean a lot in such a tumultuous environment – so when the earthquakes hit, people needed much more than just emergency supplies. They needed someone to help them get through the horror of losing their homes and loved

ones. And that's where you stepped in.

Your generosity made it possible for a grant of £25,000 to go to our partner to help with both emergency recovery and mental health services to help with the long-term recovery from the quakes.

"I am so thankful for the opportunity we were given to support those worst affected by the earthquake through the funding that we received from BMS," says BMS worker Tim*, who heads up our partner in Afghanistan. "We were able to provide practical support, such as distributing cash, blankets and hygiene kits. We also provided counselling to those most affected and who had tragically lost loved ones, spoke to people who now live in fear of another earthquake, and shared messages with the public to increase wellbeing."

Thanks to your generous support, a nation on the edge can now begin to rebuild after this tragedy.

**Name changed*

—
4

the number of 6.3 scale earthquakes that struck the Herat province in October 2023

114,000

estimated number of people in need of humanitarian aid

£25,000

amount sent to our partner in Afghanistan thanks to your support



Thank you for making it possible for Helen and Wit to share the good news!

CELEBRATING EASTER FOR THE FIRST TIME!

March 2024 marked the first ever Easter celebration in Ban Dara, Thailand, where BMS mission workers Helen and Wit Boondeekhun are ministering.

Many from the community in Wang Daeng, where Helen and Wit began their ministry, have been actively involved in the new church in Ban

Dara. More than 30 people joined for fellowship on Easter Sunday, and to share a meal. "It was an exciting opportunity for the church to celebrate the resurrection for the first time," Helen and Wit shared. Praise God for this exciting opportunity – and pray that more events like this will be possible in the future!

SHARING GENDER JUSTICE ACROSS THE WORLD

The BMS Gender Charter has been translated into eight different languages: Arabic, Hindi, Bengali, Portuguese, French, Spanish, Swahili, Nepali – a crucial step in fighting gender injustice.

"We do not want to be prescriptive," says BMS Gender Justice Co-ordinator

Annet Ttendo Miller, on the decision to translate the charter. "The onus will be on the partner to ensure that they design an action plan that will be tailor-made to their own culture, context, internal processes and legislation." Pray that this step will keep the fight for gender equality at the heart of all BMS-supported work.

From the
General Director

PRAYER IS GOD'S MOST POWERFUL GIFT

Kang-San Tan



In the midst of church disputes (1 Timothy 1: 3-11), Paul encouraged Christians to focus on outward-looking prayers for all people: "This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved." (1 Timothy 2: 3-4).

Paul's rationale for world evangelisation is there is "one mediator" for all (1 Timothy 2: 5-6). Even when Christians insist upon the exclusiveness of the gospel because there is only one way to salvation – Christ Jesus – the main thrust of Paul's mission is the inclusiveness of the gospel for all ethnicities (*pantes anthropos* in 1 Timothy 2: 1 and 2: 4). Prayers that are focused on mission are God's most powerful weapon to unite the Church, "lifting holy hands without anger or disputing." (1 Timothy 2: 8).

Your partnership with BMS World Mission, through prayers for every place and every people, is one of God's means for Christians to "live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" in our divided societies (1 Timothy 2: 2). If God wants everyone to be saved, let us be united in our prayers for the salvation of the whole world (1 John 2: 2) – and seek to invest in prayer as God's ordained pathway to true transformation of the nations.

Thank you

Thank you for all you do!

AirBMS!

Supporting world mission has never been easier – or more appealing – than booking your next getaway to this beautiful cottage in the seaside village of Aberporth in Wales, with all the profits going to BMS World Mission!

The cottage sleeps six, with three spacious bedrooms, and you can even bring your pooch pal along with you! So what



are you waiting for? Visit www.westwalesholidaycottages.co.uk/property/chautara and get your next holiday booked in today.



Bryan's Legacy

Bryan Johnson was a lifelong supporter of BMS. As a church treasurer, he always encouraged his congregation to give to BMS and had a heart for sharing the gospel. "It's been very tough losing Dad," said his daughter Alison. "He was such an important part of my children's lives growing up too – a real blessing."

Bryan decided to leave a generous gift in his Will to BMS. "I have been so grateful for all that Mum and Dad did for me to enable me to find my way to God," said Alison. "To know that his legacy of wanting others to know Christ can continue through the amazing work of BMS is all we could ask. Thank you to everyone at BMS for all you do."

