

Report to the Asia Executive Committee of BMMF International
October 20-22, 1981

From the MTM Commission
Presented by Vivienne Stacey

This report contains much of the thinking and activities of Vivienne Stacey in BMMF's Mission to Muslims (MTM) committee. For the sake of security of some people, all names have been left out, while we have also deleted small parts that were either not very relevant for us, or that would be rather sensitive for the continuation of certain ministries.
John Stringer, December 2008

The MTM Commission held its annual meeting at The Monastery of the Angels in Karachi, Pakistan, on 13th & 14th October 1981.

Present: Commission members: xxxxxx and Vivienne Stacey (convenor).
Invited from Pakistan (BMMF): xxxxxx
Visitors: xxxxxx

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CHURCH DISCIPLING TEAMS IN MINISTRY TO MUSLIMS

We believe God is calling BMMF International to a new priority in evangelism and church discipling ministries to Muslims and Muslim converts. We encourage the wider BMMF family to join us in prayer that the Holy Spirit will show us more clearly the nature of our task and the ways in which BMMF as individual members and teams can join with other members of His Body in being co-labourers with Christ in the building of His Church in the midst of Islamic communities.

We believe that this ministry begins, not with organised projects and structures, but with individuals and families whom the Lord has been preparing for ministry and to whom He has given the spiritual gifts of evangelism, discerning spirits, counselling, teaching and pastoral care. We have named several in our Fellowship now working in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan or on home leave with some not intending to return to the sphere of service of their previous term, whom we are constrained to believe have these gifts and a growing sense of call to a primary ministry to Muslims. We invite our whole Fellowship to join in prayer that the Lord will confirm this call to them and to others not named, and that the Lord will guide our BMMF International field leaders to set apart those called to these ministries. Few of our members are now engaged primarily in evangelising and discipling ministries to Muslims. We believe this calls for heart-searching, prayer and a continuing self-evaluation of our ministries.

In the developing of team ministries in evangelism and church discipling we recognise that some members will be full time, but perhaps the majority of members will have other ministries which are directly related, such as being part-time staff of

correspondence schools, of TEE or Seminary programmes, or as IFES-related workers. This may be necessary for visa purposes or to allay undue suspicion as to our ministry.

Language mastery should be a prerequisite for these ministries, and prior experience in church-related ministries highly desirable, though we recognise that service in health-care or relief & development may be the Lord's way of preparing His worker for a church discipling ministry. A Biblically authenticated life-style, godly living, love and compassion for all, and generosity in giving and receiving hospitality are some of the qualities for this type of ministry.

In discussing the Lord's appointed place of ministry and of placement for teams, adequate and prior surveys are needed of where responsible peoples live, where converts live and work, locating enquirers to radio and correspondence course programmes and consulting with local church leaders that would welcome such ministries in their parishes or areas of ministry. Priority would normally be given to areas where there is no church witness.

The immediate goal of the teams will normally be to work with converts and enquirers for the purpose of worship, fellowship and mutual encouragement, and for instruction in doctrine and practice through Bible study and the use of TEE and correspondence course materials. Such cell groups normally meeting in homes would be encouraged to meet regularly, possibly weekly or more often. BMMF team members will encourage the cell groups to develop their own forms of worship and fellowship, and to witness to others.

Out of a desire to see Muslims coming to and growing in Christ, we suggest there are four possible avenues for church discipling of Muslims:

1. To work under or within the existing churches.
2. To establish individual congregations in areas where a team for church discipling resides.
3. To establish one central congregation for Muslim converts
4. To establish cell groups throughout the city.

None of these avenues are seen as mutually incompatible, but we suggest that the two most strategic avenues are to work within the church, and to establish cell groups. A BMMF Int. worker could work within either one avenue, or both.

We suggest that those who work within the church will have the responsibility of endeavouring to remove the obstacles to Muslim outreach. Also, we suggest they will seek to encourage those who are working amongst Muslims, to take and seek an active role in accepting and integrating Muslim converts and where appropriate to channel into the cell-groups.

[A] KARACHI

SOME PROPOSALS – KARACHI CHURCH DISCIPLING TEAMS

Karachi is a vastly spread city of about 7 million people living in reasonably well defined independent housing areas. The city is rapidly expanding with a large migratory influx from the rural areas and the north of Pakistan. The populace is largely Muslim and heterogeneous in character.

