

IN THIS ISSUE:

4

Not My Home

6

Footsteps of Faith in War-Torn Congo

8

From Bible Camp to Mayor

10

Changing Ukraine, One Heart at a Time

12

New Vision for Bolivia

13

La Niña Becomes Instrument of Love

14

Living Water in the Navajo Nation

16

Refined by Suffering

19

Training Trainers in South Africa

20

International Leadership Changes

Change a Heart... Change a Nation

Change. A favorite slogan during any election campaign, change is a word we dread as much as desire. We long for change to make things better. We fear change will make things worse. And too often, even when we get the change we've fought for, whether geographical, political, economic, or social, we find ourselves disappointed. Why? Because though our circumstances may be changed, we ourselves are still the same and so are those around us.

You see, change that truly transforms society comes through changed hearts, not circumstances. And hearts change only when they are restored to personal relationship with their Creator and heavenly Father through the love of Jesus Christ and transforming power of the Holy Spirit. When God promised



restoration to an idolatrous, wicked Israel, He described it this way: "I will give you a new heart . . . I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26). When enough individual hearts change from hate to love, cruelty to kindness, greed to selflessness, their society will never be the same.

In this issue you will meet some of the BCM family worldwide who are changing their societies, one heart at a time. In war-torn Congo, 15,000 newly-printed *Footsteps of Faith* series on Christ's life, death, and resurrection in Bangala and Swahili offer more hope than guns or aid packages. A Ukrainian couple just can't keep to themselves how God's love changed their lives. In the midst of persecution, Orissa Christians choose courage over fear as thirteen hundred show up for a BCM lay leader training conference. Whether Bolivia, Peru, Ireland, South Africa, or a Navajo reservation, changing children's hearts is also giving them a future. Indeed, you might say change is what BCM is all about.

Change a heart, change a nation.

Jeanette Windle

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BCM International is a global 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.



FROM THE PRESIDENT



"The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it."

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NLT)

With the rainy, snowy, cold days of winter coming to a close, spring is slowly beginning to show the pastel colors of new beginnings and life. The Lord, in keeping with the weather and his timeless sense of humor, brought the above two verses from Isaiah across my path as I wondered and prayed about BCM and what this next year holds for us. These words of promise look beyond today's less-than-ideal conditions and into tomorrow's blessed fall harvest where the air is filled with the aroma of bread in the hands of the hungry. The rain and snow of poor economies, unsettling politics, and other crises will become trivial inconveniences as we recognize their role in God's plan for blessing and provision for us. Truly His word accomplishes all that He desires, and prospers everywhere He sends it.

One of the ways that God has prospered BCM over the years is through the leadership He raises up at opportune times and places. From the days when Miss Bessie Traber founded BCM until the present, He has provided the leaders that we needed when we needed them.

With that in mind, I am privileged to announce that during BCM Europe Leadership Meetings held this March 2009 in Putten, Holland, Rev. Dale Sigafoos was appointed BCM's Europe Director. Rev. Sigafoos provides timely and godly leadership to the ministry areas of Eastern and Western Europe as well as U.K./Ireland. At that same meeting, two men were appointed to assist as area coordinators. Mr. Richard Thompson (Director Ireland) will minister as UK/Ireland Regional Coordinator. Mr. John Abramovich (Director Poland) will minister as Eastern Europe Regional Coordinator.

The following week in Johannesburg, South Africa, Rev. John Peter was appointed as BCM's first Africa Director, and Mr. Harvey Leslie Kodi was appointed as the South Africa Assistant. Pray for each of these men as they provide leadership for the spreading of the Word through the rains and snows of the days ahead.

vially

Blessings

Rev. Marty Windle



NOT MY HOME

by Lisa Biegert

As a teenager, I had a T-shirt picturing a globe that read, "This world is not my home, although it seems to be. My home is with my God in the place He's made for me. He's comin' back real soon, the signs are very clear. So when the trumpet sounds, I'll be outta here!"

That poem meant a lot more to me when I began moving on a regular basis. I was seven years old when I felt the Lord calling me into full-time ministry. I wanted to be a missionary like my hero, Gladys Aylward, missionary to China years ago. In 2005 I married my husband Brian, who also felt God calling him to ministry. After graduating from New Tribes Bible Institute in Wisconsin, we joined Bible Centered Ministries International, a mission that shares our own vision to "Reach Children and Plant Churches Worldwide," and began a two year journey that landed us on March 3, 2009, in Peru.

BCM Peru is a thriving ministry, based outside the capital city of Lima in a village called Picapiedra, where their Bible Institute campus houses students and most of the Peruvian missionary families. For now, we are the only Americans living on campus. Brian is head of maintenance, and I facilitate home school courses for five missionary children. We are both thrilled to be doing what we love: fix stuff and teach! We will be involved with other ministries as well.

As much as we relish this new life, it was a difficult transition. The last two years have held two moves, four cross-country drives, twelve weeks of training, and more goodbyes than we care to count.

We sold our first home as a married couple, left good jobs, friends, and family, and moved from South Dakota to Pennsylvania. After BCM orientation we began the process of deputation, pausing in the middle for nine weeks of cross-cultural preparation. After over a year of living in my old bedroom in my parents' house, we finally obtained our needed support and were ready to leave.

Before leaving South Dakota two years ago, I remember thinking about how if we moved to South America, our future children would never grow up in Boy Scouts of America. We wouldn't be selling those famous Girl Scout cookies or attending PTA meetings. We wouldn't be worrying about getting our kids to basketball practice. Our kids will grow up not knowing things we took for granted – like the scent of snow in the air or visiting relatives.

How could I ever deprive them of those things? I found myself wondering in that quiet morning two years ago. Yet at the same time, our children will be bilingual, understand multiple cultures, and understand better than we ever will that heaven, not earth, is home.

I've moved once a year for the past eight years, so moving is not new to me. However, moving to another continent and only being able to take four suitcases and two carry-ons was new. But God is faithful. When we left South Dakota, I remember taking a mental inventory of everything we owned. We had just moved into our house as newlyweds six months before. Yet as I stood in the living room figuring out what we would actually keep, I realized none of it



BCM Peru Bible Institute campus

mattered. As long as we were following the Lord's will, we could leave it all behind with no regrets.

