



Steve and Gill Bryant's Prayer News June 2021



Dear friends

Warm greetings on a fine summer's day. Our prayer letter is coming to you a little sooner than normal, as we need to share some important news.

Changes coming at BCS

Last time we wrote, we told you about the many effects of COVID 19 on the world of missions. The virus has had a big effect in a fairly short time period, but there are other, longer-term trends which are also bringing about change. Some of these developments are very positive, but others present more of a challenge. For some time now, recruitment for long-term missions has been declining in traditional Western sending countries. In some parts of the world, the Church is much more vibrant than in the UK, and this means that missionaries are being sent from former mission fields such as parts of Africa and India. This is a very encouraging development, but it does not mean that the job is done.....we still need missionaries from the West. So many of our missionary teams are still short of workers, and there remain many peoples who do not yet have access to the Gospel in their own language.

Our main piece of news this time concerns BCS, the school where we served in Senegal from 1990 to 2001. Last time we asked for prayer that new long-term directors would be called to the school. Sadly, this has not happened, and other key long-term staff are not in place either. Alongside this situation, the profile of WEC Senegal has changed in recent years. There are now far less WEC families using the school, although for some time now it has also provided low-cost education for children from other mission agencies.

After a long process of prayer, discussion and consultation with others, the decision has been reached to merge with Dakar Academy, an American Christian school based in Dakar. They are looking to open a primary school in the area where BCS is situated, and a partnership agreement is being worked out. There will be a transition period during which students who are currently in Year 8 and Year 9 will be able to complete their IGCSEs, but after that the school will only offer an American curriculum. The next academic year, 2021 to 2022, will be the final year of BCS, a school which has been serving the needs of MKs for over 40 years.

This decision has implications for many families, and also for the long-term school staff. It will affect other mission agencies, particularly from newer sending countries. For many of them, funding their children's education is a big challenge.

For ourselves, the changes represent the end of an era – we began to think about serving at BCS shortly after David, our middle son, was born in 1987. We went to Bible College for a year in 1988, joined the WEC Candidates' course (4 months in residence at the HQ) in 1989, and spent several months in France to improve our language skills, before heading out to Senegal in November 1990 with three children aged 5, 3 and 14 weeks. The childhood years spent at BCS had a profound impact on our sons and to a large extent formed who they are today.

After our return to the UK in 2001, we continued the connection with BCS, due to our new role as International Education Consultants. As part of this role, we have run the MK Staff Training course (formerly MK Pre-field Orientation, or MKPFO), since 2002, and this year's will be our 20th course.

MK Staff Training 2021

Despite the pandemic, WEC is still recruiting for MK ministry. So far we have 13 participants signed up for this year, including three home-end MK support workers, one family tutor going to Cambodia, and nine new workers committing to a year at BCS. As with last year, the course will be delivered online via Zoom.

Prayer requests

- Pray for the staff, students and parents at BCS, as they adjust to all of the implications of the changes that will be taking place.
- Pray for the transition period, and for the teachers and students who will be affected by that.
- Pray for the provision of affordable education for all missionary families. Possibly new, creative solutions will be needed.
- Pray for us as we prepare for the MK Staff Training course. This year it takes place from Monday 26th July to Thursday 5th August, (some participants only do the first week.)

How are we doing?

We have both stayed well and have now had our second dose of the vaccine. Since we wrote last time, we have been able to meet up with Peter and Miriam for a day, and have also visited Michael and Bethany at their home in Wales. At the end of May, together with David we spent a week away in the Forest of Dean. Despite the rain, it was lovely to get a break and a change of scene.

As always, we want to thank you for your ongoing interest, support and prayers. Let us know how we can pray for you too.

Many blessings

Steve and Gill

Steve and Gill Bryant, 67 Budbury Tynning, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 1QE