



A resource for ministers from the General Director

Creation care

Each winter when I was a child a nearby river flooded and submerged the lower area of our garden. I loved it. My father didn't, nor did the hens who lived there. But the hens got moved, the damage was trivial and the problem was always soon over.

The effect of global warming *is* and *isn't* like that. Yes, there's increased flooding. Yes, those who lived on areas of land now routinely under water will have to move. But no, the damage is not trivial. And no, the problem will not soon be over.

Cold War doom and gloom warnings that the end was nigh came to nothing, and perhaps my generation grew complacent or cynical, as if the world was bound to survive, or scientists would always find a cure for any ill. That's a very dangerous kind of complacency or cynicism.

Deniers (of a global warming problem) seem to imagine 99 per cent of the world's leading scientists are either wrong or in an unexplained conspiracy to frighten us.

Empty optimists are maybe more numerous – those who believe it'll somehow all come right in the end.

What both groups have in common is their own legitimacy to do nothing, change nothing, make no sacrifices. That's indulgent irresponsibility.

Christians, I believe, should be at the front of action on the global warming issue:

- Because we believe our heavenly Father made this world and cares how we treat it
- Because God does not want people's lives destroyed by drought, famine, floods, disease
- Because God deems it unacceptably selfish for one part of the world's population to poison and destroy the lives of another part by their reckless, greedy lifestyles
- Because he calls us to be forces for good, for change, for kingdom values.



A friend told me yesterday he had just arrived back from the Canadian Rockies, and had seen how glaciers have melted and will soon be gone. For the first time he believes there's an issue with global warming. But he didn't mention any way his life would change.

Let's not be prophets of doom but leaders of change. Let's say loudly that the world matters, that there are sensible things which can be done, and let's model how to live a new way. God asks nothing less.

Alistair Brown



"How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works – he who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke." (Psalm 104: 24, 31-32)

"Any error about creation also leads to an error about God." (Thomas Aquinas, 13th-century theologian)

"If I am going to be in the right relationship with God, I should treat the things he has made in the same way as he treats them." (Francis Schaeffer, 20th-century theologian and philosopher)

"People say there should be a debate about global warming. But I tell you the debate is over; the reckoning has begun. The truth is staring us in the face. Climate change is here: it is an issue for our generation as well as future generations; and those who deny it are the flat-earthers of the 21st century." (David Miliband, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

Science: combating climate change

Research shows unequivocally that climate change is a serious reality. Eminent scientist Sir John Houghton writes about the impact of a warmer planet – and how urgent action is vital

Over the last 40 years, the earth has been steadily warming. Thousands of the world's scientists have assembled convincing scientific evidence that most of this is due to emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere from our increased burning of coal, oil and gas – globally over seven thousand million tonnes per year and still growing. With the increased warming come changes in climate, the rate of change being greater than for at least 10,000 years.

At first sight a bit of extra warmth might seem welcome. But, looking more carefully we find that most impacts will be adverse. For instance, in 2003, over 20,000 deaths occurred in central Europe in a heatwave of unprecedented severity. Other major impacts will be caused by rising sea levels (up to one metre this century) as ocean water warms and expands, leading to more frequent and intense floods and droughts.

These will most seriously affect parts of the developing world where, on average, floods, droughts and storms cause more deaths, economic loss and misery than any other disasters. Tens of millions of people will be displaced in areas of Africa and Asia. Where do they go in our increasingly crowded world?

These serious consequences of human activities cannot be completely avoided but they can be mitigated



● Sea level rise is a major threat to low-lying countries like Bangladesh, where over ten million people live below the one-metre contour.



through a reduction in our use of fossil fuels. Much greater energy efficiency is needed through the use of renewable sources. Appropriate technologies are largely available; what is required is the will to act.

Our wealth in the rich world has come largely as a result of cheap energy

from fossil fuels, without us realising the damage we are causing. There is an inescapable moral imperative for us first

to take urgent action to reduce drastically our emissions of carbon dioxide and secondly to use our wealth and skills to assist those in poorer countries to develop in sustainable ways.

Christians need to be at the forefront of this caring and sharing action to combat one of the most serious problems the world faces this century.

