

Baptist Missions Department Report 2021

The BMD Board places on record its gratitude to God for the ministry of Natalie Hood who faithfully served as Secretary of the Missions Department for a period of 10 years. She served as the secretary to the former Missions Developer, Rev Nelson Abraham, later as secretary to Rev Angelo Scheepers as the Interim Missions Developer, then as the office secretary for the Baptist Union of Southern Africa until her resignation in March 2021. We wish her well in her newfound employment.

The Missions Board last had a face-to-face meeting at Langa Baptist Church in Cape Town during February 2020. Thereafter, due to Covid-19 and the National Lockdown, it met regularly on Zoom. Likewise, because of the Lockdown, hardly any field visits or visits to churches could be undertaken. The Interim National Outreach Developer served in a voluntary capacity for most of 2020. He assisted by way of administration, the preparation for Board meetings, maintaining contact with partners / ministries in South Africa and abroad, and ensuring that the missionaries and church planters were financially sustained.

The following are some of the highlights that took place since the 2019 Assembly:

Ministry in South Africa:

Church planting:

The BMD identified some 34 new church plants in our 7 Regional Networks / Associations. This included 4 French speaking, 2 Swahili speaking and 3 new plants in Lesotho. The Easter Appeal realised an amount of just over R 100 000 and a large portion of these funds will be made available to the Regional Networks / Associations for church plants in their regions.

Riviersonderend, the Overberg (Western Cape): Elriza Visser, our BU missionary in the area, reported that there are five different Bible study groups which are going strong. The church is also involved in ministry on a nearby farm. A ministry to teenagers, called "Lead Today", is growing. The Oasis Fellowship is also very involved with ministry in the community, especially with counselling amongst children and people in crisis. We are grateful to the Western Cape Regional Network, the BWD and key supporting churches for their partnership with this project.

PEPE (Preschool Education Programme) SA: Our partnership with the Brazilian Baptist Missionary Union continues through the ministry of PEPE South Africa. This is led by our BU Missionary, Vanessa Patience. There are five Pepe units that are still operational in SA. Four of them are in the FSBA and one in the BNA. Ten missionary educators from local churches are also involved. Vanessa has monthly Zoom meetings and WhatsApp training with the Brazilian Baptists.

Rural Theological Education: Pastor George Ngamlana is responsible for the training of fifteen CTBS Pulse Programme students in Northern Zululand (KZNBA) and ten students in

Tjakastad, Mpumalanga (BNA). Petrus Vorster continues to be involved with six students from the Uppington (BANC) area. Most of these students are Lay Pastors / Leaders in new churches.

DOLM (Deeds of Love Ministries): See separate report below.

Partnerships in Africa:

Although Covid-19 and the National Lockdown made travelling in Africa and field visits virtually impossible, our partnership with Baptist bodies/churches in the following countries continued at different levels.

Malawi:

The Moller family visited South Africa during the latter part of 2020 and returned at the beginning of 2021. Their daughter, Hannah has completed her home schooling. Dr Keith Moller is very involved with the translation of the Bible into pure Yao and the project is progressing well. The BMD agreed that a major part of the 2022 Easter Appeal Offering will be used towards the printing of some of the books that have been completed.

Lesotho:

The BMD / Trust Funds assisted our Mamenoaneng Baptist Church in Maseru to complete the external structure of their building. A new church has been planted in the Mafeteng District.

Zimbabwe:

The BMD responded to a desperate plea for help from the Baptist Union of Zimbabwe (BUZ) to help feed some of their destitute pastoral and local church families who were going hungry because of the Covid and drought situation in Zimbabwe. An amount of R 20 000 from the November 2020 BMD special offering was made available to, and distributed by, the BUZ. Great appreciation was expressed to the BMD.

Zambia:

The BMD has agreed to assist the Northern Baptist Association of Zambia with funds for a new church planter. A church will be planted on the border of Zambia and the DRC.

Kenya:

37 Pastors / Lay Leaders of the Ushindi Baptist Church, Mombasa have now completed 14 of the 20 courses of the CTBS Pulse Training Programme. By the end of this year, they would have completed 15 courses.

Partnership in South America:

Columbia:

The Baptist Denomination of Columbia has agreed to second José and Maria Celis to the BMD as missionaries to South Africa. The ultimate plan is to plant churches amongst the Hispanics within our country. It was agreed that their first three-year stint will be in the WCBN. José is an alumnus of the Cape Town Baptist Seminary. The Columbia Baptists are keen for a partnership to be established between their theological colleges and ours. A visit of interested college graduates and students to Columbia is planned for February 2022. A local church pastor's exchange is planned for October / November 2022. Details will be forwarded to the churches.

Partnership with American Baptist Churches USA:

Faith Yarbrugh has been seconded by International Ministries of the American Baptists to the BMD. She is teaching at the Telios school based at the Bethany Emmanuel Church in Qonce (King Williams Town).

Partnership with BUSA Ministries:

Theological Colleges:

The Missions Board agreed that the officers of the department meet with the principals of Baptist Theological College and Cape Town Baptist Seminary on a bi-annual basis to discuss how the BMD can assist the seminaries and students in the area of Missions. It was agreed that an annual Zoom interview with graduating students take place to assist students who are keen to get involved in Missions following their training. It was also agreed that the 2022 national Church Planters' Conference be held during the Cape Town Baptist Seminary Missions week to enable students to attend. A similar event is envisaged with BTC.

Baptist Women's Department:

Our Women's Department continues to facilitate the training of the Bibleway correspondence course at the Ushindi Baptist Church in Mombasa, Kenya. To date, 180 women and 70 men have completed the five basic courses and two of the advanced courses. The motorbike purchased by the BMD/BWD/Ushindi Church continues to be used by Pastor Wafula for training these students as well as the Pulse Programme students in Mombasa and surrounds. We are grateful to the BWD who have agreed to donate 50% of the profits of their reopened Alberton Hidden Treasure shop for the ministry of the Missions Department. This arrangement will commence from 1 October.

Baptist Union Trust Funds:

Since the beginning of the year, the Trust Funds have been assisting the BMD to supplement grants made to needy church planters in different parts of the country. The grants are provided for a limited period and are subject to specific criteria. During 2020, an amount of R110 000 from a donor was distributed amongst 31 church planters / needy causes.

Our challenges:

Finance:

In terms of the new structure adopted by the 2018/19 Assembly, the Missions Department is required to raise its own income. This has been very difficult given the Covid-19 and the current economic situation. We are, however, grateful to the few churches that are giving directly to the BMD. However, we need more churches to come on board. We are currently operating with a shoe-string budget, a 1/3 BU office secretary, and a part-time National Outreach Developer (NOD). Please pray with us in this regard and encourage your church to participate on a regular basis. A big word of thanks to our local churches and individuals who are supporting the ministry of our Baptist Missions Department as well as the missionaries. The BMD is happy to report that to date, an amount of just over R100 000 has been set aside towards the funding for the appointment of a new full time NOD soon.

At the 2019 Assembly it was reported that the BMD had adopted the BMD 2025 vision. This included:

- To be the BUSA's sending agency
- To plant 25 new sustainable and healthy churches nationally and internationally
- To facilitate 50 "church to church" and "church with church" partnerships nationally and internationally

As indicated, due to Covid-19 and the National Lockdown, progress was somewhat limited. However, praise God for 5 new churches that came into being and all the positive developments that took place since the 2019 Assembly. We continue to keep the above goals before us.