We are so very thankful for Brian's incredible generosity. If you want to find out more about leaving a gift in your Will, please visit

www.bmsworldmission.org/legacies

Baptist Assembly 2024 – a big thank you!

On the weekend of Pentecost, Baptists from across Great Britain gathered in Telford to be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit.

It was so encouraging to meet many Engage readers, and to hear how we can best equip you and your church. We really hope you found our seminar on reconciliation helpful, and that you found BMS worker Oksana's update on the work in Afghanistan as inspiring as we did. And wasn't it so amazing to hear Annet Ttendo Miller, our Gender Justice Co-ordinator, praying powerfully for the women of Afghanistan?

"It was wonderful to see so many of our friends and



supporters at the Baptist Assembly this year," said Arthur Brown, BMS' Director for World Mission. "Thank you so much for your continued contribution to what God is doing through BMS around our broken world."

Thank you so much again for joining us – we look forward to seeing you again next year!

**Name changed for security reasons.*

Welcome to the OASIS

No family, no language, no hope. That's how many refugees arrive in Cyprus. But your support is helping change that.

Words: **Laura Durrant**

Lara is expecting her first baby. Her eyes light up as she tells me in broken English that she's six months along, and that she and her husband are keeping the baby's sex a surprise.

But Lara's pregnancy is a far cry from how she expected to bring a baby into the world. She's thousands of miles away from her family in Kurdistan, Iraq – in fact, she's not sure she'll ever see her family again. Lara isn't her real name. Her father had planned to marry her off to one of her uncles, so she and her now husband left to start a new life in Cyprus, where tension still bubbles under the

surface, 50 years on from the Turkish invasion in 1974. I ask Lara what her hopes are for her new life. She's a pharmacist and would love to be able to work here and help people. She dreams of visiting Mecca one day. And she's excited for the arrival of her baby – although she cannot know what kind of life she'll be able to give them.

...

It's a hot morning in Larnaca on the day I visit the Oasis, the aptly-named centre for displaced peoples run by BMS World Mission partner All4Aid. It's Friday, which means clothing distribution day. It's just one of many activities that takes place

in the centre, which serves refugees living in Larnaca and the nearby transit camp. Cyprus might seem like a surprising hotspot for refugees and asylum seekers – an island known as either a tourist destination or a war zone. I confess to feeling a little guilty as I wander the rooms and racks of clothing on offer. I myself have taken time out of my family holiday to come here. Once the morning is over, we will drive back to a town of white villas, sandy beaches and sunburnt strip. I'm getting a glimpse of Cyprus' complicated culture, one which can both help and hinder the people like Lara trying to make a stable life here on the island.

“
THE
OASIS
IS MY
FAMILY
”



You're helping provide computer training and necessary food for refugees in Larnaca – thank you!

Elena is the only Cypriot working at the centre. She's constantly buzzing from person to person, helping out wherever she can. She explains to me why so many refugees end up here. Many are convinced by traffickers that Cyprus is a gateway to mainland Europe. There's a large number of people fleeing war in Syria or conflict in countries like Somalia and D R Congo. They take boats to the north of the island and are then smuggled across the border – where everything begins to

unravel. "They're telling them lies and lies and lies," says Elena. "And they come here. Then they realise that they're stuck in a small island with no industry, no work, no housing, and their lives are so difficult."

The tourism and hospitality industries do provide some opportunities for seasonal work – in fact, they're some of the few areas where refugees are allowed to work – but they also contribute to the housing problems in Cyprus. It's hard for even Cypriots to find housing,

and refugees in transit camps have to provide a permanent address to leave the camps. Many make up addresses just so they can leave – and then end up sleeping on the beaches and sunbeds. It's why the Oasis gives out so many sleeping bags. And it's why they're determined to help whoever they can, however they can.

As well as the clothing distribution today, the centre runs a women's group on Tuesdays and food distribution on Mondays, as well as English

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THE
NUMBER
ONE NEED
IS HAVING
SOMEONE
TO LISTEN
”



Lara dreams of having a safe place to raise her baby. Your support is making that possible.



Elena's faith compels her to serve the displaced people in her community.

and Greek classes. And you've generously helped fund computers and sewing machines so the centre can open a computer lab and crafting room in the autumn – creating even more avenues for people to find work and community.

The centre's impact on local refugees is clear to see. All of the refugees I spoke to today are also volunteers, keen to give back after the welcome they received. Lara works on the welcome desk and helps translate where necessary. But


more than the practical help, the Oasis lives up to its namesake as a place of sanctuary. "The number one need is not housing or food or accommodation," explains Elena. "It's having somebody to listen." As Lara puts it: "The Oasis is my family."



