

World

Winter 2008

An Inside Look at BCM's Global Ministries



Raising Next Generation's Leaders

From the President



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BCM International is a Bible-Centered Ministry dedicated to making disciples of all age groups for the Lord Jesus Christ through evangelism, teaching, and training so that churches are established and The Church strengthened.

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Activity in world missions is changing. A long tradition of local churches and individuals working through mission agencies has been preempted by their active participation in international missions—with or without mission agencies. As a mission, BCM strives to nurture this desire for ministry while carrying forward our own vision of reaching children and strengthening The Church. In this issue of BCM's World Magazine you will read articles about tomorrow's leaders being developed in today's children and youth. You will witness the response of some of those youth to ministry in the face of

crisis. And, hopefully, you will better understand the potential this new generation holds within the church's vital participation in world missions.

In this issue you will also notice a new seal of membership. The highly recognizable and trustworthy IFMA seal of integrity, which we have used for years, has been replaced with CrossGlobal Link. Don't be alarmed. The Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association of North America (IFMA) has simply changed its name to CrossGlobal Link. At the association's Annual Business Meeting held in September the constituency voted to change its name.

"This is more than just a cosmetic change to the association," explained Dr. Marvin Newell, CrossGlobal Link Executive Director. "This is a change in function and direction for the association, intended to keep it in pace with the changing world of missions."

CrossGlobal Link will no longer be exclusively interdenominational as in the past, and it opens the door to churches and mission pastors joining as associate members. It also signals a stronger intent to be involved on the greater global mission scene. The identity slogan of CrossGlobal Link, *Connecting in Mission*, is descriptive of these relationships. As an intercontinental mission with a missionary body that includes more than 40 nationalities serving on five continents, BCM International can certainly identify with such a vision.

CrossGlobal Link, founded as IFMA in 1917, performs the same functions as the ECFA (Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability) and more. Besides the financial dimension, it holds our mission to doctrinal, organizational, operational, and relational standards that leave no question about our integrity. This should bring peace of mine to you, our donors and our members. Because of this, we are proud members of CrossGlobal Link.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end.



Raising Next Generation's Leaders

by Jeanette Windle

A small brick school building in the sun-baked Swaziland countryside is abuzz. Teachers in each classroom gather their students into a straight line, marching them out onto the long concrete veranda. BCM missionary Assiena Maseko has arrived for the weekly Bible class.

The school has no auditorium nor even seats to accommodate 800 children. No problem. The students line up neatly in the dirt courtyard as they do each morning for roll call. Inured to a bright sun overhead, dust, or restless muscles, they will remain standing throughout the lesson. One child raises a hand to recite last week's verse. Assiena begins a lively gospel chorus. The children join in the singing, clapping and stepping in place to the music with the joyful abandon of one long conga line.

Together the children chant this week's Bible verse until a few of them can race it off verbatim. Then Assiena sets up her flannelgraph board. Students settle down in their lines to listen spellbound to the age-old Good News of a Creator God who loved the world so much He sent His only Son to walk dusty streets just like those in their village, heal the sick and feed the hungry, die on a cross to pay the penalty for sins, and rise from the dead to offer eternal life in God's presence.

Lesson over, students file back to their classrooms. But Assiena is far from done for the day. She returns to her vehicle, a donated mini-van. Next stop is another rural school. By afternoon Assiena has arrived at a third village. Here a much smaller group of children sprawls on the grass under the shade of a flowering tree. Settling into a chair, Assiena props the flannelgraph board on her knees while she calls the Bible Club to order.

BCM ministry in Swaziland, a country in southern Africa with a population of about a million, began in 1972 when Assiena Maseko and Ana Mamba [now deceased] became the Bible Club Movement's first full-time children's workers in the region. In 2003 Martha Tsabedze, an experienced children's ministry leader already working on a volunteer basis in another region of Swaziland, joined BCM as a missionary. Together the two women teach the Word of God to approximately 9000 children a week. And though they may be the only full-time BCM missionaries in Swaziland, many more volunteers minister alongside Assiena and Martha around the country. Altogether 79 volunteer teachers hold 93 Bible Clubs each week. A dozen schools altogether with 600-800 students each are currently permitting the weekly Bible classes. Among the children are a number of Aids orphans.