Sir John Houghton CBE FRS was co-chairman of the Scientific Assessment for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for 14 years, and is a former Chief Executive of the Meteorological Office. He is currently President of the John Ray Initiative, a charity that connects the environment, science and Christianity

● “What we do now can have only a limited effect on the climate over the next 40 or 50 years. On the other hand what we do in the next ten or 20 years can have a profound effect on the climate in the second half of this century and in the next.” (*The Stern Review, 2006*)

Useful websites

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change www.ipcc.ch

Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research www.metoffice.com/research/hadleycentre/index.html

John Ray Initiative www.jri.org.uk

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change www.unfccc.int

Theology: why Christians should care

The greatest reason to care for creation, says Dave Bookless of new BMS partner A Rocha, is that it's a command from God – and something to which more Christians are responding



● “The earth is the LORD’s and everything in it.” (Psalm 24: 1)

‘Mission’ and ‘environment’ haven’t always belonged together. Christian mission has often been seen as ‘spiritual’ and environment as ‘physical’. Mission has been all about people, environment about everything else. Today, however, that dichotomy is being overcome as Christians worldwide catch a vision of mission that includes creation care.

There are at least three reasons for this change. The first is **a rediscovery of the scope of biblical mission**. Jesus, after all, never divided spiritual and physical; he ministered to body and soul. Noah was a man with a God-given mission – one that led him to become the first great wildlife conservationist.

God’s first ‘great commission’ to humanity in Genesis 1: 26-28 was all about revealing his image through stewarding the non-human creation.

This isn’t to diminish the New Testament’s Great Commission – we need evangelism more than ever – but Matthew 28 actually talks about making ‘disciples’, not simply converts. Looking around the planet today, with perhaps 40 per cent of all species threatened with extinction this century, we might ask whatever happened to ‘creation care’ in our discipleship training?

Secondly, **mission that ignores creation soon runs into problems**. If we preach a gospel that is so ‘spiritual’ that it ignores the earth, we risk creating a Church that is not only unbiblical, but fails to recognise our God-given interdependence

with other creatures upon air, food, water and fuel. Many today reject Christianity because they see it as irrelevant to the environment. However, as evangelist Rob Frost says, “When Christians take the earth seriously, people take the gospel seriously.”

Thirdly, today **God seems to be spontaneously calling Christians into creation care**. A Rocha has grown from one little project in Portugal, protecting a threatened estuary, into a global mission movement of Christians passionate about caring for creation in Jesus’ name. A marsh in Lebanon recovering from drainage, woodlands in Africa studied and re-planted, or a wasteland in London transformed into a beautiful natural oasis... what have these got to do with mission?

The answer is that all are

● **Who suffers with climate change?**

“The impacts are inequitable: poor countries will be hit hardest and earliest, when it is the rich countries who are responsible for three-quarters of greenhouse gases currently in the atmosphere.” (*The Stern Review, 2006*)

the fruit of a vision that starts with the belief that God loves, and Jesus is good news for, the whole creation – a vision that sees people, communities and creation transformed, and to God be the glory.

Rev Dave Bookless is National Director of A Rocha UK, part of the international family of A Rocha Christian conservation projects



● Species threatened with extinction:

Birds: 12%
Mammals: 23%
Amphibians: 32%

By the end of the 21st century, up to 40% of all species could be extinct.

(*Simon Stuart, IUCN & IPCC, 2006*)

Useful websites

A Rocha www.arocha.org

Living Lightly 24:1 www.livinglightly24-1.org.uk

European Christian Environmental Network www.ecen.org

BMS and the environment: green solutions

Two BMS World Mission couples reflect on their encounters with environmental issues in Brazil and Nepal.

Beekeeping in Brazil

It's not only the world's scientists who are warning that we need to alter the way we live to avoid devastating climate change. Bees are also giving us this message! Between 1971 and 2006 half of the USA's honeybee population was wiped out, and some experts are even predicting extinction.

Our church in Trapiá – the poorest area of the Americas – set up a beekeeping project, with the help of a grant from Operation Agri, initially to improve income in the local community, but, as we've got more involved, we've realised that it is a way to care for God's creation too.

Before, people would chop down a tree



to get honey. Now we've learnt to carefully capture the colony and put the combs into a hive, where we can look after the bees and get them through the droughts we have here. With more bees, crops planted during the sporadic rains all produce more.