I catch Lara again as she browses the clothes on offer. She picks up a pair of baby shoes, and we smile together as I tell her about my niece and nephew, just old enough to wear shoes like

those. I hope she understands my English, that we share a genuine moment of connection before I go home.

I don't know whether or when Lara will achieve her dreams. But I know that God is there in this mixed up, pieced-together community she knows to be home. And I can't help but think that if we all chose to live like they do at the Oasis, things might just be a little bit better. •



“ I WILL TELL MORE PEOPLE,
SO THEY CAN HAVE LIFE ”

Seeking first the Kingdom in Bangladesh.

We sit, savouring the light breeze that occasionally embraces us. Yesterday was a cold winter's day in the UK. Today, we're engulfed in Bangladeshi sunshine. The baptismal pool glimmers. Still. Just a few minutes ago, we watched 13 people celebrate rebirth in this water. Each man and woman emerging to new life with the sound of Bangla singing. Their brothers and sisters celebrating with them as they took this bold step on their journey with Christ.

It's quiet now, aside from birds singing hope in the trees.

We're waiting to interview Javed*, the man who courageously led each of these people to Jesus, and who hopes to baptise many more in the coming months and years. Javed and the group travelled for four hours to get here, rising with the sun to join us at the Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha (BBCS) in Dhaka for their baptisms.

In a couple of days, we'll be in the east of Bangladesh, in some tea gardens. We'll see Bina Roy and James Biswas sharing the love of Jesus with tea plantation workers living in poverty and facing huge challenges. Then, we'll travel to the other side of the country, just across

the border from Kolkata, to hear Rev John Karmakar, Rev Barnabas Hembron, and Pete and Louise Lynch bring good news to a Christian revival meeting.

From east to west, we'll see lives transforming. God's Kingdom coming in Bangladesh. Not in giant waves, but in ripples. In small screenings of the Jesus film, and families gathered together in houses to worship. In hospitality, and friendship, and long, desperate hours of prayer for healing.

In the words and actions of Javed, Bina, James, John, Barnabas, Pete and Louise – BMS World Mission-supported pastors faithfully serving God in this densely populated, immensely beautiful country. A country where just 0.3 per cent of people are Christian.

These faithful men and women are seeking first the Kingdom, and this harvest, they're asking you to help them.

"Jesus is not only for Christians," Javed says. He's taken Communion with the newly baptised believers and is now ready to tell us all about his growing ministry. "He came to save us all."

Javed grew up Muslim. His dad is a well-respected Muslim leader, responsible for many thousands of people. But one day Javed started thinking about Jesus. And once he'd started asking questions, he couldn't stop. "I saw that the Qu'ran wrote many times about Jesus Christ," Javed says. "I decided that I will find him."

An online platform led Javed to





BBCS General Secretary and BMS partner worker Rev John Karmakar, and it wasn't long before he and six of his friends were making the journey to Dhaka to meet John and find out more about Jesus.

"They welcomed us very well and they told us about Jesus Christ," Javed says. He and his friends went away encouraged to keep seeking Jesus. Which they did. On his next visit to BBCS, Javed arrived as one of 13 new believers from his community. All of them wanted to get baptised.

"I started thinking again, Jesus... came to save all the people," says Javed. "I decided that I will tell more people they can have life. When we have more experience of Jesus Christ, then we have peace. We are trying to make a new generation – a new Christian community from the Muslim people."

Today is another milestone on Javed's journey as a Christian and an evangelist. Thirteen more people baptised into an ever-growing family of disciples. The number of believers

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MOTHERS ARE NOW SEEKING MEDICAL CARE... CHILDREN WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL ARE NOW ENROLLED

”

in his community doubled. And his work only just getting started.

Over in the east of the country, James and his wife Bina share Javed's passion. "I love preaching the gospel in Bangladesh," James says. More than ten years ago, God called Bina and James to minister to people living and working in the tea gardens, many of whom struggle with generational poverty, limited education options and poor health. Bina and James are

working to bring life in all its fullness in these communities, and they're currently reaching about 3,000 people.

"Through our efforts, we have witnessed positive changes," Bina says. "Mothers are now seeking medical care and eating nutritious meals during pregnancy, leading to a decrease in maternal mortality rates. Children who were previously not attending school are now enrolled, and we see remarkable progress in their lives. And many individuals have embraced Christianity and are eager to learn more."

