

Mission Lines

*“As we have
opportunity, let us do
good to all people”*

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No.51

Galatians 6:10

MISSIONS EMERGING FROM LOCKDOWN

Now that restrictions imposed because of the Covid pandemic have begun to ease in many places, overseas mission personnel who had to leave their area of service have been able to return and others whose ministries were put on hold because of lockdown have been able to restart at least some of their activities. As we are all aware, the virus is still active, especially in some areas, so continued prayer for protection and guidance in how to help in the situation would be valued.

Peter and Louise Lynch in Bangladesh were in strict lockdown for many weeks during the devastating third wave of the pandemic but they have been able to start travelling again recently and have enjoyed participating in workshops for pastors and other church leaders. These proved to be times of renewal and great joy for those who participated. Pray that government permission will be granted so that the leadership course planned for next month can go ahead. Visits were also made to an area badly affected by flooding earlier in the year to bring further assistance to those still in great need. Pray concerning plans for a visit to UK for reunion with family and home assignment.

Claire Bedford and other BMS colleagues were eventually able to return to Chad and their work at the Guinebor II Hospital. The hospital has been very busy recently, especially with many cases of malaria, and this has added to the challenge of procuring supplies of medicines and equipment. Pray that reliable and regular ways of replenishing supplies can be found. In a recent prayer letter Claire said that it continues to be a joy to serve the Chadian people and her continual prayer is that God will use her and the others at the hospital as His hands, His feet and His mouth in order to practically show His love to the local people.

Cally Magalhaes in Brazil with the Eagle Project is praising God that the psychotherapy sessions in the Youth Prison have been able to restart and that they are going very well. Three groups have been meeting and requests have been made for new groups to start in other units of the prison. She asks for prayer that two important government documents will soon be granted as they cannot move forward without it. The Portuguese translation of her book is now out so she is praying that it will inspire many Brazilians to commit their lives to serving God and other people.



Two former prisoners discussing university options

Beginning from this financial year we are supporting two new projects. We have agreed to partner with SAT-7, an organisation engaged in the production of TV programmes with Christian content for the countries in the Middle East and North Africa and also to support one of Tearfund's Environmental and Economic Sustainability programmes in Chad.

SAT-7

We have chosen to specifically support the ministry that focuses on preparing for and presenting programmes in Farsi for Iranians and Afghanis. The Pars team work from two studios, one in Cyprus and one in London. Ian Rose and I were privileged recently to be able to visit the London studio, which is entirely managed and operated by Iranians. We met one of the lady presenters and heard some of the testimonies from viewers about how the programmes have sustained and encouraged them in challenging situations and led some to faith. We watched the camera team set up for a programme called Question Mark and actually saw the beginning of the presentation. The programme invites viewers to send in questions about a specific theological subject and a selection of these are answered by experts being brought into the programme by Skype. All the experts are Iranian theologians living in different parts of the world. It was really inspiring to watch and to hear about the popularity of the programme. We were encouraged specifically to pray for the audience response team who answer hundreds of messages coming in from viewers through social media.

TEARFUND

The Chad project focuses on improving the environment and quality of life in 6 villages in one specific area of the country. It aims to work together with the local communities to improve farming methods to stop the degradation of the soil, plant trees in areas where the forest has been cut down over the years for firewood, encourage the building of stoves that use less fuel and build latrines and improve water sources.



One village elder reports that he is beginning to see change in the environmental protection of his village. The women have been shown how to construct stoves that use far less fuel so in almost every household you can find this fireplace built from clay. Men have been taught how to plant seedlings and an area has been designated as a site for reforestation and a natural reserve for trees. He says that he will take personal responsibility to monitor the site and protect it.