Churches exist within Karachi but have been hampered in outreach to the Muslim community by a number of factors. The church is largely within non-Muslim culture and there is little knowledge of how to communicate cross-culturally. For many members there is low motivation to evangelise Muslims, and to our present knowledge no churches openly and willingly accept Muslim converts. There are no Muslim convert churches despite the existence of considerable numbers of Muslim converts and enquirers.

MTM proposes that a team for church discipling be set up to work among the Muslim community in the city of Karachi. MTM proposes that the team be divided into two groups that have different emphases:

Group 1 This group is to work among the existing Muslim converts, and to form around these and enquirers from other contact groups, cell groups throughout the city. These cell groups would provide a centre for fellowship, prayer, worship and Bible study within their cultural context, and would spear-head further growth among the Muslim community.

Group 2 This group would work within the existing churches, to follow-up Muslim contacts and enquirers, to take an active role in integrating Muslim converts into both the church and cell groups, and to teach and make materials available in order to encourage the church in its ministry to the Muslim community.

MTM expects a large area of overlap between these two groups within the team.

MTM recommends that the team members be based in localities where evangelism can be initiated, and that all team members should have some form of identity in terms of work or occupation.

[B] BANGLADESH

PROPOSALS FOR MTM IN BANGLADESH

At present within BMMF International in Bangladesh, there is no-one who regards his/her primary responsibility to be MTM. In a country where 80% of the population is Muslim, and where there exists a great degree of openness amongst Muslims to the Gospel, this is startling. Most, if not all, see personal evangelism as important, but many perceive all non-Christians in the same light, whether they be Hindu, Muslim or nominal Christian. This is understandable, but the particular problems that Muslims face in becoming Christians are slighted over, making our ministry with this major segment of the society less effective.

Perhaps the time has come for us as a mission to define our policies in Bangladesh. Do we stay exclusively within the circles of development work and the Christian community as it exists? Or are we prepared to move into this major new area of MTM? Our policy needs to be defined one way or another. The following are two proposals for MTM in Bangladesh.

GOAL 1: To heighten the awareness of the existing personnel to MTM in Bangladesh.

Step 1 Spark interest by circulating articles and information that come from the MTM Seminar and Commission through the Regional

- Superintendent to personnel in Bangladesh. Ask questions that call for a response.
- Step 2 In 6 months or so have a meeting of those interested in MTM for prayer for Muslim friends and for sharing ideas, some in the form of papers.
- Step 3 This group (and others if possible) seek to expose themselves to other MTM work in Bangladesh (eg xxxxx etc).
- Step 4 From these contacts, more be written, discussed, and circulated to other BMMFers, culminating in an MTM Seminar in Dacca, mid-October 1982

[C] **DELHI**

CHURCH DISCIPLING TEAMS – A PROPOSAL FOR INDIA (DELHI)

In considering a plan to begin development of an MTM team in India, we see New Delhi to be an obvious starting point, because a number of our BMMF personnel involved in MTM are living there, and because there are several Indian families who are also keen to develop their own MTM.

We are very encouraged by the two Indian couples – xxxxx – who have both moved recently into Saket in South Delhi, in order to further their work among Muslims. As members of ISA/BMMF we heartily support them, and we wish to encourage them in the development of their ministries. Mr & Mrs xxx have made contact with these couples and plan to meet with them regularly for sharing, prayer and encouragement. **We recommend** that another expatriate couple join this team. **We recommend** that mastery of Urdu should be made a priority by new workers commencing MTM. New ways to learn Urdu should also be explored. We would welcome the participation of other workers (both national and expatriate) in this team.

We endorse the need for the establishment of cell groups for existing Muslim converts as well as for new converts and inquirers. Initially, we see the need for two such cell groups in different locations in South Delhi, which would meet regularly using culturally acceptable forms for worship, fellowship and sharing; and teaching in doctrine and practice. The possibility of linking cell groups with existing churches needs to be thoroughly explored. We want to encourage evangelistic outreach by the cell members into Muslim areas (eg Nizamuddin, Okhla and Mehrauli) with appropriate literature to be made available where necessary.

From such a base in New Delhi we would pray that there will be an extension of this work into other areas (eg Old Delhi, Agra).

We support the proposal for the All-India Consultation on Ministry to Muslims to be held in New Delhi 6 – 10 October 1982, and to be preceded by a small All-Asia Consultation (1 – 5 October). Bishop xxxx is the convenor and Dr xxxx is secretary of the Planning Committee for the consultation. The declared aim and objectives of this consultation “would be to bring awareness of Unreached Muslim People Groups in India, and to work out a strategy for evangelism, and discipling them.”

Summary of recommendation to AEC:

1. Approval of BMMF participation in the MTM team in New Delhi
2. Recruiting of an additional couple to work with the team.