For organic honey, we need to persuade local farmers to stop spraying crops with poison against the boll weevil or the caterpillars. One solution is the neem tree, whose bitter leaves are a good deterrent.

We've also learnt that the most valued honey comes from the native non-stinging bees and we are encouraging the keeping of one particular variety called *jandaíra* (*Melipona subnitida* Ducke), a threatened species.

Daveen and Mike Wilson are BMS long-term workers in north east Brazil



Recycling in Nepal



"Kali sisi, purano kagaj" is a familiar cry on the streets of Kathmandu. It comes

from tall, thin men pushing bicycles with sacks to collect empty glass bottles and old newspapers. This is the city's recycling service.

Near where we live, there is a 'depot' where the material collected from recycling is sifted and sorted ready for sale. We have no idea what kind of money is to be made from recycling this rubbish – probably not much.

When we first lived in Nepal, large skips would sit at road intersections, unemptied for weeks and overflowing. More than ten years on, whilst you are unlikely to call Kathmandu 'clean', it is certainly improved. For less than 50p per month, we have an almost daily door-to-door collection.

But when you consider that the population has more than doubled in the last ten years, something had to be done. Not so long ago, the ring road marked the urban boundary – now you have to go to the outermost reaches of the valley to see any rice fields.

We try to minimise our rubbish. There is less packaging here so that helps and since we eat a lot of fresh fruit and vegetables,

separating all our organic waste to make compost for the little patch of garden is worthwhile.

Cynthia and Ian Chadwell are BMS long-term workers in Kathmandu, Nepal



• What about Africa?

"[It] is the continent probably most vulnerable of all to the negative effects of climate change and the one that faces the greatest challenges to adapt. Poverty, conflict, disease, governance problems, an unjust international trading system and the burden of unpayable debt... hinder the ability of communities and nations to handle shocks." (*Africa up in smoke 2' from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development, which includes organisations such as Oxfam, WWF and Friends of the Earth*)

• "Between 1984 and 2000, agricultural land in the [Kathmandu] valley decreased from 62% to 42%. If this trend continues, by 2025 there will be no agricultural fields left in this once fertile valley." (*Kathmandu Valley Environmental Outlook report, January 2007*)

Useful websites

Environmental Data Interactive Exchange www.edie.net
BBC www.bbc.co.uk/climatechange
BMS World Mission www.bmsworldmission.org

Being green: living locally – thinking globally



In about 1840 a strange, penguin-like bird was captured on a rocky outcrop off St Kilda, the remotest part of the British Isles. Flightless, it was carried off by two men who were convinced that it was a witch.

The hapless creature was put on trial, found guilty and stoned to death. The bird was a great auk – the last ever recorded in Britain. Four years later, the species became extinct globally.

Charles Darwin first visited the Amazonian rainforest in 1831, and was inspired by the proliferation of the forest and the species that lived within it. Only 60 per cent of the forest that Darwin saw now exists. Globally we destroy an area of sub-tropical forest as big as Wales every year. That part of our planet is the richest in wildlife in all its complexity and majesty.

God's creation is still being destroyed. What can we do about it? We can begin where we are. In Grasmere, Cumbria there are feeding stations for the red squirrel to encourage its re-establishment. Knotweed is a pervasive weed that smothers all other growth; we have a spraying programme that reduced it by 85 per cent last year.

Algae grow in our famous lake because phosphates are not successfully removed

- While aviation currently accounts for approximately 4% of greenhouse gases, scientists believe that figure will rise to over 60% by the year 2050. (BBC, December 2006)

- If every UK household installed three energy-efficient light bulbs, the electricity saved in a year could power all the streetlights in the UK. (Energy Efficient Partnership for Homes, 2007)

in sewage treatment. Our local pharmacist is selling subsidised detergents that are phosphate-free.

In the market town of Brampton a group is manning a stall each month at the farmers' market promoting locally-grown produce. All of this is part of a wider programme in Cumbria initiated and supported by the churches.

By buying goods made from wood harvested sustainably. By supporting fair trade foodstuffs from growers skilled in maintaining the quality of soils. By supporting those who help overseas farmers with simple technology, and providing communities with clean water.

Such actions enhance not only our own quality of life, but that of others around the world. How can we thank God for his creation without taking care of what he has entrusted to our charge?