The same thing happened as we were packing for Peru. We found out just before we flew that we could bring only four suitcases when we'd planned on taking six. So we had just a few days to figure out what was staying, what was going, what must come down immediately (we could bring two suitcases), and what could wait for two American girls arriving a few weeks later. Yet taking less proved more a relief than an anxiety. Not only is this world not our home, but the Lord Himself is all we truly need to survive.

During the last two years we've had so many people tell us they could never do what we are doing. We've had even more people tell us that we must be so excited to be going on such a great adventure. Both statements always caught us off guard. We believe that when God calls you to do something, He also equips you to handle it. We also realize that even though some days our new life does seem like an adventure, most days we'll just be working.

We were also caught off guard by how hard it was to explain what we were thinking and feeling as we prepared to leave. Yes, we were excited. But there was some fear and trepidation at leaving all we'd known to join a team we didn't know, who speaks a foreign language and is already functioning very well. Our lives were being left behind along with family and friends.

Saying goodbyes were difficult. We knew we'd be able to use Skype and talk to (and see!) our families while in Peru. But there is something reassuring about talking on the phone within the same country. It was hard leaving our small group at our church that we'd come to know and love. It was hard leaving behind two pregnant sisters, knowing we'll miss years of our new nieces' or nephews' lives.

And yet when we boarded the plane, we both shed tears of joy as we prayed and thanked God for bringing us this far. We were finally going home – a place we hadn't been to in two years. It was superbly comforting to know we were in the center of God's will for us.

Still, landing in Peru was again a shock, physically and mentally. We'd flown from Florida where it was 45 degrees Fahrenheit to arrive in Lima at almost midnight to about 80 degrees and humid. We'd left English speakers to be surrounded by thousands of people jabbering what seemed to be the world's fastest language, Spanish. As we left the airport, I looked at my husband to see his eyes opened wide, looking more lost than I ever thought he could be. As we went to bed in our new home at 1:30 AM, we looked at each other, and said, "What in the world are we getting ourselves into?"

But now that the initial shock has worn off, we are so content to be here. Everyone here has accepted us and made us feel welcome. And we're excited to begin our new ministry.

My favorite verses recently have been Hebrews 11:13-16 (NIV). The author is speaking of the heroes of faith who died without ever receiving in their lifetime the promises from God. They realized they were "aliens and strangers" here on earth. "If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return" (vs.15). But they were longing for something better—a heavenly homeland. Verse 16 says, "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them."

Brian and I had every reason to stay where we were or to return back there. But, we don't want to because there's something better. Our hearts are here in Peru, and we are so glad to be here! We don't care how hard it is going to be or how confusing the language will be for the first few months (years?). We don't mind getting sick. We don't even mind getting lost the first time we take the bus.

Why? This world is not our home. We are merely passing through. We look forward to that trumpet sound (which we were kind of hoping might have been while we were on the plane!) calling us to our heavenly homeland. But for now we are where God wants us, and Peru is our home. We wouldn't trade being here for anything else this world has to offer.

To follow Brian and Lisa Biegert's ministry with BCM Peru or sign up for their ministry news, check out their blog at http://brianlisabiegert.wordpress.com/



BCM Peru evangelistic outreach



by Margery Dickinson with Jeanette Windle

"You want 15,000 copies of BCM's *Footsteps of Faith* Bible lessons on the death and resurrection of Christ? To be delivered to DRC? Exactly where is that?"

Located at the center of the African continent, DRC, or Democratic Republic of Congo, is Africa's second largest country, roughly one-quarter the size of the United States with a population of 68 million. Formerly Belgian Congo, DRC was renamed when it attained independence in 1960. Rubber, diamonds, gold, oil, and numerous other mineral reserves make it one of the most naturally wealthy regions on Earth. But as memorialized in the Joseph Conrad classic *Heart of Darkness*, that wealth spawned one of the most brutal colonial eras ever documented. Once Portuguese explorers discovered the Congo in the 1500s, slave raids and trading decimated its population. Under Belgian colonial rule, millions more died through forced labor and horrific working conditions in rubber plantations and mines.

Independence did not bring peace. A succession of dictators and rebel uprisings destroyed much of the infrastructure built during colonial days, including DRC's network of roads and railways. Then after some unstable years in the late 1990s following neighboring Rwanda's crisis, full civil war broke out. While it officially ended five years later, tribal fighting and rebel raids continue to this day, especially in eastern DRC. The war and its aftermath have resulted in the death of four million people, with more than three million people internally displaced. News headlines are a constant succession of atrocities.

And yet in the midst of undeniable darkness, God is building His Church in the Congo—and BCM International is privileged to play a role. While after five hundred years of Belgian rule, more than 80% of Congolese consider themselves "Christian," much of this is a syncretistic animism that places more faith in witchdoctors than the Bible. But missionaries have been taking the gospel into DRC since the 1800s, including well-known missionary explorer David Livingston. The largest Protestant denomination in DRC today is CECA, a French acrostic for the Evangelical Church in the Center of Africa. Founded in 1912 by Africa Inland Mission, CECA has a membership of between one and two million, with over 1,000 local churches concentrated mainly within a 200-mile radius of northeast DRC, but including new church plants in Kinshasa, the capital, and Kisangani, DRC's second largest city.

BCM missionary Margery Dickinson served in partnership with Africa Inland Mission in DRC from 1970 to 1984, teaching Bible Clubs in public schools and villages and training hundreds of Congolese Christian children's ministry leaders. During that time Margery translated BCM's Footsteps of Faith curriculum on the life of Christ into Bangala, while CECA Christian Education leader Samson Dhedonga translated it into Congo Swahili. These were first run off by the hundreds on mimeograph machines, then printed by the thousands at the Brethren Church's Nyankunde Press in DRC, later reprinted at AIM's Rethy Press, and eventually by BCM's own press in Philadelphia. During those fifteen years, 17,000 copies of Footsteps lessons were disseminated to trained church leaders throughout CECA's northeast corner of DRC. BCM's Bible Club program became the official children's outreach for the Christian Education Department of the CECA denomination.



Margery Dickinson

During the war years, most expatriate missionaries and aid personnel were forced to evacuate from DRC. Hospitals, printing presses, church buildings, and Christian schools were damaged. Christian literature, including much of the BCM material, was destroyed. But despite staggering obstacles, CECA churches have continued to grow and remain true to the Word of God. While few expatriate missionaries have yet been able to return, a new generation of Congolese Christian workers are committed to carrying the gospel across their own war-torn land.