BIBLE TRANSLATION PROGRESS

It may have been a year of lockdowns and travel restrictions across the world, but the work of Bible translation has continued to progress. There's lots of good news to be thankful for and encouraged by! In the midst of all the difficulties, established work has continued, new work has begun, and an excitingly large number of Bibles and New Testaments have been launched. Of the 7,135 recognised languages spoken in the world:

717 now have the complete Bible
1,582 in addition have a complete New Testament

1,196 in addition have small portions translated
2,899 have on-going active projects

During this past year alone 13 people groups have access to the full Bible for the first time and 44 groups



can now read the New Testament in their language for the first time, including one of the Guera project groups in Chad. That means more than one new translation has been completed every week! In addition, the first specific translation for a deaf community has been completed after many years of work. The translation can be read by watching a 'reader' signing it on video. There is an on-going sign language project in Ethiopia which is making good progress.

However, there is still much more to be done. Despite this tremendous progress, there are still 1.5 billion people worldwide who do not have the Bible in their language. That's 1 in 5 people who do not have the same access to the Bible which we take for granted and translation teams worldwide are working with urgency to rectify this injustice.

Guera Project Update

After the New Testament dedication last December, 20 new Guerguiko New Testament listening groups were created, with a total of 325 people attending. Six churches are involved and the team can already say that the New Testament is being used effectively. They continue to pray that many lives will be changed and that the church will become strong. The story of the Migaama New Testament is also almost finished. The books have been printed and have arrived in the region, and a dedication service is being planned for December. The team is also working on an audio version.

NEWS FROM CENTRAL INDIA

In a recent newsletter from the Deepgruh Foundation, an organisation seeking to reach the unreached in Central India, the director and evangelist, Prabhakar says that the country continues to face unprecedented complex situations. Never before has it faced such challenges. Some face them with confidence but others are really struggling. The wider consequences of the Covid 19 pandemic and recent devastating floods in western Maharashtra have caused huge loss of lives. Many have lost all their belongings and thousands are homeless. Anxiety and distress seem to overshadow every home, as people breathlessly hope for a brighter future. Pray for God's comfort to all those families who lost dear and near ones in the floods.

Unfortunately, many pastors, church leaders and doctors died while serving others during the Covid 19 pandemic, so pray for the widows and their families and for God to raise up godly leaders who can carry on the work. God is working in amazing ways and there are testimonies from those whose lives have been changed as a result of care and concern shown to them.

NEWS FROM DOMBOSHAWA THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

For the last three years we have been supporting one of the students, Tapiwa, by paying towards the fees that have enabled him to study at the college. Praise God that he was able to pass his exams despite still suffering the after effects of the trauma he experienced earlier in the year. Pray for him as he retakes one course and seeks God's guidance for the future. Pray that God will provide for his living expenses.

The political and economic state of the country has been worsening in recent years and the problems have been deeply exacerbated since 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank God however that good rains in the last season will avert hunger and bring a modicum of economic relief. Many students have struggled to pay fees and this has affected the financial health of the college.

The college was able to commence its new Masters' programme in February this year marking a new milestone. The college faculty managed to overcome the effects of coronavirus shutdowns by delivering effective education through online teaching. Some students who would have dropped out of college due to economic hardships were rescued by the provision of revolving educational loans. Despite the socio-political hardships in the nation, morale among students, staff and faculty remains relatively high.

Continue to pray for others involved in mission work overseas:-

The Leprosy Mission is full of praise for the generous responses to their appeal for funds to enable them to set up Hubs of Hope in northern Mozambique. These hubs give villagers a place for people to come together to learn about leprosy and for leprosy sufferers to share and encourage each other and to learn how to manage their conditions.

Nathan and Rose now in UK – Pray for them as they settle into life in this country and for God to guide them as they seek their way ahead. Pray, too, for colleagues who had to leave their place of service at very short notice as they make plans for future service. Those left behind also need our prayers that God will protect the colleagues they were working with and help them to continue the projects without outside help.

Bench Bible Translation Team – Pray that the final typesetting and printing can go ahead soon and for guidance as the team move on to other forms of service.



The team in Addis to work with the computer department during lockdown

If you have a news item for inclusion in the next edition of Mission Lines, please send it to mary.breeze44@gmail.com.