God's Kingdom is coming in Bangladesh. Not in giant waves, but in ripples. In 26 newly baptised Muslim background believers now sharing Jesus with their neighbours. In children getting the chance to go to school, and mothers surviving childbirth. It's coming through the faith, words and actions of a few inspiring men and women you help support when you give to BMS.

And we want to make those ripples bigger. We want to support more



Praise God that people are committing themselves to Christ. Please pray that Javed will reach even more people through his ministry.

Help grow God's Kingdom in Bangladesh

- 1. Watch:** Meet Bina and James in the *Seek first the Kingdom* video.
- 2. Share:** Ask your minister to host a *Seek first the Kingdom* service this harvest.
- 3. Give:** Order gift envelopes using the link below so your church can hold a collection during your *Seek first the Kingdom* service.

Head to www.bmsworldmission.org/kingdom now to get involved.

**Javed's name has been changed to protect his identity.*

people in Bangladesh and see more lives transformed by Jesus. That's why BMS has a plan to train up 120 more workers like James, Bina and Javed over the next five years – equipping more of God's people to share Jesus with the 170 million men, women and children in Bangladesh who haven't yet met him. And we can't do it without you.

This harvest, will you help grow God's Kingdom in Bangladesh?

Before he heads back home, Javed has one final thing to say: "I love Jesus Christ because he

loves me, and I want to share this love with other people. One day we need to go to him – this is the time to tell people so we can go together."

We sit, engulfed in Bangladeshi sunshine. The baptismal pool glimmering beside us. A few minutes ago, we watched 13 people celebrate rebirth in this water. Each man and woman emerging to new life with the sound of Bangla singing. A taste of heaven on earth. It's quieter now, but the birds are still singing hope in the trees. •



HANDS & HEARTS

A new chapter in global mission

You and your church are crucial to making global mission possible. And the BMS World Mission Church Partners programme is one of the best ways you can foster that heart for mission in your church. Come and meet some new people working in mission that you can connect with as they strive to introduce others to the abundant life made possible through Christ.



Name: **Ardi Wiradinata**

Location: **Indonesia**

In his 21 years of ministry, Ardi has planted churches, pastored congregations, lectured at seminaries and spoken at events across the world. The latest chapter in Ardi's story has led him to BMS partner Asia Pacific Baptist Federation (APBF), where he's been Director of Mission since 2021.

In his role, Ardi is responsible for connecting 40,000 churches and 65 Baptist conventions across 22 countries in Asia and the Pacific, bringing them together in the name of mission. Those might seem like daunting numbers – especially as APBF has set a goal of reaching all nations and people groups in Asia and the Pacific by the end of 2040! But Ardi is not deterred by the challenge and is excited to see God move across the world alongside the workers of the global mission field.

Thanks to you and your support of BMS, you're helping make Ardi's work possible by introducing people across Asia and the Pacific to Jesus for the first time.

None of this transformational work would be possible without your generous partnership with mission workers across the world. This is only a brief introduction to some of the people your church can partner with, but if you'd like to discover more about them and help make their life-changing work possible, then visit www.bmsworldmission.org/churchpartners or call **01235 517611** – we would love to hear from you!

Name: **Barnabas Hembron**

Location: **Bangladesh**

Committing the past 20 years to full-time ministry, Barnabas is determined to help spread the good news across Bangladesh. In his time, Barnabas has been a Sunday school organiser, youth leader and pastor – but before all this he was a professional footballer! However, when he attended a spiritual revival camp as a young adult, God called him to step away from this path and to embrace the world of mission.

Currently Barnabas is working for BMS partner the Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha as their Mission Co-ordinator, helping steer their evangelism and mission programmes. Alongside this, Barnabas likes to keep busy: he helps moderate the Department of Evangelism, Ethnic Unity and Culture at the National Church Council of Bangladesh, he's the pastor of the Baptist Church in Dhaka and he's also a tutor at the College of Christian Theology Bangladesh!

Thanks to you, Barnabas can support and train evangelists and ministers looking to enter into new mission fields across Bangladesh.



Name: **Pastor J Lalduhawma**

Location: **Cambodia**

Since he was 15, Pastor J has dived face-first into the challenge of pastoring the Global Church. Pastor J felt called to ministry while studying in 1999 and began his theological studies after completing his master's degree. He was ordained in 2008 and began working at the Baptist Church of Mizoram in north west India.

In 2013, Pastor J and his wife Lalrengpuii were chosen to be sent to Cambodia.

As part of his role in Cambodia, Pastor J pastors the Horaio Baptist Church and runs a dormitory ministry.