3. Making available literature for use by the team; republication of existing literature; and preparation of new materials suitable for use with enquiring Muslims.

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CHRISTIAN LIFE STYLE FOR LIVING IN A MUSLIM COMMUNITY

(Ref. Minute CP2 of the Personnel Consultation)

Part 1 A Theology of Lifestyle: Biblical and sociological Basis

Our Christian lifestyle in a missionary situation is more than outward behaviour. It calls for an integration of faith and practice consistent with Biblical revelation and worked out in the context of identification with people of another faith and culture. It is not a static position, but rather through prayer and reflection and in fellowship with God's people, it is one that matures in manifesting the fruits of the Spirit. Such a lifestyle must be grounded in an ever-deepening understanding of our faith in God as Creator, Sustainer and Lawgiver; in Jesus Christ as Saviour, Lord and coming King; and in the Holy Spirit as Life-Giver, Advocate and Guide. The moral and ethical values that determine the parameters of our lifestyle are more than the decrees of God: they come from the very character and attributes of God, who as One is eternally personal and moral in His inner relationship of perfect love and holiness. Our response to the customs and institutions of society such as the family, systems of education, law and order, as well as the religious institutions of worship, witness and service, reflect the dynamic interaction between our faith and practices and the faith and practices of our guest community, in this case Islamic. Our Muslim neighbours do not want us to imitate their culture but they will respond to authentic evidences of the reality of our faith as seen in our daily living and in our love and sensitivity to their own search for God.

Therefore, in determining our lifestyle as Christians living alongside Muslims, we will recognise that the Gospel of the Kingdom of God judges all cultures, our own as well as that of our neighbours, rejecting and destroying all that is idolatrous, legalistic and contrary to the Word of God. It adapts and transforms all that is consistent with God's general revelation to mankind, and in witnessing to the newness of Christian lifestyle which comes from the work of the Holy Spirit transforming us into the likeness of Christ. This includes a spirit of humbling and identity with the poor and suffering as witnessed to in the Incarnation; a spirit of unconditional forgiveness and love and joy in suffering for His Name's sake as seen in the Cross; a spirit of power in the Church as the new community of God's people as demonstrated in the resurrection; and a sustained hope even in suffering and persecution as promised in His glorious Return to complete His Kingdom.

We recognise the lifestyle of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord as the perfect model for his disciples for all time. We do not seek to imitate the lifestyle of His followers in the first century church, but we do seek to live out the principles of Christ's lifestyle as witnessed to in the early church, in the context of our own age and in the places where we are called to serve.

We reject the absolutising of lifestyle of any historical age or prophet or saint, Christian or Muslim. As cross-cultural Christians we do not seek to equate our own cultural heritage as being appropriate for God's people living in an Asian culture. We judge ourselves, not others. We depend on the Holy Spirit to enlighten both our understanding and that of our national colleagues on the most appropriate lifestyle for each of us. Together we look to the Holy Spirit to fill us with His enabling power so that our lives are lived to the glory of God. As "people of the book" we depend on the grace of God for every thought, word and action. We love Him with all our heart, mind and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves, because He first loved us, and gave Himself for us.

Part 2 The Practice of Lifestyle: Individual, Family and Community

There are several areas of lifestyle that need special study and experimentation by MTM members as individuals, as families and as church discipling teams. These include:

(A) Individual and Family Lifestyle

1. Marriage relations between husband and wife involving respect of personhood, authority and family headship. Our attitude to sexuality within marriage, to child bearing and family planning. Our position on abortion and on divorce and re-marriage needs clarification, and in particular on divorced people applying for service in MTM discipling teams.
2. Education and our children, including equality of daughters and sons, issues of sending children to Christian or to Muslim schools. Behaviour of adolescent children in relation to parents and to peers. Issues of dating and courtship. Family use of Sundays and of holidays.
3. Honour and responsibility for parents and relatives. Concepts of the joint and extended family.
4. Family lifestyle. Styles of clothing, use of jewellery, decoration of home and cleanliness, attitude to possessions and display of wealth, modes of travel, standards of eating, prohibitions.
5. Hospitality. Rules of etiquette, occasional and established hospitality.
6. Lifestyle of unmarried MTM workers, relationships with families and courtship, adopting of foster children.