Due to health difficulties, Margery Dickinson left DRC in 1984 for a new ministry in Member Care at BCM headquarters in Philadelphia, but she continued in regular contact with her co-workers back in the Congo. In 2001 CECA leadership wrote Margery, telling of their need for 8,000 copies of *Footsteps of Faith* through the Gospels, Volume 1, covering Christ's early life and ministry. Donations provided \$8,000 to print the books in Bangala and Swahili at Kijabe, Kenya. DIGUNA, a German Mission group specializing in evangelism, transported the materials into DRC just before tribal warfare devastated Bunia, where CECA is headquartered. Despite the chaos and some loss of material, the curriculum volumes were distributed among CECA churches. But with the continuing conflict and resulting difficulties in communication, little was heard about their impact.

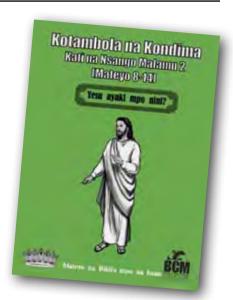
Then on May 22, 2008, Margery received a letter from CECA Christian Education Director, Rev. James Djadri. The Bangala and Swahili churches were using the Gospels, Volume 1 on Christ's life and ministry. Now they wanted 15,000 copies of Volume 2 on Christ's death and resurrection. It was a tall order, but God began to open doors. Cistern Materials Translation and Publishing Center in Nairobi, Kenya, under director Sam Chege and manager Jefferson Kabiro Gathu, are a team that is eager to spread the gospel through the printed word. They agreed to print all 10,000 copies in Bangala and 5000 in Swahili for \$10,100. Donations soon covered this, and in March 2009 the Cistern team finished the 10,000 Bangala Footsteps lessons, followed in April by the Swahili lessons.

But how to get them into a country where much of road and air travel has shut down? Enter DIGUNA again. An acrostic in German for The Good News for Africa, DIGUNA works in DRC under the evangelism department of the CECA church, and also serves in Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan. Its members specialize in mobile

evangelism, using 4-wheel-drive vehicles to reach remote areas. Half of its two hundred missionaries are African nationals. Having seen the effectiveness of Footsteps materials in evangelizing children, DIGUNA committed to transporting all 15,000 copies into DRC at no cost to BCM.

PRAY for peace in DRC, and for safe transportation of Bangala and Swahili Footsteps materials among the Congolese churches, a difficult task given road conditions and instability. PRAY for the impact of Christ's death and resurrection on Congolese hearts to bring them to faith in a Savior. PRAY that CECA's once-flourishing Bible Club program will be revived, and that through it many children will be discipled for Christ.

Gifts to strengthen this ministry may be designated for BCM's Congo Literature Project.



Right: Cover of Footsteps of Faith, New Testament, Volume 2 in Bangala.

Below: DIGUNA representative with Congolese children.



FROM BIBLE CAMP TO MAYOR

by Bob Evans

The 60th Anniversary celebration of BCM Northern Ireland this past November in Lisburn, Northern Ireland, had a special guest, the city's mayor, Councillor Ronnie Crawford. As a young teenager, Crawford was part of the very first BCM Northern Ireland youth camp at Carnlough in August 1966. Today as mayor, Crawford is only one of countless Irish children reached through six decades of BCM ministry who have grown up to become adults making a vital impact on their society.



Lisburn mayor Councillor Ronnie Crawford

"The theological foundation for my life," the mayor shared at the celebration, "came as a result of attending BCM camps and Bible Clubs."

The "wee" island called Ireland is actually two separate countries. Sometimes referred to as Ulster, the northern part belongs to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Republic of Ireland occupies 80% of the land and holds approximately 70% of its total 5.7 million population. BCM ministry in Ireland began in the northern city of Lisburn in 1948. The first afternoon Bible Clubs were held in a small hut on the local YWCA property. Among the first volunteers was school teacher Tom McKinstry. He had been asking the Lord to show him how to reach children and young people of Northern Ireland for Christ. Sometime later BCM sent its first full-time missionary from England, a young lady named Joan. It wasn't long before Tom and Joan became Mr. and Mrs. McKinstry.

Tom left his teaching job in 1967, allowing the McKinstrys to expand Bible Clubs, evangelistic rallies, and teacher training classes to cities and towns around the country. Area Bible Clubs came together for annual sports days in Lisburn's Castle Gardens and Wallace Park

and for rallies where clubbers competed enthusiastically for awards in Bible memorization and inter-club quizzing.

As the ministry increased in Northern Ireland, God led two Americans, Alice Lloyd and Claire Burford, to begin BCM ministry in the Republic of Ireland. They followed a similar pattern of children's Bible Clubs, five-day Sunshine Clubs, and teacher training seminars. In 1970 a significant development impacted this ministry. Alice and Claire received an invitation from the Sandes Soldiers Home at the Curragh Army Camp in County Kildare to start a Bible Club for boys. Within a few years, more than 250 boys were attending.

This led to opportunities for ministry to women, some being mothers of these boys and the establishing of a Ladies Club that still meets today. The Ladies Club led to a Sunday night Fellowship Meeting that eventually resulted in the planting of Newbridge Bible Fellowship Church by two American missionary couples, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lenahan and Mr. and Mrs. Brian Duffield.

Camping has been a vital part of BCM's global ministry strategy. BCM Northern Ireland has held annual camps since that 1966 summer camp attended by a future Lisburn mayor. In 1978 God provided Mullartown House Camp, a beautifully situated property on the coast of the Irish Sea. Around 1970 the Republic of Ireland missionaries began holding their own camps on rented properties.





Today more than a thousand children and youth attend BCM camps throughout Ireland each summer.

Over the years more than two dozen missionaries from home and abroad have ministered with BCM in both parts of Ireland. Some are still there reaching children, young people, and adults for Christ, directing camps, teaching clubs, evangelizing, discipling, planting new churches, and assisting existing ones. This group has been bolstered by hundreds of volunteers who serve as trustees, committee members, teachers, helpers, and camp counselors. An example is the children's ministry begun in Kilkenny, Republic of Ireland in 1970. Started by Mervyn and Joyce Young and numerous members of the Harper Family, these clubs continue today with well over 100 children and young people attending.