The dorm ministry was set up to help make further education a viable option for students from rural areas by offering them an affordable place to live. At the dorm, students can take English and computer classes, and many students have found faith at Pastor J's church!

Name: **Wissam Nasrallah**

Location: **Lebanon**

Wissam grew up in Saudia Arabia after fleeing Lebanon to escape the civil war, and gave his life to God when he was 14.

Wissam decided to move to France for university and had a strong conviction to share the gospel.

After spending several years working in finance in Paris, Wissam felt called to return to Lebanon. He joined our partner Thimar as their Chief Operations Officer in 2017, working to share the Word of God, bring relief and alleviate poverty across Lebanon. Wissam is responsible for overseeing the operations, communications and daily running of Thimar.

Because of you, Wissam can help share the abundant life of Christ Jesus across Lebanon





SMILES OF HOPE IN UGANDA

Children are at risk right now in Gulu, Uganda. Could you help them?

Words: Chris Manktelow



I

Imagine having to look after your one-week-old baby boy completely on your own. You've got no support from the baby's father,

plus you have to look after your two older sons, and get back to work farming your land as soon as you can – it's the only way you can provide for your children. That was exactly the situation Apiyo* found herself in – before your support changed everything.

The children's father did nothing to support his sons or their mother, despite his well-paying job. When BMS World Mission-supported Child Protection Officer Valerie gave Apiyo clothes, soap and oil for her new baby, she burst into tears. "You're strangers," Apiyo said. "You've brought things that even the father of the child has not brought. He's never bought anything for his child."

Valerie works with BMS partner Justice Livelihoods Health and splits her time between working on specific

"A LOT OF CHILDREN ARE GOING THROUGH A LOT OF ABUSE"

cases of child abuse and neglect, and raising awareness in villages and schools across Gulu, Uganda. She first learnt about this case when Apiyo spoke to her after a village meeting on Uganda Human Rights Day. "A lot of children are going through a lot of abuse," she says. "Often the parents were raised in abusive homes themselves, so then that has just carried on to their families."

After listening to Apiyo's story, Valerie went to meet the father of the three children. He refused to pay school fees for his two older sons, so Valerie warned him that she would involve the probation officer and the authorities if he continued to neglect his children. "In the end," says Valerie, "he came back to me and said, 'Valerie, here are the receipts for the school fees I have paid.' I called

the headteacher, and he had paid the school fees for the two boys, which made us very happy."

Sending children to school, especially girls, is one of best ways of ending child abuse and gender injustice. "Girls are either dying from childbearing when they are very young," says Valerie, "or they're dying from abuse from their partners because they were married off to older men. So, when we advocate for keeping girls in school, just as boys are kept in school, then we are getting rid of all these other problems that would arise if they got married."

Valerie also runs classes for parents, teaching them to raise children in a way that is not too authoritative or lenient. She often finds it difficult to encourage fathers to join in – but has hope that through



Valerie will do whatever she can to help bring abundant life to the children of Gulu. Will you give today to help her?

“THANK YOU FOR FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF MY CHILDREN.”

education, many fathers will step up to see their roles as equally important as the mothers.

Even though the father of Apiyo’s children agreed to pay the school fees for his older sons, he still did not want to look after his baby. “The child has basic needs,” Valerie told him. “He needs nappies, he will need milk very soon, and bottles. He’ll need washing soap.” Because Valerie stepped in, the father has now given Apiyo what she needs to look after her baby – and she knows that her sons’ lives are safeguarded for the future.

“Thank you for fighting for the rights of my children,” Apiyo told Valerie.

“When she called, you could

feel the smile and the gratitude in her words when she was speaking,” says Valerie. “Because at first when we met her, she did not have that. She was bitter, she was angry, she was frustrated – but now she has hope.”

It’s thanks to your support that Valerie is able to help protect and safeguard the children of Gulu – and Valerie is deeply grateful for what God is doing through her work. “Seeing how God has used me to bring back hope in these children’s lives and to give them the future that God has for them – that brings a big, big, big, big thank you in my heart for God,” she says. Every little smile of hope that Valerie sees makes her work worth doing. •

There are many more children in Uganda who need your support to stay in school and be set free from abusive homes.

By giving to the BMS Justice for children appeal today, you can help Valerie and her team protect children in Gulu by giving today at www.bmsworldmission.org/justice

**Name changed.*



A letter from Palestine

We cry out in prayer for a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Gaza. Jack Y. Sara, President of BMS World Mission partner Bethlehem Bible College (BBC), based in the West Bank, shares how they've been affected by the war and how you can pray.



