

# MISSIONUPDATE

MAY 2007

*Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in you. Psalm 16:1*



Starting from scratch: persecuted Christians have lost everything but faith

## Dear Friend

Welcome to the May edition of **MISSIONUPDATE**. You'll notice the following stories about mission in Indonesia, the UK and Tanzania all deal with the theme of safety – whether it's providing protection from persecution or constructing safe spaces to explore challenging spiritual issues.

Please join me in praising God for being our refuge and our strength as we work in difficult times and places...

## NOWHERE TO RUN

**CMS helping persecuted Indonesian Christians rebuild their lives**

Inside what looked like a disused factory, we picked our way through a maze of cardboard rooms, none bigger than 10 square feet. There was no running water or electricity, but 200 Christian families live there.

In the past several years, thousands of Christians in remote parts of Indonesia have come under intense, violent persecution from Muslim extremists. One group most seriously affected is the Lata Lata people from Bacan, north Maluku. Many were driven out of their homes and forced to convert to Islam. Now, homeless, they face being killed as a result of returning to their faith in Christ.

CMS, with local partner Bless Indonesia Today,

will help them build new lives. The Lata Lata are fishing people so CMS is giving fishing boats to the community, providing jobs for 128 fishermen and improving the lives of hundreds more.

Despite their suffering, persecuted Christians in Indonesia say their faith in Jesus has given them hope. Shin Yong Tang, from the CMS Singapore office, comments, "The Lata Lata people have a moving story to tell of God's care in terrible times. The boat project will mean real life changes for them. But this is only one instance. I'd like to call on Christians everywhere to pray...that all this suffering will come to an end."

*Please pray for CMS partners in Indonesia as they help Christian refugees rebuild their homes and lives. Pray for peace and security to be restored to the region.*

## SPACE PIONEER

Mark Berry in Telford

It's been almost two years since Mark Berry made headlines by moving to Telford to pioneer new kinds of Christian community. Mark now leads *Safe Space*, a core group of seven people who are committed to helping people in Telford seek God.

Many of the people Mark encounters consider themselves spiritual, but not religious, or have never considered spiritual matters. Mark creates "safe spaces" within Telford where people can confront doubts, share stories and explore spirituality. Each week Safe Space gatherings happen at a pub, in Mark's home and at the local college. Mark aims to be real with people, letting them know that it's safe to share their thoughts with him.

Recently, while leading a spirituality workshop at the local college, Mark says, "There was one guy, full of bravado, who'd attended at his girlfriend's insistence. As we got into the exercise I saw him crying. Later I asked, 'Are you all right?' He replied that for the first 20 seconds he'd wanted to laugh. Then he started thinking, asking questions about who he was and where he came from. Being a completely new thing for him, it shook him up."

*Please uphold Mark in prayer as he listens to people and helps them seek God.*



Mark Berry

## SPEAKING OUT ABOUT AIDS

Mission Partner Elaine Macha in Tanzania

As HIV/AIDS spreads, Christians in Tanzania need to know how to prevent infection, and how to help people who have the disease. We've been educating people in HIV/AIDS awareness, and then training them to train others.

Believers relish the chance to explore how they as Christians can face the problem of HIV/AIDS. For many, it's the first time they've been able to ask questions, like, "How would Christ respond?", "How can I resist pressure to enter into sexual activity as an evening pastime?", or "What should I do if my husband has HIV/AIDS?"

Last Autumn people we trained ran 26 HIV/AIDS seminars, not only for Christians, but some Muslims as well. The people were so grateful they responded, "We need more teaching like this. Can you run another seminar?"

*Please pray for funding so the Church can continue these groundbreaking seminars in 2007.*

Thank you for taking the time to read these stories and for your prayers and support, which is such a source of encouragement and blessing to us and our partners around the world. As the CMS London office prepares to move to Oxford next month, we would value your continued prayers for a smooth transition.

May you also know God's blessings this month as you 'live and move and have your being' in him.

Yours in Christ

Tim Dakin  
CMS General Secretary