Assiena Maseko

Both Assiena and Martha have been teaching God's Word to children now for decades, and they intend to continue as long as God gives strength. But they know that won't be forever. Their prayer and burden is that God will raise up new BCM missionaries and volunteers to carry forward the vital mission of reaching Swaziland's next generation with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and raising up a next generation of Christian leadership well-grounded in God's Word.

Because Children Matter

Reaching the 4-14 Window

by Dan Schmidt
USA Director, BCM International

For decades mission groups have spoken of a “10-40 Window,” that section of the planet between 10 and 40 degrees latitude where the majority of people live without a saving, shaping knowledge of Christ. More recently, a very different window has been receiving increasing attention. The “4-14 Window” opens not on a geographical region but on a chronological range: that very sizeable segment of the world’s population between the ages of 4 and 14.

Peering through this window, we see a people group that is spiritually needy—and receptive. We also discover that they are nearby. Yes, one can board a plane or ship and travel to where children are, but they also fill our local neighborhoods and churches, too.

Long before the “4-14 Window” gained popularity, BCM International was founded on a passion for reaching children. The mission’s scope and influence has expanded since its beginnings as the Bible Club Movement in 1936. But children—whether near or far—remain at the heart of why we exist and what we do.

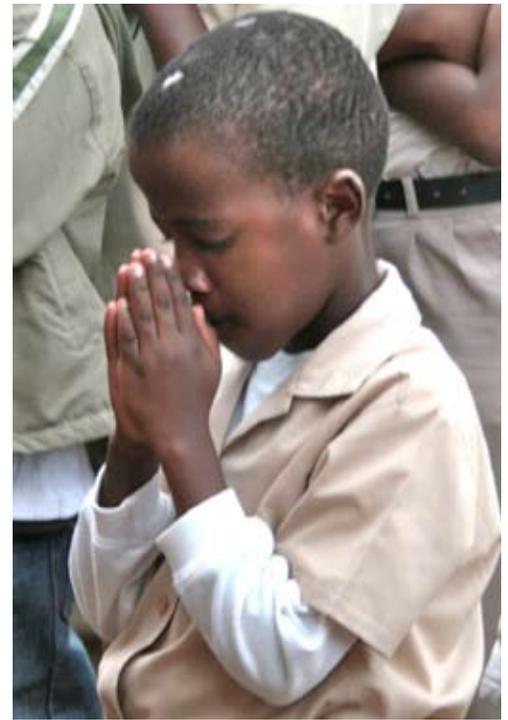


Why Does It Matter?

Children matter to God. Scripture is filled with stories featuring children. Think about Naaman’s servant girl. Daniel and his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah. Samuel. Children crowding around Jesus or healed by Him. A boy offering his lunch. The Bible trumpets God’s love for all He has made, including the young. It clearly acknowledges that children can love and serve the Lord, and that they need Him, too. Jesus too had much to say about the value and faith of children (Mt. 18:2-5; Mk. 10:14-15; Lk. 18:15-17).

The world is full of children. Just over a third of the world’s nearly 7 billion people are age 15 or younger. Children are an especially large part of the population in the global south. While many of these children may live in areas where the gospel has been heard, most children are still living apart from the Lord.

Children are receptive to the gospel. Studies around the world repeatedly indicate that most people who come to faith in Christ do so before the age of 15 while less than 10% receive Christ after the age of 19.



Children are influential. Many cultures prize their children and cater to their needs and desires. Consequently, children have an obvious influence on their elders. Further, children are eager to interact with peers, and these interactions affect both behavior and thought. Some studies show that children who know Jesus are particularly effective in sharing the gospel with others their age.

The physical and spiritual needs of children are underserved. Ironically, in an age when children receive special attention, young ones can also be victims of abuse—at times in the same locales and cultures. Neglect of children is widespread, and many live in desperately poor and unsanitary circumstances. Couple all this with the tendency to focus spiritual resources (like teaching, facilities and programming) on older people, and children are routinely overlooked.

Today, a majority of BCM’s full-time missionaries work directly with children. They lead Bible Clubs during and after school, serve in camps that offer extensive summer programs, and work among young ones on the street. A growing commitment from BCM is to train children’s ministry leaders for local churches so that many more people can be engaged in this work.