After six decades, the fruit of BCM ministry in Ireland can be found today in thousands of young people and adults now living their faith

in Jesus Christ, not just across that country, but literally around the world. Ruth and Keith Henderson grew up attending BCM Bible Clubs and camps, then served as volunteers. Today they are missionaries in Australia. But they have never forgotten the impact of BCM missionaries and volunteers on their lives.

"Our greatest memories of BCM and Mullartown House Camp are spiritual. It was a place where we found ourselves being grounded on the precious Word of God. The continual challenge to live a spiritfilled life and to permit God to have control of our life did not go unembraced by us. Part of the reason we are in full-time service today at the other side of the world is because of the challenge given to us in those missionary meetings at Mullartown."

Mullartown House Camp is adding a much-needed wing to its existing building. They still need \$182,500 to complete this building project. Please contact the BCM UK office at info@bcm.org.uk if you are interested. Also, the BCM team in the Republic of Ireland are praying for God's provision of funding for a permanent camp property. If you are interested in participating this ministry, please contact BCM Ireland Director Richard Thompson at randjthompson@eircom.net.



CHANGING UKRAINE, ONE HEART AT A TIME

by Dawn Moore

"The Ukranian people are fed up and calling for change," says BCM Ukraine missionary Igor Kotenko.

And with good reason. A former Soviet republic, Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe with a population of 46 million. Upheld as a Western model of free-market democracy, the country is currently rocked by financial and political instability. A recent dispute with neighboring Russia over natural gas has resulted in shortages, super inflation, even going without heat when gas shipments were halted. Ukraine's currency, the hryvna, has devalued to the point where banks have issued cash limits, and Ukrainians stand in the freezing cold for hours to withdraw daily amounts of their savings. Disillusionment reigns.

But in the village of Kijliv, fifty miles from Kiev, Ukraine's capital, change is just what Igor and his wife Oxana are committed to bringing to their countrymen. The same change that transformed their own lives when they came face to face with God's Word and a Savior's love.

As successful professionals, Igor and Oxana Kotenko were steadily building a life together. A Ph.D., Igor was on faculty at Kiev Polytechnic University. Oxana had graduated from Odessa Business and Accounting University. They were raising two sons, Roddy and Eugene. Then thirty-seven year old Igor went to the Kiev market to buy food. There for the first time, he picked up a Bible. As he held it in his hands, he knew he had to have it.

Instead of his groceries, Igor spent almost half of his salary, 80 rubles, on the Bible. "At first I was scared of my wife's reaction. That she'd think I'd wasted money set apart for food."

Oxana's reaction? "I asked myself why this book is so expensive. Maybe this is reason to read it as well."

"She said we had no option but to read this book as I had spent such a crazy amount of money on it," adds Igor. The couple began reading the Bible together.

"I wouldn't claim we were unhappy living without Christ," Igor expresses. The couple had a good relationship with co-workers, family, and friends. "We were happy in our ignorance."

What changed?

"Five years before my conversion, my wife and I met with a woman who witnessed boldly about Christ without fear of being captured and imprisoned. Her witnessing made an impact in my understanding of the relation between man and his Creator and the role of Jesus Christ in this relationship."

STEP BY STEP... THE WALL THAT SEPARATED ME AND THE BIBLE BEGAN TO MELT.

Igor and Oxana continued to read their Bible, but without much understanding. Christian friends tried to help, but couldn't break through. Two books translated into Russian—*Peace With God* by Billy Graham and *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis—moved them forward. The next step was to overcome their fear of being considered part of a sect, as Bible-reading Christians were accused. They attended a Baptist church, which led to Igor studying at Odessa Bible School.

"Step by step, due to contacts with believers and the reading of those books," Igor shares now, "the wall that separated me and the Bible began to melt. The Word of God brought faith in my heart."

As both Igor and Oxana grew in their faith, the Kotenkos found they could not keep the good news of their changed lives to themselves. After Igor graduated from Odessa Bible College in 1993, the couple joined BCM International and began sharing their faith in the Kijliv region through Bible Clubs, camps, and university outreach.



Igor & Oxana Kotenko



Ukraine Summer Camp

Meanwhile, they continued studying God's Word. Igor received a Masters in Divinity from Tyndale Theological Seminary in the Netherlands in 2000. Oxana graduated in 1995 from Odessa Bible College, received a diploma in Christian Education from Kiev Theological Seminary in 2000, and is currently a Master of Arts student of the Talbot Seminary at Biola University.

Today Igor and Oxana Kotenko are part of a team of twenty-three BCM Ukraine missionaries serving in a wide variety of ministries around the country and even into Russia. The Kotenkos train Sunday school teachers and supervise the Bible Club Ministry across Ukraine. Within their own church, Igor preaches and teaches while Oxana works with teenagers and runs a women's ministry that meets in the Kotenkos' apartment. They have worked to translate and print BCM Bible curriculum in the country's two main languages, Russian and Ukrainian. Igor translated BCM's program for sharing Christ's love with children and adults who have mental or physical disabilities. This became the first Christian manual in the Ukraine for such ministries. Both Igor and Oxana have also been involved in editing Hristianstvo, a Christian magazine with a circulation of 10,000.

Summers are busy with camp ministry. Oxana serves as director of the Christian camp program, Compass, which in 2008 accommodated approximately 200 children and more than 30 volunteer workers. The original program was designed for children 7-12 years old. But as those children grew, camps were added for teenagers. A second camp, held at the Black Sea shore on the Crimean peninsula, accommodates about 50 participants. There is also a special program for 15-18 year olds who serve as assistant leaders in the camp. "An after-camp ministry overgrew itself," jokes Igor, "into a year-round ministry for teens."

It has been exciting to see campers become active in sharing their own faith. Many are now camp leaders themselves. This year the Kotenkos facilitated six missionary trips for teenagers who were former campers

to minister in orphanages around Ukraine. Members of Oxana's teen ministry run holiday programs for children with disabilities.

While the economic and political situation in Ukraine may be unstable, the church situation is not. Approximately 30 percent of self-identified Christians are evangelicals, as compared to neighboring Russia with less than 2 percent. There are no restrictions for ministry as in other former Soviet republics. The only real difficulty for starting new churches is the huge price for premises, construction, and land. Even this constriction relaxed when Parliament issued a law excusing churches from land tax.