Dr John Biggs recently retired as specialist mission networker for the environment for the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) and is a former BUGB President. He is also Chairman of Sustainable Communities in Cumbria

Our daily decisions can directly impact people living thousands of miles away. Dr John Biggs explains that, when it comes to global green matters, we must start at home



- Latest government figures show that 4.2% of the UK's electricity is generated by renewables, including wind, solar, hydro and biomass. (BBC, February 2007)

Useful websites

Stop Climate Chaos (of which BMS is a member) www.stopclimatechaos.org
I Count campaign www.icount.org.uk
COIN Climate Outreach and Information Network www.coinet.org.uk

Frequently asked questions

What are greenhouse gases?

The main greenhouse gases are water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. They are called greenhouse gases because their role in the atmosphere is like the glass of a greenhouse (or a blanket), trapping heat from the sun. Without this protection the earth would be too cold for life. The concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is changing because of human activities.

Is carbon dioxide the main problem?

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the most important greenhouse gas, which is increasing in concentration because of human activities. It has contributed about 70 per cent of the enhanced greenhouse effect to date, methane about 24 per cent and nitrous oxide about six per cent (Houghton, 2004). Unlike the other greenhouse gases, which may be destroyed by chemical action, carbon dioxide is not destroyed, but redistributed within the carbon cycle. Since the Industrial Revolution and the burning of fossil fuels CO₂ has increased in the atmosphere by about 30 per cent, trapping more heat.

What is the Kyoto Protocol?

The Kyoto Protocol is an internationally binding agreement setting targets for industrialised countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions. The protocol was agreed in 1997, and became a legally binding treaty in 2005 between 38 countries with the notable exception of the USA and Australia.



(Source: Climate Stewards)

Top ten energy saving tips

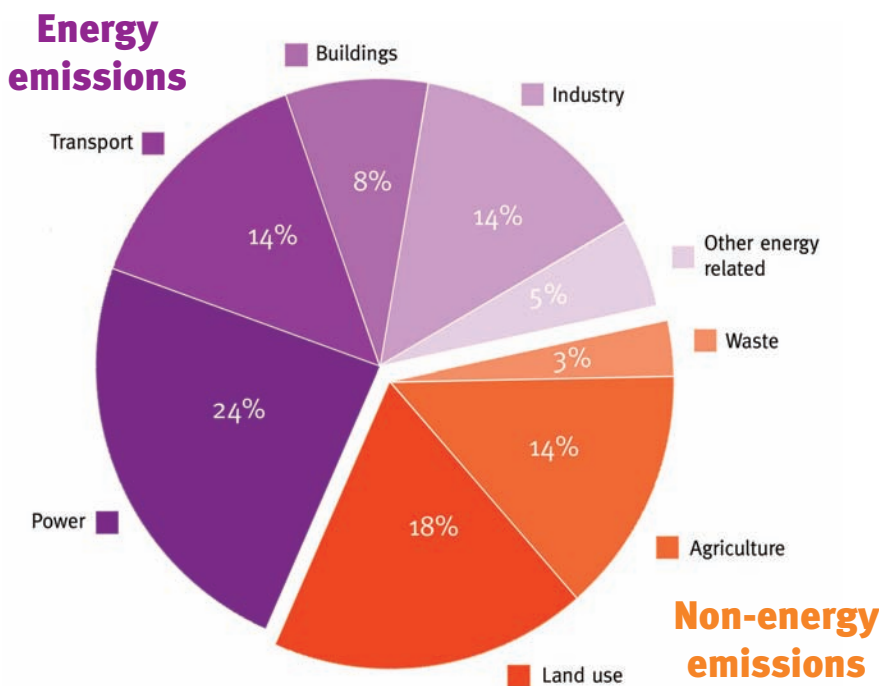
- 1 Don't put more water into the kettle than you need. The kettle is the most wasteful energy appliance in the house.
- 2 Turn down the temperature of your house to 18 degrees Celsius (unless your health makes this impossible). The Energy Saving Trust calculates that even a one degree reduction can save ten per cent or £40 from an average annual electricity bill.
- 3 Make sure all windows are double (or triple!) glazed.
- 4 Ensure your house is fully insulated. If you have a conservatory, ensure that it is well-insulated, and that doors to the rest of the house are kept closed. The Energy Saving Trust (www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) has great advice.
- 5 Make sure windows have heavy curtains over them that can be drawn on winter evenings.
- 6 Install radiators with individual thermostats.
- 7 Turn the radiators off in any rooms that you do not use.
- 8 Don't leave appliances on stand-by – switch them off!
- 9 Use a Sava-plug (see www.savawatt.com) for your fridge and freezer, if your appliance is Sava-plug compatible.
- 10 Don't install air conditioning (unless it is solar-powered).