In Step with the Master Teacher is BCM’s current tool for training. Building on the intentional training that has long characterized the mission, *ISMT* has been designed for Sunday school teachers and others who interact with kids, providing specific, practical tips and techniques for effective ministry. BCM’s newest resource, *Sharing Christ with Kids*, a joint



development project between BCM, AWANA, and Celebrate Kids, teaches through a practical and interactive four-hour seminar how to boldly and biblically share the gospel with kids.

This commitment to training is in keeping with the recognition that mentoring plays a vital role in a child's discovery of and growth in Christ. Children respond to those who have taken the time to prepare themselves, and once reached, these children typically will mature and want to reach toward other children still needing Jesus.

How Can You Get Involved?

The task of reaching these children is enormous. How might you be involved? Here are some suggestions:

Pray. Pray for children in your neighborhood and in your church. Pray for other neighborhoods, too. Perhaps you have traveled to a country where you've seen or met needy kids. Maybe you know of missionaries in Europe, Africa, Asia, or the Americas whose primary work is with kids. Pray for them to be faithful. Pray for their stamina. Pray for adequate resources to minister effectively.

Contact BCM about hosting a Sharing Christ with Kids or In Step with the Master Teacher workshop. We can send experienced trainers for a 4- or 7-hour session (including lunch!) that will improve skills, build confidence, and share a passion for communicating well with kids.

Consider ways of funding such ministry.

Encourage your church (or your small group or your Sunday school class) to dedicate significant resources to training children already part of the

congregation, and also to reaching out toward other communities and collections of kids. Imagine what happens when bright, passionate people with a vision for discipling children in the ways of Jesus are supported with ample prayer and funds.

Participate. Be a teacher or a helper. Serve at camp for a week or two, or help someone who will work at one. Volunteer as a mentor to a couple of kids who need one.

For 70 years BCM has been among those for whom children are the priority. Like AWANA, CEF, and other agencies, BCM wants to pour energy and experience into pointing kids to Christ and encouraging their maturity as His disciples. Each summer thousands of children in

Europe, Asia, and the Americas attend a BCM camp or a VBS staffed by BCM personnel. When school begins, hundreds of thousands worldwide enroll in BCM-sponsored clubs. Teacher training programs worldwide use the expertise BCM has gained in this ministry to encourage lay and full-time workers in local churches to be even more effective in their efforts with children.

Yes, whether by that name or another, BCM International has always been committed to reaching the "4-14 Window." Through that window we can see millions—no, billions—of people made and loved by our Lord. With His help we—and others with similar passion—can pour our lives into showing and telling about that love to them.



A Legacy of Love

by Chris Martin

In Pakistan, a Muslim country, it is highly unusual for young men and women to be seen together at a public function. But this was a special occasion. Laughter and warm greetings rose amidst steaming bowls of curry and rice as the group of young adults celebrated the return of their former Sunday school teacher, BCM missionary Marion Jean Grant, who had been away in her home country of Canada for the last ten years.

Marion and fellow ministry worker, Elsie, had returned to Multan, Pakistan, as honored speakers of the Girl's Conference, which the two women had first organized twenty years ago. Ten years had broadened shoulders and deepened voices, but Marion greeted each one by name. Though much had changed during her years away, it became evident as Marion reminisced with her former Sunday school students that the impact Christ had made on their lives through her simple acts of love had left a legacy that continued to flourish.

India had been Marion's first choice as a young BCM missionary eager to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with children. Visa complications led her instead to Pakistan, a stark contrast to her hometown of Hamilton, Ontario. Fierce heat and heady fumes were her first vivid impressions of the country where she'd

minister for the next twenty years. Feroza, a faithful Pakistani believer, took Marion under her wing, introducing her to the local women and teaching her how to pray in Urdu, the national language.

Marion's first ministry assignment was supervising and discipling nurses at the Women's Christian Hospital. But it was not long before the children of faculty members and other local youngsters began gathering with her for "Sunday School," which could actually occur any given day. Marion's goal was simple: teach the children how to read the Bible and apply it in their lives.