"This law was initiated by the evangelical lobby in the Ukrainian parliament," explains Igor.

And as God's love changes hearts, it has an impact on local economy and politics as well. With the recent gas crisis, many areas in Ukraine struggled with lack of heat and gas, as services were cut off to force price negotiations with Russia. But not the region of Kiev where Kotenkos live, thanks to the city's mayor, who identifies himself as a believer.

"This area is inhabited with low-income people," the mayor announced publicly, "so it is sinful to cut heat from them."

That's the kind of change Igor and Oxana Kotenko remain committed to bringing to Ukraine, as the good news of salvation melts walls of separation between Ukrainians and a loving Creator and heavenly Father, one transformed heart at a time.

Needs for the Kotenkos' ministry include printed manuals for teachers and students, transportation of children to and from camp, food and other supplies for students, and Bibles. If you are interested in participating in this ministry, contact Igor & Oxana Kotenko at Igor@bcm.kiev.ua.

NEW VISION FOR BOLIVIA

by Sarvia Ortiz

"The vision awaits its appointed time . . . if it seems slow, wait for it; he whose heart is not right becomes proud, but the righteous will live by faith . . . for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:3-4, 14).

The prophet Habakkuk couldn't understand why God, who abhors sin, allowed the evil to prosper. But when he glimpsed God's purpose, he was consoled and encouraged to expect great changes in his society because a day will come when all will know God. Those who despite adversity remain faithful to God will live.

Like Habakkuk, we who serve God today must trust the work God is doing in our society. Even as we witness governments seeking to banish God from their lands, moral decadence and evil being called good, the church must accept the challenge to be salt and light in our nations, to awaken a new generation committed to serve our Lord.

This was the vision that brought together more than 250 young ministry leaders from all over Bolivia in the highland city of Cochabamba August 15-17, 2008, for BCM Bolivia's first National Sunday School Teacher Convention. The following overheard conversation was typical of their enthusiasm.

"Isn't it beautiful how with such a diverse group, we can feel so united as one body in Christ?"

"Yes, no one asks about our church or denomination. All that counts is the love of Christ we share."



But just how did BCM get started in Bolivia?

For much of its history, Bolivia was known best for its constant military coups. But the 1990s saw both a new level of political stability and openness to the gospel. So much so that the Association of Evangelicals in Bolivia (ANDEB) was able to host breakfasts and summit meetings with presidents and their cabinets. Churches were multiplying rapidly. By the last census, the evangelical church had grown to an estimated 16% of Bolivia's nine million inhabitants.

At the same time, churches were filling up with people who called themselves Christians but knew little of God's Word or Christian life. Pastors became concerned at a lack of Bible teaching and discipleship. A new generation of Christian urban professionals were demanding church leadership with higher levels of preparation and who could respond effectively to spiritual and ethical issues of their society.

In 1991 North American missionaries Claudia Moore and Ellen Steele invited to Cochabamba a team of believers from Michigan, headed up by Mrs. Susan Sanderson, to train a group of Bolivian children's ministry leaders. Among them were Dionicio and Lidia Ajhuacho, a young pastor and his wife with a passion to reach children. The result was a new ministry among the children of Bolivia called the Bible Club Movement.

Back in Michigan, the Sanderson family and fellow believers continued to support the Bible Club ministry in Bolivia. Among them were David (deceased) and Dorothy Hoffer, one-time missionaries to Bolivia, who were now working with BCM in Michigan. In 2000 this group of believers formed the Michigan Committee, specifically to encourage the Bible Club ministry in Bolivia, the beginning of a formal affiliation with BCM International. BCM Bolivia set as its key objective the systematic teaching of God's Word from Genesis through Revelation. A second objective is partner with local churches in training their leadership and children's ministry teachers.

The years from 2001-2005 saw continued growth of BCM Bolivia, including its recognition as a legal organization by the Bolivian government, its first candidate school, which graduated eighteen new missionaries, and the first BCM Latin America Conference, uniting more than sixty BCM ministry leaders from Brazil, Peru, Mexico, and Bolivia. That conference resulted in the Declaration of Cochabamba, which continues to serve as a strategy plan for BCM ministry throughout Latin America.

Children have always been the focus of BCM Bolivia. This has involved many young people as volunteers, who as they themselves were trained, started Bible Clubs throughout the Cochabamba region. In the last ten years, more than seventy clubs have been organized, reaching more than a thousand children with the systematic teaching



of Scripture. Most of these have been plugged into neighborhood churches. Two clubs have grown into churches, each now with a pastor of its own. Evangelistic campaigns and camps have reached thousands more.

With the backing of the Michigan Committee and Sanderson Family, BCM Bolivia was able to acquire two properties to build camps. The main property of 3000 square meters in the small town of Tiquipaya, a university community on the outskirts of Cochabamba, was originally a local spa, well-known to residents for its sizeable pool, sauna, and sporting fields. On August 13, 2006, with Mrs. Susan Sanderson representing the Michigan Committee, the cornerstone was laid for a three-story multifunction building with a 120-bed capacity to serve as BCM Bolivia headquarters as well as training, retreat and camp center. To this point, the first floor has been finished, along with a conference hall seating 250 people. With its convenient location, BCM Christian Camp Tiquipaya is already in heavy demand by churches and ministries for spiritual retreats, children and youth camps, pastoral and denominational conferences. BCM missionaries Isaac and María Condori oversee this ministry, a heavy work load for only two people. A future goal is to see short term mission teams with

a vision for camps coming through to help meet the goals and objectives of our mission here.

Because of their own life changes, many young volunteers who went through our training and worked in the Bible Clubs are no longer involved directly in BCM ministries. But the discipleship and training they received with BCM has opened doors to other ministry, whether as Sunday school teachers in their local churches, some in full-time Christian service, others as Christian adults serving God through their professions.

Since 2006, Bolivian Christians have seen growing on the horizon of our country political and social storm-clouds that menace our faith and liberty. BCM Bolivia missionaries have personally experienced that adversity, and it has sometimes been difficult to view adversity as opportunity. But today we give thanks to our God for the freedom we have to serve as part of the BCM team. Though much territory remains to be covered, we are confident that with God's help, we will soon see the ministry of BCM Bolivia offering blessing and spiritual renovation in every corner of our homeland. May we raise up faithful workers who handle correctly the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15)!