(Source: Living Lightly 24:1)



What is responsible for greenhouse gases?

Greenhouse gas emissions in 2000, by source



Energy emissions are mostly CO₂ (some non-CO₂ in industry and other energy-related)

Non-energy emissions are CO₂ (land use) and non-CO₂ (agriculture and waste)

Source: Prepared by Stern Review, from data drawn from World Resources Institute Climate Analysis Indicators Tool (CAIT) on-line database version 3.0



Creative and Christian

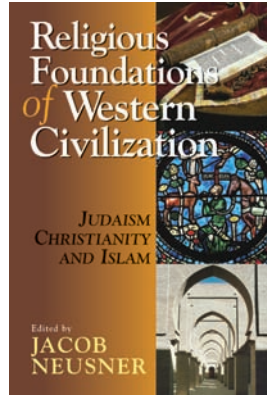
By: *Leen La Rivière, Piquant*,
£6.99

ISBN 1-90368-930-9

With its short chapters this book will suit discussion groups as well as the individual. It is an update of a book originally written in the Netherlands in 1986, but relevant today.

After outlining the theology of art, he appeals for creativity to be encouraged in the church, not using art as a decoration but as an integral part of proclamation. The prophets used many visuals: pots, yokes, trumpets. He emphasises the importance of the artist's character and of suffering. One irony is that there are no pictures or examples, but he does highlight that well-crafted words are also art!

Reviewer: *Neil Young, Mission Networker, Glasgow*



Religious Foundations of Western Civilization

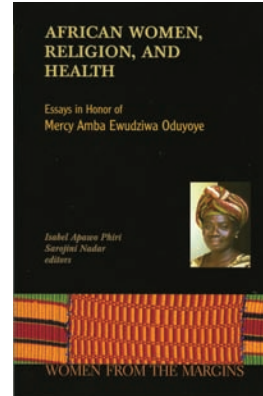
Edited by: *Jacob Neusner, Alban Books*,
£22.99

ISBN 0-68733-202-8

This book introduces its readers to three major world religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. A team of contributors address significant themes in the development and interaction of these religions over the last 2,000 years.

This book is intended as a set text for American college students and has discussion questions at the end of each section. Most *Mission Catalyst* readers will be familiar with the information on the early centuries of the Modern Era but, I suspect, the later chapters detailing the development and interaction of these faiths over the centuries provide valuable insights that are less well-known. I am happy to commend this book.

Reviewer: *Brian Talbot, minister of Carbrain Baptist Church, Cumbernauld*



African Women, Religion and Health

Edited by: *Phiri and Nadar, Orbis Books*,
£14.99

ISBN 1-57075-635-X

This book is a collection of 14 essays, written largely by African women theologians, that celebrate the work of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye, perhaps Africa's foremost female theologian. The first essays explore her legacy, while the remaining ones examine scripture, poverty, health and healing through her insights.

The book speaks of challenges on various levels. We read of the complex challenge in being childless in African society and the subsequent stigmatisation found inside and outside the church, and of the syncretism involved in being a female traditional healer and a Christian. We learn how African women have become instruments in peacemaking and have responded to HIV and Aids.

Reviewer: *Sarah Harris, BMS World Mission worker*



DVD review – An Inconvenient Truth

94 minutes, *Paramount Classics*.
Directed by *Davis Guggenheim* www.climatecrisis.net

Ranging from homely tales of his childhood to well-chosen words illustrating detailed science, Al Gore's film is a convincing portrayal of an issue which shows every sign of being the defining one of our age, and of several to follow.