"If I have to go home to Canada tomorrow, what am I leaving behind?" Marion often asked herself. This concern prompted her to search for creative ways, from Bible drills to interactive lessons, to give the children practical tools for walking in God's Word.

Marion had now gone from being a single foreign missionary without family of her own to "Auntie" of dozens of children. Whether eating



2007 Girl's Conference, Pakistan

meals with their families or inquiring about the children's daily events, Marion found many ways to be involved in their lives and show them Christ's love.

One afternoon on her birthday Marion squeezed her class into her small apartment to celebrate. Playing with balloons was an exciting novelty for the children, many who had never seen one before. They found especially fascinating the relighting birthday candles Marion's home church had sent, and shouted excitedly as the candle's flame would "magically" reappear. These were special years for Marion as she played an active role in guiding many children in their walk with the Lord.

Altogether Marion served twenty-one volatile years in Pakistan. She remembers well the excitement during the 1972 Pakistan/India conflict when she was evacuated by the Canadian Air Force. Eventually Marion returned to Canada to take over another ministry. Occasionally she heard reports on her former Sunday school children. Many of them had managed the turbulent adolescence years well, but Marion was deeply grieved to hear that one student had tragically committed suicide. The news reinforced her desire to reconnect with her students.

So it was with a grateful heart that Marion received the invitation to return to Pakistan to speak at the 2007 Girl's Conference. Her co-speaker, Elsie, had been the former nursing superintendent at the Women's Christian Hospital, and they participated as well in the Nurses Graduation, Elsie giving the commencement address and Marion handing out Bible prizes. A pleasant surprise awaited the two women when they themselves were presented with elegant plaques in gratitude for their work on behalf of the women's ministry.



Marion Jean, Ithimar, Iris, and Elsie

During the eighteen day trip Marion and Elsie also conducted teacher training classes for a hundred teachers and spoke at the Gulzeb Children's Rally, where scores of children heard Marion tell the story of Zacchaeus in Urdu. But Marion longed to see her Sunday school children and encourage them in their spiritual walk. The Director of the Women's Christian Hospital, a church elder, graciously organized a reunion.

Remarkably, twenty-five of the original twenty-nine children were able to attend the reunion. Marion could not get over how much her young students had matured during her time away. David J., once a playful child, now sported a goatee and had aspirations of engineering. Wavy-haired Ithamar was studying hard to get into medical school. Out of 20,000 candidates vying for the opportunity, he became one of 1,529 to be selected, an honor for any young Pakistani.

Over a delicious Pakistani dinner Marion learned as well of the struggles her students had faced during the past decade. But she was thankful to see so many persevering in their relationship with the Lord. Four of the students were baptized this summer. Seven attended the teacher training seminars Marion gave during her visit. Another plays keyboards for church and leads a Bible study. They are eager to be involved in people's lives, the same way Marion had become involved in the lives of a band of youngsters years ago.

As gifts Marion had brought an Evangecube to give to each one. The evening's events reached a crescendo as she challenged them with the Great Call of Matthew 28:19: "Go...and make disciples." Having spent many difficult years ministering in Pakistan, she knew well the hardships they'd face through their faithful testimony in a Muslim culture.

Saying goodbye was difficult, but Marion doesn't see this visit as the end to her ministry with these young people she's grown to love as her own. The Children's Pastor's Conference, being held in Orlando this coming January and in San Diego the beginning of March, will feature Pakistan as their ministry project. Every year this project provides leadership training and resources for children's ministry workers in the selected country. Marion will be returning as a team trainer to teach in Islamabad and Multan, and she plans to organize another reunion for the students. "A lot has happened this year and I want to encourage them."

More than three decades ago Marion came to Pakistan with the vision of teaching children to follow God. But if you ask her today, she'd tell you she has learned just as much from their own lives. "It's not just the Bible stories I told that grew students in their faith," Marion reflects, "but the things done outside of training, getting involved in their lives, that made my time with them so significant."

This is the legacy of love Marion Jean Grant left in Multan, Pakistan, which by God's grace continues to grow and change lives to this day.