LA NIÑA BECOMES INSTRUMENT OF LOVE

During 2007 and 2008, La Niña, the cold phase of El Niño weather phenomenon, was blamed for the worst flooding in decades across Bolivia's tropical Beni region. Hundreds of thousands were displaced by the floods. Loss of life, homes, livestock, and crops was compounded by health epidemics related to contaminated water supply. A BCM Bolivia ministry team of doctors, nurses, and pastors was able to take clothing, blankets, and food as well as medical help to three communities beyond reach of government aid efforts. The spiritual ministry was even greater as many children and adults received Christ as Savior through the witness of the team.

The mission was not without its adventures. The entire plain had become one big lake, only treetops showing above water. As the BCM team traveled in a small boat, they soon lost all direction. When night came, they continued to float aimlessly, now with the added danger that the boat's motor might snag on one of the barbed wire fences ranchers used to mark property lines. There was also the hazard of venomous snakes and predator animals that infest the jungle zones.

An area pastor accompanying the team tried to cheer things up, announcing in a loud voice, "Brothers, in these parts a pastor has to carry three things with him at all times—his Bible, his machete, and his pistol."

With that, the pastor pulled out his pistol and fired it three times in the air. Within a few minutes, a group of men in another boat pulled up alongside to help. The BCM Bolivia ministry team returned home rejoicing for the opportunity to be a channel of blessing to these communities in need.



by Jennifer Hamilton

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me...streams of living water will flow from within him." —Jesus

The desert of southwestern United States is a harsh environment, lacking in water and vegetation. The desert floor is hard, uncompromising clay, which during the monsoon season effectively shuttles sudden cloudbursts downhill, causing flash floods since the concrete-like ground cannot absorb water. Gnarled clumps of sagebrush and spiky leaves of the yucca plants straggle toward the sky.

Against this bleak, dry landscape, the dormant volcano called Shiprock rises to a cloudless sky in the Four Corners region of the Navajo Nation where New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Utah meet. Shiprock is significant to the Navajo, tying into their religious myths and legends. Climbing the peak is illegal. The Navajo fear the disturbance of the *chiidii* (ghosts) or that climbers will rob corpses of Navajo who died on the rock.

Navajo religious beliefs contain the worship of many gods, often in the likeness of birds, reptiles, or animals. The Navajo believe they must constantly perform ceremonies to remain in harmony with these gods. Illness or misfortune rise from transgressions against the supernatural or witchcraft. Death and the dead are feared. The afterworld is not thought of as a happy or desirable place, nor is there any concept of reward or punishment for deeds done in this life.

North America's largest Native American group, today's Navajo often lives isolated due to poverty. Many homes lack electricity, running water, or other modern amenities. Unemployment can be as high



as seventy percent, adding pressure to already rough life situations. Alcoholism is rampant, leading to high rates of family violence and sexual abuse as well.

It is in this land and among these people where BCM missionary Nancy Davis has chosen to live. In 1989, after more than thirty years of BCM Bible Club and camp ministry in Carthage, New York, Nancy felt God's leading to move to Navajo territory in New Mexico. The region wasn't foreign to Nancy, as she'd often visited a couple she dubs her "spiritual parents." With no children of their own, as they grew elderly, they urged Nancy to move nearby. But Nancy wanted to be sure this was God's will for her life. She began to pray about it.

On September 22, 1989, Nancy's daily devotional reading was Deuteronomy 6:7-9: "The Lord your God is bringing you into a good land... a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper." A description of New Mexico?

Three weeks later Nancy was visiting her Uncle Jim and Aunt Lillie. Their devotional reading for that day turned out to be the same passage in Deuteronomy 6. It seemed she was being led to New Mexico, her uncle assured Nancy.

Less than a month later, Nancy Davis packed her bags, left New York and arrived in the desert. Little did she know the BCM leadership had been praying for workers in New Mexico. Little did she know there would be children ready and waiting for her arrival.

Nancy met Jack Drake, president and founder of Navajo Ministries, a Christian mission that runs a children's home, counseling center, and radio station in Farmington, New Mexico, a small town bordering the Navajo Nation. Children often stayed at the mission short-term, then came back if there was crisis in their home. Nancy got connected with these children, holding a Bible Club for them and acting as a sponsor. Over the years she eventually sponsored ten different children.



On the Navajo reservation Nancy began a Bible Club with two families, meeting in the home of one where she taught five girls and a boy. When the father of one family abandoned them, the mother had to work to support her children, so the Bible Club moved. In the summers Nancy held five-day Clubs and Vacation Bible School. Navajo children would arrive in beds of pickup trucks and were taken home by the same means. When Nancy drove to a Navajo housing area, the children would run to her car to meet her and help carry her teaching equipment.

But Navajo families seemed to move a lot. Nancy would go to a home to pick up children for club only to find the family gone. In one instance, she called the home where a club was meeting because the



children hadn't come out to the car as usual. A man answering the phone told Nancy that he and the children's mother didn't know her.

Then there were children who responded to the gospel, but reverted back to the lifestyle into which they were born. Nancy's Bible Club ministry was often difficult and disheartening. Still, in the middle of that dry desert, the living water of Jesus Christ was producing growth.

A boy named John is one reason Nancy doesn't give up. Due to a difficult home life, John has spent most of his life at the Navajo Ministries children's home, where Nancy taught him at one of her Bible Clubs. Today he is involved with the Junior ROTC, plays on his high school varsity football team, and has excelled in school. He was recently chosen to attend a Forum on National Security in Washington D.C., its purpose to prepare outstanding students for a possible career in government. John could have been just another statistic. But because of the living water of Jesus flowing through channels like Nancy Davis and Navajo Ministries, John looks ahead to a successful future.

One of the Bible Club girls Nancy sponsored went to college, then returned to the Mission. Today she offers the living water she received to other children there. Another Navajo Bible Clubber named Nehemiah loved the Bible lessons so much that even after he got a job as a teenager, he would come to club. He too got involved with Junior ROTC. in high school and played the trumpet. It was a thrill for Nancy when Nehemiah showed up dressed in his uniform to play "Taps" for her. He is now attending San Juan College in Farmington.