It's essentially a film of him presenting a well-crafted lecture, enlivened by some cleverly designed graphics. Along the way, he demolishes several of the conspiracy theories to which so many cling. If, like so many of us, you need someone credible to help you find a well-developed base to start from in getting to grips with the climate change issue, Al Gore's your man.

As a mathematician by trade, and a confirmed sceptic of much popular science, I'm happy to tell you that, on the issue of climate change, this film changed my perspective. As Gore says, this is a moral issue – and that's why Christians need to be well-informed on it.

This film isn't (and doesn't pretend to be) the answer to all the questions, but it is a major contribution, and a really good place to start to explore your own understanding of the issue.

Reviewer: *Mark Craig, BMS World Mission Director for Communications*

For Mission Catalyst readers

Creative and Christian costs £6.99
(including p&p)

Religious Foundations of Western Civilization costs £20.99 (including p&p)

African Women, Religion and Health costs £13.99 (including p&p)

HOW TO ORDER

Post: Send a cheque made payable to *St Andrew's Bookshop* to Hopkins Yard, Valley Road, Hughenden Valley, High Wycombe, Bucks HP14 4LG.

Tel: 0845 270 2160. Please have your credit/debit card ready.

Website: www.standrewsbookshop.co.uk

DO NOT SEND TO BMS WORLD MISSION

Bible reflection: creation care

God's ownership of this world is the headline for the whole Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1: 1). And he made it well, flawless (Gen 1: 31). We're talking about everything that walks, crawls, flies or swims: "The earth is the LORD's and everything in it" (Ps 24: 1).



His greatness and goodness is seen in his workmanship: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Ps 19: 1 & Ps 97: 6). All God's creation worships him (Ps 96: 11-13 & 148: 7-10).

God's creation really matters to him. But from early on it was spoiled. Adam and Eve's sin not only damaged humankind's personal relationship with God but left them at odds with their environment (Gen 3: 17-19) and put the earth in "bondage to decay" (Rom 8: 20).

But he didn't give up on his earth. When God brought a great judgment on everyone except Noah and his family, they weren't the only ones to escape extinction. God ensured the survival of each kind of creature (Gen 7: 2-3). And he vowed to Noah and every living thing never to bring that kind of judgment again (Gen 9: 9-11).

No question; this earth, its people and its creatures are important to God. It's scary, then, to recognise he's made human beings like us responsible for all of it (Gen 1: 28). We are stewards of this world, accountable for what happens.

God means us to use it to provide for everyone and everything he has placed on the earth: "He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate – bringing forth food from the earth" (Ps 104: 10-14).

Damage the world, and we wreck God's supply channel for every creature. The rich will ensure they have food, shelter and protection but the poor will suffer first and most. God calls his people to be proactive in care for the poor (Ps 82: 3-4). Nothing good is in store for those who selfishly guard their interests and care little for others (Job 20: 20 and Ps 10).

Too easily we think God is concerned only for 'souls'. God's care is much broader. "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight" (Luke 12: 6). Our Christian care must be as broad.

One day creation will be released from its prison (Rom 8: 21), perhaps what Revelation calls "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21: 1). Until then – and maybe even then too – stewardship of the world God has made and values is ours to do well, for our sake and his.

In transit



Join BMS World Mission's *In transit* campaign against human trafficking, and support evangelical Christians in Albania as they actively lobby the Albanian government to create more effective legislation.

We are calling on Baptists in the UK to sign and return the *In transit* postcard – you'll find one copy with this issue of *Mission Catalyst*. Later this year postcards will be presented as a petition to the Albanian ambassador in London.

Order more postcards for your church at www.bmsworldmission.org/intransit or by calling 01235 517617. Also on the website are several ready-to-use service resources, a short downloadable video, articles and action points, as well as an e-postcard.



Higher ground

This year's harvest appeal looks at how God's love breaks through in volatile situations to bring peace, restoration and redemption to those in need.

Higher ground is ideal for harvest but also suitable to use in your church at any other time and features a short video filmed in Indonesia.

You will be encouraged by the changes that are taking place where lives, homes, and church buildings are restored after natural disasters and where the Church is now growing.

The comprehensive *Higher ground* appeal pack includes a DVD video, user's guide and leaflets.

For more information and to order your pack go to www.bmsworldmission.org/higherground Alternatively call BMS Resources on 01235 517617 or e-mail resources@bmsworldmission.org