Marion Jean with two former teacher training students

Grandfather and grandmother (ages mid-70's) wish to donate to a BCM ministry, but also to fund or help fund college education for an 18-year-old grandchild scheduled to graduate from high school Spring of 2008. The grandparents own \$100,000 in municipal bonds (any amount can be used; we're using \$100,000 as an example because it is an easy multiple to comprehend). They no longer need the bonds for income or just care more for the grandchild than the 5% income generated by the bonds.

They place the bonds in a 4 year charitable remainder trust (CRT), at which time they receive a tax deduction equal to 85% of their contribution (\$85,000). The deduction is based on their attained ages. The grandparents remain the income beneficiaries of the 4 year CRT. At 5%, the income produced by the bonds will be \$5,000. Since the income comes from municipal bonds, none is taxable. They in turn will contribute the \$5,000 to the grandchild's college of choice. College payments would not be considered a taxable gift to the grandchild.

At the end of four years of college, the CRT will distribute the bonds to a Donor Advised Fund with BCM for future distributions to BCM at the recommendation of the grandparents and their family members over the next 10 years. Not only will they be contributing to BCM ministry, the grandparents will have reduced their taxable estate by \$100,000.

What are the costs to the grandparents? There is cost to draft the CRT documents, estimated to be around \$500, and an annual administration fee of 1% of assets in the CRT, all of which is tax deductible. **Please feel free to request an illustration by calling the BCM Development Department at 717-859-6404.**

Joe MacMichael
Director of Development

Natural Disaster Opens Doors to Gospel

by Jennifer Hamilton with Marion Odicio

Around dinnertime on August 15th, 2007, the earth moved.

Wilfredo, pastor of the Acomayo church in Ica, Peru, along with his wife, Raquel, held on as a massive earthquake struck the city of a half-million population. Measuring 8.1 on the Richter scale, it reduced sixty percent of the city to wooden beams propped like matchsticks against crumbled walls. The Pan-American Highway buckled, leaving huge gaps, stranding people in the demolished city.

When it was over, Wilfredo and Raquel looked out over the destruction. This was the second time in their marriage when their lives and city had been swept away by disaster. But this time a personal faith in God's love and sovereignty gave them strength and courage to begin picking up the pieces.

Eight years before, a massive landslide destroyed almost half of Ica. Not long after, BCM Peru organized a group of Christian *karatekas*, karate experts doing demonstrations, to come to Ica to share the gospel. A young man named Wilfredo and his wife, Raquel, had been attending the Acomayo church for a month. In the landslide they lost all they had. During one of the karateka performances Wilfredo "finally came to understand," as he puts it, trusting Christ for salvation. Raquel accepted Christ

soon after. Today Wilfredo, now a pastor, and Raquel, along with their family, live in the Baptist Seminary in Ica, helping others also to "finally understand."

BCM missionaries Marion Odicio and Jonatan Odicio (Marion's son) had been in Ica the day of the earthquake, finishing up six sessions of Teacher Training at the Baptist Seminary. They left as fellow BCM missionaries Daniel and Joan Irrazabal and Zarela Funegra de Neyra arrived to continue the Teacher Training. Marion and Jonatan had been back at IBYM (Peru Bible Institute and camp) not four hours when the earthquake hit. Amazingly IBYM suffered only minor aftershocks and fallen picture frames. Daniel, Joan (who was five months pregnant), and Zarela were unhurt, but stranded in Ica due to the damage to the Pan-American Highway.

BCM Peru quickly organized a team of sixty IBYM students and missionaries to minister to the ravaged city. They gathered utensils, tools and food supplies, which had grown scarce in the city, to take with them. The team was lodged at the Ica Bible Institute, which had suffered minimal damage. There they set up a central kitchen, supplying their own kitchen crew as well as a nurse to attend to any needs.

Coordinating with a local pastor, Otto Hurtado, father of a BCM missionary as well as one of the IBYM students, the group organized

into work teams, each one equipped with tracts, tools, first aid kit, and a cell phone. Then they moved out to implement what they called Operation Filipo (Philippi) with three ministry objectives: 1) A Message to Tell, 2) Hearts to Share, and 3) Hands to Work.

A MESSAGE TO TELL

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20

Each team engaged in personal evangelism, distribution of gospel tracts, and children's outreach in the neighborhood of the local church they were helping with cleanup.

In just 2 days, 351 people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ!