Nancy Davis continues to hold Bible Clubs and sponsor children at Navajo Ministries. After fifty years as a BCM missionary and nineteen years in the New Mexico desert, she has now seen a generation of her Bible Clubbers grow to adulthood. She is often invited to birthday parties, graduations, and baby showers of former Bible Club students.

"People say they can't imagine doing the same thing for fifty years," Nancy shares. But she can't imagine anything else she'd have rather done. "Every group of children is different. What a privilege and joy it has been to have a part in so many lives."

REFINED BY SUFFERING

by Joe Dukes with Jeanette Windle

A BCM medical team was traveling in Andhra Pradesh state toward the Orissa border when their guide, Rev. Adrusta Rao, BCM India's Coordinator for Church Development and Relations, drew their attention to a village through which they were passing. In September a few months earlier, Pastor Rao and a local pastor were riding through on a motorcycle when they were suddenly surrounded by a group of men on motorcycles. The two missionaries had reason to be afraid. Only weeks before, the most recent wave of anti-Christian persecution in neighboring Orissa had left over 150,000 believers dispossessed, churches and homes burnt, and hundreds murdered or disappeared. Now the motorcycle posse demanded to know why a BCM church in their own area was offering sanctuary to these troublemakers. Christian refugees were not welcome in the area.

Pastor Rao and his companion prayed fervently, if silently, as they explained they had local, district, and state government approval for a refugee camp. Their prayers were answered. Accepting their explanation, the men eventually let the BCM missionaries go.

The large and growing Christian minority in India's southeastern state of Orissa has long been a focus of Hindu radical opposition. When a Hindu supremacist party won state elections on an anticonversion platform, hostility escalated to action. The first major tidal wave of persecution came on Christmas Day, 2007, when mobs attacked Christmas celebrations across Orissa. A second and more severe wave came after Maoists rebels murdered the anti-Christian Swami Laxamanananda Saraswat on August 23, 2008. (For more,

see "Orissa Burning: Faith Under Fire" by Jeanette Windle – *BCM World*, Fall 2008).

With tens of thousands left homeless, including some Hindus, the Orissa government eventually permitted aid organizations to set up relief camps. But these were not safe for BCM pastors and church leaders, many of whom were on a death hit list of the same radical Hindu movement now controlling the state government--and the camps. Two BCM churches about ten kilometers apart just across the border from Orissa agreed to host refugee camps (a third was planned, but local officials refused to allow Christian refugees into their village).

In all sixty-two families totalling more than 240 men, women, and children were housed under tarps, thatched shelters and the actual church sanctuaries. At one village, a bore well recently installed through BCM ministry for village use provided water. At the other, water had to be brought from a nearby pond. A communal kitchen provided two nutritious meals a day. More than thirty children orphaned in the violence were cared for at a third location.

By the time BCM pastors and families filtered into the camps, most were in poor physical shape. Many had spent weeks hiding in the jungle and surrounding countryside, living off whatever they could gather. Along with malnutrition and exposure, adults and children were suffering from infections, complications from contaminated water, and other medical problems. Among them were pregnant women and newborns. In November 2008 BCM President Marty Windle and a medical team that included VP of International





Ministries, Dr. Vararuchi Dalavai, Rev. Rao, and a number of Indian Christian doctors visited the camps. If an open thatched shelter made an unconventional clinic and pharmacy, care was no less effective, and more than two hundred refugees were treated for malaria, hepatitis, fungal diseases, anaemia, and other sicknesses. A free clinic was also held for local villagers.

A follow-up medical team in January 2009 included Dr. Chip Mershon and Nurse Practitioner Rebecca Young from the USA along with Joe Dukes, VP of Personnel. Among Indian Christian medical volunteers were ophthalmologist Dr. Sheila and a dentist, Dr Shalom. This permitted eye and dental exams along with more immediate medical needs. Once glasses were fitted, a number testified excitedly that they were now able to read their Bibles clearly for the first time in years. Overseeing both teams was Dr. Helen, a small, elderly woman, now retired from medical practice, who for years had the distinction of administering India's public health system. Operation Blessing India (CBN) and the Cephas Foundation Charitable Trust provided medical supplies for the teams.

But physical ailments were far from the only trauma refugees had endured. BCM president Marty Windle, Dr. Chip Mershon, Joe Dukes, and Dr. Dalavai as well as Rev. Rao and BCM Orissa supervisor Rev. Nayak encouraged the refugees during their visits through the sharing of God's word and praying with them. They also took time to listen as BCM pastors and families shared the horrors of their own experiences. Tears flowed down cheeks on both sides as one man told of seeing his son shot dead in front of their home by a mob seeking to kill the area pastor—himself. Another pastor and his family had awakened in the night to realize that the radical Hindus had locked their doors and windows from the outside. As their house was set on fire, the family managed to escape out a back window and flee to the jungle. Another pastor described seeing two fellow believers shot dead on either side of him as he and his congregation fled their church. A BCM regional director had lost his

teen daughter to malaria complications while in hiding. One pastor's wife with two preschool children made her way to the camp, only to find out her husband was in jail, accused of sedition on the premise that his Christian church was responsible for the riots. Experiences of murder, gang rape, and other atrocities were too horrific to describe. A number of pastors had been separated from their families for months because of a price on their own head. All their homes and churches were destroyed.

In shared grief came spiritual healing. And yet what impacted every visitor to the BCM refugee camps was not the destitution and suffering endured by the Orissa Christians. It was the atmosphere of worship. Many arriving at the camps had not been able to worship with other believers in months. Others had been meeting sporadically on jungle paths and in other isolated shelters where they could not raise their voices above a whisper, much less sing praise to their Savior. At the camps they made up for this by holding two worship services a day, each lasting several hours. There are advantages to having several dozen pastors on tap to preach. One pastor, Lubara Mallik, composed a song that came to be known as "The Persecution Song." The simple Indian melody was sung over and over at every worship service. Walking through the camp, one could even hear the children singing it as they played. Translated to English, the words are as follows:

Come let us endure the suffering of persecution. Serve dearest Lord Jesus and experience Him through suffering / Christ had to suffer before He entered into glory, / We are crucified with Christ, so have no rights and cannot suffer wrongly. / We are greater worth than gold, As gold refines by fire. so we believers are refined by suffering. / Glorious days are coming when we shall walk on gold. / Let us not blame any one, rather forgive our persecutors / For whom Jesus has shed His precious blood. / So let this be our response to unjust suffering, the badge of authentic discipleship.