(B) Religious Life Style

1. Prayer. Times and places for private, for family prayer and community and PUBLIC WORSHIP. Prayer and worship at meal times. Relationships of free prayer to liturgical prayer. Christian forms of meditation. Positions of prayer.
2. Fasting. Acts of fasting in relation to seasons of prayer and meditation. Fasting during Lent as equivalent to Ramadan. Motivation in fasting.
3. Alms giving. To whom alms might be given, and the amount. Relation of alms giving to tithing. Alms giving at Christian festivals. Motivation in alms giving.
4. Pilgrimage. Christians to the Hajj. Christian Conventions? Teaching sessions on the lives of great saints of the church and teaching on pilgrimages in the Bible.

5. Festivals. The celebration of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Harvest. Forms of service, giving of gifts and food. Cost of such festivals.
Family festivals – birth of a child; first birthday; anniversaries – weddings, death of relatives; visits of relatives.
Sacraments and ordinances – baptism, Lord’s Supper, marriages, funerals.

(C) Social Lifestyles

1. Settling disputes. Appeal to churches or church courts – we appeal to government Law Courts.
2. Money Lending. Difficulties in lending money, possessions or property to others. Problems over the restitution of stolen goods or money. ‘Concepts of Forgiveness’.
3. Political Allegiance. Payments of taxes, issues of Customs declarations, obedience to national governments, modern equivalents of appealing to Caesar for justice. The rebuking of officials for corrupt practices. Letters to Editors on issues of social justice.
4. Lifestyle under religious/political persecution. Preparing churches for times of persecution, loyal ties to God and to Caesar in terms of persecution, use of violence in resisting evil, pastoral care of the suffering and bereaved, responsibility for orphans and widows, centres of refuge for Muslim converts.

A PROPOSAL FOR NEW DIRECTIONS RESEARCH AND SURVEY FUND

Since Q.78, two of the countries BMMF has been working in have all but closed down to our personnel. As a result, some 30 people have been released and have needed to be deployed elsewhere. Increasing restrictions on visas in the sub-continent, particularly for European and American nationals, makes it more and more difficult to place them in our traditional countries of service. BMMF has moved in the direction of expanding into the Gulf and other areas. We even have the beginnings of a structure there. However, this is extremely limited. We need more of a vision as well as information with regard to the deployment of new personnel in that region. This cannot be done without being exposed to the area and the possibilities that exist there. The following is a proposal for a fund that would encourage such research and exploration.

We recommend to AEC that:

1. for the next quadrennial 20,000 dollars per year be made available for the above described task.
2. the balance accrue
3. research could include a small team working for a few months in the defined areas.
4. this could include travel in new geographical areas for the purposes of making contacts and gathering information.
5. the fund be under the direction of a group of three, including a leader accountable to AEC.

6. the counties to be considered are: Tunisia and the Sultanate of Oman, as xxx is considering moving there; Egypt, Sudan and particularly Algeria where the Spirit of God is moving and where we would be welcomed to work; Turkey and Lebanon where there is BMMF interest; South Africa and Sri Lanka which were more fully reported in the appendix; other countries in the Gulf which we have committed ourselves to look at.
7. some suggestions as to people who could explore these areas are: xxxx to Egypt, Sudan and Algeria; xxxx to Tunisia and the Sultanate of Oman on behalf of xxx; our Directors should certainly visit these areas, especially xxxx ; a couple of people from Bangladesh (xxxx could go to Sri Lanka; xxxx could be requested to do survey work in the Gulf area.

MTM AND LITERATURE

MTM recognises that church discipling teams will need literature and cassettes in their ministry.

MTM also encourages church discipling teams to make known their present needs of literature and/or cassettes, together with projected needs. This includes material that may be currently available, or materials requiring translation, or materials as yet not produced.

MTM recommends that BMMF approach the groups mentioned below to supply the following literature.

1. MIK to produce a study guide in Urdu (and English for use elsewhere if required) to accompany the book "Beliefs and Practices of Christians", suitable for both group and individual use.
2. xxxx to produce studies to accompany the Bible Selections called "The Message of the Tawrat, the Zubur and the Injil, for use by groups or individuals. That these studies be made available for translation.
3. The xxxx to develop a course on "Home and Society – a Christian Perspective", which could be studied by both men and women, but in which joint family study would be encouraged. That the course be written with the Muslim family especially in view.

MTM continues to encourage, stimulate and initiate both production and/or use of appropriate literature and/or technology (cassettes, video-cassette tapes, radio programmes) by church discipling teams, as needed or seen to be required.

MTM should consider and help in the production of materials on tapes suitable for use by non-literate and semi-literate men and women. For example, putting the material of "Home and Society – a Christian Perspective" on tape in Punjabi, to be used in the Multan area.

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