Jackie, a second year student, met a woman wearing a "wordless" bracelet of colorful beads. The woman said she wasn't a Christian, but her son, who attended an evangelical church, had given the bracelet to her. Jackie seized the moment to share the gospel and led her to Christ, using the woman's own bracelet.

Two lots away from where Lucho, a BCM missionary, was working, some troopers were doing demolition as well. Since the soldiers had little food, Lucho's team shared their own food and Christ with them. Two soldiers made a public profession of faith in front of their peers.

While Fernando's (the BCM gardener) team was heading to work, they shared the gospel on the bus. A lady listening asked about the group. Daniel, a first year IBYM student, told her about BCM and the mission they were on in Ica. She was a Christian and to aid in their efforts paid the bus fare for Fernando's entire group.

On Saturday efforts were combined to present a "Pennies for Peru" activity (coordinated evangelistic program for children) in three different locations. At night, the entire BCM group went to a youth meeting in one of the churches where they had been invited to conduct the program.





On Sunday night a special “Service of Praise” was held at the Tinguña Baptist Church, with some 120 people present. Gian Carlo, one of the IBYM students from Ica, gave his testimony, sharing of his decision to prepare for ministry despite his family’s opposition, and how the Lord had sustained him for two years at IBYM. Today all his family members have become Christians. Jonatan Odicio, BCM missionary, shared a message from the Word about how, even in the midst of storms, God is still God.

HEARTS TO SHARE

“Rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn.” Romans 12:15

Each team sought to be an encouragement to those affected by the earthquake by being present with them, hearing their stories, praying with them, and offering consolation.

Álvaro, a first year student, came across a little girl who badly needed a wash up. Getting out his water bottle, he cleaned her face and hands. The next day, when he returned to his work place, the little girl was waiting to share a cookie with him.

Richard and Christy, a Christian couple, had been cooking meals for the Teacher Training team from their restaurant in the center of Ica. They lost both restaurant and home in the earthquake. The team spent an evening singing, praying, and sharing encouragement from the Word with them. Richard shared how he had been able to save three people from underneath the rubble of a neighbor’s house.

HANDS TO WORK

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.” Colossians 3:23

Each team also engaged in demolition, clearing, repairing, and cleaning as needed, whether church buildings, parsonage, homes of church families, or homes of the unsaved.

The team had the privilege to minister to several people who were in the Teacher Training class the very day of the earthquake. Two weeks later, the team was helping break down the walls of their homes and clear out the rubbish.

Roy, a first year student, was clearing an area full of rubbish and got the scare of his life when he heard a little girl’s voice underneath the adobe bricks. Carefully removing the bricks, he found a talking doll.

A group headed by Daniel, BCM missionary, was working in a place called San Camilo. A truck with soft drinks passed by where they were demolishing. The truck stopped, the driver got off, and presented each one of them a bottle of soda pop.

El Chaco, the ABWE camp in Pisco, reduced to rubble, was torn down and cleared away. Eight houses and seven churches were demolished and cleaned up as well.

In one week approximately 1450 people were witnessed to in a personal encounter with someone from BCM and 965 people made a decision to accept Christ.

“BCM might enter the Ica history books as the mission that tore down churches instead of building them,” writes Marion Odicio. “But what has been built in the lives of the people in Ica, and in the hearts of IBYM students, will never be forgotten – not during this lifetime or in the one to come!”

Carlos Odicio, Marion’s husband and Director of BCM Peru, summed up the week in Ica best: “All glory and honor belongs to God Almighty!”



Celebrating God's Church in the Equatorial Rainforest

by Jeanette Windle with Imro Smit

The village lay 1½ hours Cessna flight from the Suriname capital of Paramaribo on the bank of a river deep into the equatorial jungle. It was hardly a commercial center to draw plane-load after plane-load, canoe-load after canoe-load of Amerindian and Maroon (descendants of escaped African slaves) delegations from a radius that reached into Brazil and French Guiana as well as Suriname. Except that this year, November 1-5, 2007, the Wayana tribal community of Kawemhakan was hosting the Interior Bible Conference, an annual gathering of the Baptist Union, Suriname's only national association of churches among the scattered Amerindian and Maroon villages of that small South American country's vast rainforest interior.