As the larger government relief camps began to close, the decision was made to close the BCM camps as well. If it is not unjust suffering, but rather a godly response to suffering that is the badge of authentic discipleship, then the BCM Orissa pastors and church leaders have truly shown themselves to be such disciples. Many Orissa Christians have sought permanent refuge in other parts of India, and with good reason. But the unanimous resolution of the BCM camp refugees has been to return to their scattered congregations as well as those hostile neighbors so desperately in need of the gospel's life-changing message.

Since most of the refugees had lost all personal possessions, January's follow-up medical team presented each of the sixty-two family units a set of basic provisions to help them start over. Included were four dinner plates, four tumblers, one rice and one curry cooking pot, and 2 serving spoons, all of solid stainless steel. Each family also received travel funds and a start-up gift of Rs. 5000 (approximately \$104).

All of this as well as the daily expenses of running the camps was made possible through generous giving of the BCM International family. One joy in the heartbreak of the Orissa situation has been to see BCM ministries all over the world coming together to support their brothers and sisters in need. Children's camps in Peru, BCM Northern Ireland's 60th Anniversary celebration, a missions conference in South Africa, a women's retreat in Scotland, churches and individuals from India to North America are among so many who have responded to this crisis.

On March 1, 2009, the BCM Orissa refugee camps officially closed (this doesn't include the orphans, who are now in an organized children's home). Both camps as well as area churches came

together for a final worship service, where returning families were commissioned and sent on their way with some additional relief distribution. Their departure is hardly the final chapter in the Orissa crisis. Many are returning to destroyed homes and no jobs. In a number of Orissa villages, local Hindu leaders have been forcibly coercing returning Christians to reconvert to Hinduism or leave. Recently another Hindu radical leader was assassinated by Maoist rebels, and the call has already gone out again to avenge his death upon the Christians.

And yet in Khandmal district, a region that saw the most violence and persecution, BCM Orissa recently held its first laymen and women training conference. Despite threats, more than 1300 lay leaders showed up! Rev. Nayak, wrote of one pastor's return home:

"Pastor Tuna of Bataguda boldly went to their village. Gathering the scattered believers, he started worship services in his church in spite of dreadful fear. He encouraged the believers that they are serving the living God. He said we are already dead in Christ, so there is no need to fear anyone. If they die, they die for Christ and their eternal place is heaven. This very thin and short BCM pastor shows a strong faith. Looking to his braveness, other pastors also have been taking the steps, among them Pastor Bimalraj and Pastor Lubara Mallik (who wrote the Persecution Song). Pray for these pastors who could be the example for others."

One of those same pastors added, "We don't ask that you pray for the persecution to stop, but that we will be faithful and stand strong in the midst of the persecution."

Let's hope he won't mind if we pray for both!

TRAINING TRAINERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

by Esther Zimmerman

"My church is going to wonder what happened to me!" shared a pastor participating in BCM's first Africa Train the Trainer workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa, March 9-12, 2009. For the first time, he added, he'd understood God's heart for children. Now he was making plans to prioritize children's ministry for the first time in his church.



With almost fifty percent of Africa's population under fifteen years of age, children really do matter. Yet they often find themselves on the sidelines of church strategy planning. This challenge brought teacher trainers Bob Barber (BCM Director, Central/Eastern Europe) and Esther Zimmerman (BCM International Children's Ministry Director) to Johannesburg with the objective of equipping African ministry leaders to train others to reach children with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

During the four-day workshop, a different pastor began each morning session with a devotional on children in the Bible. All commented that it was the first time they'd ever prepared a message on a child. But as the group examined God's heart together, they recognized that to be serious about the Great Commission requires being serious about making disciples of children.

Trainees participated in a day of children's ministry training, a day of analyzing how to use the training material effectively with others, and a day of practice in presenting *In Step with the Master Teacher* training to others. In all, more than twenty new master trainers left the four-day training ready to prioritize and multiply ministry to children. A few highlights:

• A group of pastors working in the same region are already planning a joint training day for Sunday School teachers—less than a month after completing Train the Trainer themselves.

- Another pastor of a large Johannesburg church plans to take *In Step with the Master Teacher* children's ministry training on his next visit to encourage and support a young church planting movement in Malawi.
- A Zulu missionary is looking forward to sharing *ISMT* training on an upcoming missions trip to Mozambique.
- The leader of another para-church children's ministry will be using *ISMT* training immediately in her regional training workshops for children's workers.
- The director of a Christian ministry to families impacted by HIV/AIDS plans to use BCM's training to equip local churches in reaching out to thousands of children affected by HIV/AIDS. With infection rates nearing 20% of the adult population in South Africa, the needs among children are enormous.
- BCM Zambia missionary, Pastor Titus Mambwe intends to hold a series of area trainings in northern Zambia to further develop BCM children's ministry in his country.

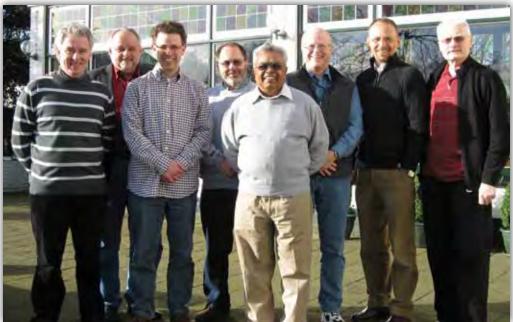
And the list goes on. Praise God for pastors and leaders who have glimpsed God's heart for children. Continue to pray for them as they seek to prioritize and multiply ministry to children in Africa.





INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CHANGES





Rev. John Peter

From left: Mr. Richard Thompson, Rev. Marty Windle, Mr. Mark Brussel, Mr. John Abromovich, Dr. Vararuchi Dalavai, Mr. Joe Dukes, Mr. Michael Leister, Rev. Dale Sigafoos. Taken at De Herikon in the Netherlands during BCM Europe Leadership Meeting.

Please join us in congratulating the following individuals in their new leadership roles with BCM International:

Rev. Dale Sigafoos, Europe Director

Mr. Richard Thompson, UK/Ireland Regional Coordinator

Mr. John Abromovich, Eastern Europe Regional Coordinator

Rev. John Peter, Africa Director

Rev. Harvey Leslie Kodi, South Africa Assistant