Dear friends,

Despite the challenges and uncertainties brought by the war in Gaza, we continue to find hope and strength through our faith in Jesus Christ.

The war has significantly impacted the work of Bethlehem Bible College (BBC). Our daily routines have occasionally been disrupted, and the tense security situation has made it difficult for many students and teachers to reach the college safely. However, we remain committed to providing education and spiritual support to those who can attend, and we are diligently working to expand our online programs to reach a broader audience, especially among Arabic speakers globally.

As the President of BBC, I find joy in collaborating with my colleagues. Their dedication and commitment inspire me daily and motivate me to continue serving with dedication too. Many of our faculty

and staff could pursue better opportunities elsewhere outside our country, but they have chosen the hardest choice to live out the Lord's calling upon their lives by serving with us and among our Palestinian people.

We ask for your prayers for peace and stability in our region and for the protection and safety of all our students and staff. Please pray that we can continue to offer education and spiritual support to those in need and that we can extend our reach to impact more lives across the region.

Thank you, BMS, for your continued support and prayers. We believe that God will use these challenging times to show his power and love through our work, and we are grateful to everyone who joins us on this journey.

With warm regards,
Jack Y. Sara
President, Bethlehem Bible College



WE BELIEVE THAT GOD WILL USE THESE CHALLENGING TIMES TO SHOW HIS POWER AND LOVE THROUGH OUR WORK.





LETTERS FROM... THE UK

Thank you for the message of hope

Dear Laura,

The message of hope in your introduction to Issue 59 of *Engage* is most encouraging. You indicate that attendees at the BMS World Mission Day of Prayer had reflected on the idea of hope as an action. That concept of "hope in action" is radiated through your editorial message and clearly demonstrated through the narrative and photographs within the *Engage* magazine.

As individuals we might feel small and inconspicuous but collectively, through our contributions to BMS, we feel that we are able to actively engage in the work of BMS. We thank God for the skill base and for the breadth of the work of BMS and its partners operating in many areas of the world where there is poverty, disease, injustice, conflict, displacement or need.

May God continue to bless the work of BMS,

Annette Gravell

From the Editor

Dear Annette,

Thank you so much for your kind words! It's so encouraging to hear that you enjoyed Issue 59 of *Engage* magazine, and I'm so glad to hear that you felt the sense of hope in the issue, but also that you see the value of each contribution to BMS. Every penny given really does make a huge difference!

Every blessing,

Laura

Get in touch! If you've been inspired or challenged by anything you've read in *Engage*, we would love to hear from you! Use magazine@bmsworldmission.org to get in touch with our Editor, Laura!



Difficulties with QR codes

Dear Laura,

I was wanting to do the survey you mentioned in your letter, but it could only be accessed via one of those funny mobile-phone code things, which I do not know how to use. I did try to access it via the BMS website, but the surveys I found did not seem to be your one. We do have smart phones, and my wife has just figured out how to find bus times on it, but do bear in mind that a lot of your supporters will be oldies like us.

I really appreciate the articles in the latest *Engage*. Very good.

Bob Allaway

From the Editor

Dear Bob,

Thank you so much for getting in touch with your feedback. I'm so sorry you had issues accessing the survey, and it was an oversight of mine not to

include a straightforward link along with the code to the survey. If you have any further thoughts, please do get in touch using the email address on this page.

Thanks so much for all your support, Bob, we really do appreciate it.

God bless,

Laura

Bananas for Engage!

Dear Laura

Thank you for Issue 58 of *Engage* magazine.

I was very interested to read the article about Esther growing bananas in Uganda, firstly because they are my favourite fruit, my husband and I usually eat one a day, and secondly when I noticed that she had been helped by Genesis Acaye and his team, because my church is in partnership with Genesis. We receive regular newsletters from him, so it was lovely to read Esther's story and to learn how much support she has been receiving from him and the team. It was very encouraging to learn of the success of BMS' support for just one person out of many and how much difference it has made to her life. Thank you so much for the article and the beautiful photos of Esther, such a happy smiling face!

Best wishes from

Christine Baker

From the Editor

Dear Christine,

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your thoughts on *Engage* magazine with me – I really appreciate hearing what you think! I'm glad you enjoyed the story of Esther and her banana plants particularly. Having had the privilege to visit Genesis and see his work, I can assure you it's making such a difference to the communities in Gulu.

Every blessing,

Laura

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