BCM missionary Imro Smit was one of the conference speakers. Imro's ties with the Baptist Union go far back. In the 1950s missionaries of the [then] West Indies Mission [now Worldteam] had begun outreach among the Amerindian and Maroon tribes of Suriname's interior. People came to Christ, and churches were established. In time these churches along with others in the Suriname capital and coastal towns joined together to become the Union of Baptist Churches.

In 1963 two WIM missionaries, Pat Taylor and Mildred Milam, came to Paramaribo to open a hostel for the children of missionaries working in the interior so they could attend school in town. In 1968 they transferred to the [then] Bible Club Movement [now Bible Centered Ministries International], the



Imro Smit baptizes a man from the stone-aged Akurian tribe of the Suriname interior

beginning of BCM ministry in Suriname. Imro Smit was saved in a BCM children's camp. In 1970 he left Suriname to attend Jamaica Bible College. Founder and Director of WIM Elmer Thompson was one of Imro's teachers. On returning to Suriname, Imro joined BCM as a missionary. He later attended Columbia Graduate School (now Columbia International University) where he met and married his wife Linda, a fellow student.

Today Imro and Linda, along with other BCM missionaries and volunteers, have developed an active ministry of Bible Clubs, Christian camping, youth outreach, and church planting along with leadership and teacher training among area churches. They continue in close fellowship and cooperation with their Baptist Union brothers and sisters in Christ. So when Imro was invited by them to speak and produce a media presentation at the annual Interior Bible Conference, he jumped at the opportunity.

The five-day conference is not a schedule for the faint-hearted. The Surinamese have an intricate and well-developed music tradition blended from African, South Asian [India], and Amerindian roots, and they love to sing. Singing roused villagers and conference delegates from hammocks by

4 AM, breaking at 6 AM for bathing in the river and breakfast. After breakfast the sound of a cow horn called the people to church, and the serious core of the conference began.

Five speakers taught each day, preceded and followed by more music. With translation into one, two, and sometimes even three different tribal languages, meetings were lively and long. After a short break for supper, church delegations presented their own special music, carefully rehearsed and choreographed for the occasion, until late into the night.

Some three hundred conference delegates swelled the population of the village, filling to overflowing the makeshift thatched visitor huts. More than 100 children gathered each day for their own meetings. Forty-nine adults and children received Christ during the conference and were baptized on the final day of the conference. As one of the Bible teachers, Imro was privileged to baptize four. The first was an Akurio Indian, member of a stone-age tribe discovered only in the last century by missionaries [see photo]. Imro also videotaped and took many pictures, producing a commemorative record for the churches in DVD format.

To date, BCM's ministry in Suriname has been largely in the capital of Paramaribo, where half the country's population lives. But Imro Smit sees a great need for solid Bible teaching among the scattered interior churches where resources and trained pastors remain scarce. His involvement in this year's Interior Bible Conference has affirmed Imro's own burden to reach out to meet that need in any way he can.

"Plans are already underway for the conference next year," Imro shares. "It seems as if the Lord is enlarging our borders, and we would enlist your prayers for His leading."



United in Purpose: BCM International European Conference 2007

by Chris Martin

Nestled among the wooded hills of the Beskidy Mountains, the charming town of Ustroń, Poland, is renowned for its crisp air and peaceful ambiance. Such peace was far from the case elsewhere in the country. Amidst rising political tensions from the upcoming election, and just as nearly one hundred BCM missionaries and guests began filtering into the town for the biannual BCM European Conference, the Polish customs guards had gone on strike.

Caught on the far side of the border was the BCM Ukraine team. To make their disappointment more keen, the Ukrainians had missed the last conference two years earlier due to visa complications. As an SOS went out, churches, missionaries, and fellow Christians literally around the world began to pray. The conference was starting when the good news came. The strike had been lifted, and the Ukraine team had arrived in Ustroń. It was the perfect beginning for a conference whose theme was *Standing Firm, Striving Together*.

Missionaries and guests at the 2007 BCM European Conference traveled to Poland from across Western Europe, the former Soviet bloc, and the United Kingdom. BCM President Rev. Martin Windle, VP of International Ministries Dr. Vararuchi Dalavai, as well as Dr. Bob

Evans, former BCM president, arrived from Pennsylvania with other IMC (International Ministry Center) personnel. BCM missionary Olga Zaitseva, one of the Ukraine team who'd made it across the border, translated into Polish and Ukrainian.



wife Dasia, graciously hosted the conference, led a guided tour of Kraków, the spiritual and cultural hearth of Poland. This included visits to the Wawel Castle and Oskar Schindler's enamelware factory.

The theme of *Standing Firm, Striving Together* could be seen in action in the fellowship and spirit of unity among the very different cultures and ministry settings represented. One consensus that emerged from the conference was a need for strong team relationships and partnerships with

Exhausted ministry workers found refreshment each morning as keynote speaker Dr. Frank Severn, missionary and former SEND International president, ministered from God's Word. Seminars filled the rest of the day. Workshops dealt with team-building and innovative ways to share the gospel, a vital topic to BCM, a mission founded on creative child evangelism. Christmas morning came to mind as new ministry products were introduced.

"The world has changed around us and what worked before doesn't work as well now," explains BCM Missionary Esther Zimmerman, one of the key seminar speakers during the conference.

Evenings were spent with ministry updates as BCM representatives from the U.K., Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union presented ministries and prayer needs. As PowerPoint presentations flickered on the overhead screen, an underlying call emerged: "Spiritual growth is slow within our country, and the work ahead is too great to be done alone; we need more workers."

Despite a full schedule there was still time to enjoy the natural beauty and historical significance of Poland. Chair-lifts ferried conferees to catch breath-taking scenery atop the pristine Czantoria Mountains, which border Poland and the Czech Republic. BCM missionary John Abramovich who, along with

local churches and organizations. This initiative was carried forward over the next three days as BCM leadership from Eastern and Western Europe remained in Ustroń for the follow-up LEADS conference. The purpose for LEADS, standing for *Leadership Enrichment Assessment Development of Servant Skills*, was to encourage current leaders and develop new leadership.

BCM conferees left Ustroń with few illusions. Europe remains a difficult mission field with few short-term results. "Out of all BCM, Europe is by far the most challenging and needy," says VP of International Ministry, Dr. Vararuchi Dalavai. But a renewed pledge to unity and excitement to serve the Lord were also very much in evidence. *Standing Firm, Striving Together*, BCM Europe is committed to reach their countries and continent for Christ.



BCM LEADS event



Oskar Schindler's Enamelware Factory

Discover Jesus *More Than Just a Theme*

by Larry Chupa, Director
Mill Stream Bible Camp
Omeme, Ontario, Canada

Mill Stream Bible Camp's 2007 summer season was another amazing time with new campers and staff joining returning ones and making new friendships. A special thrill was to talk to leaders prior to the start of camp and discover that all had attended Mill Stream as children. Now they are taking on leadership roles.

Discover Canada, Discover Mill Stream, Discover Jesus, was the 2007 camp theme.



Discover Jesus

"Discover Jesus" proved far more than just a theme as many campers made decisions to follow Christ's steps and develop a relationship with God. This summer's Bible theme was *Our God is Able*. Campers learned that God is able to do anything, help them through anything, and is big enough to help them overcome the giants in their lives. The theme proved very real as the summer turned out to be one of the hottest and driest on record. Our God protected campers and staff from any major injury and harm, as we know He is able to do.

Over thirty-eight children made a commitment to follow Christ. Eight children attended from refugee families. Many of these children shared concern for family members. Please continue to pray for these children, that the Bible stories they have heard will sustain them over the months and that doors will open for these children to attend Christian programs and churches.

Discover Canada

Each cabin had a province or territory assigned to them. Their dining-room tables and cabins displayed the flag of their province. Campers were educated in unique ways concerning Canadian animals, locations, and inventions.

Discover Mill Stream

A variety of instructional electives and recreational activities were offered each day. Special features such as the Rubber Ducky Race over the falls were very exciting. Dress-up days such as Fisherman Day, Multicultural Day, and Lumberjack Day displayed Canada's diverse nature. The multicultural aspect was true-life as campers included children from countries such as South Korea, Afghanistan, and Somalia. Fun times in the pool, on the river, at the barn, learning new campfire songs, and making new friends are among the happy memories campers have carried home.

