



# SPREAD

MARCH 2011

## From the Chairman—Tony Thompson

I hope you find the 'SEAN' stories in these pages an encouragement and inspiration. We begin with an account of a recent visit made by our Director, Terry Barratt, to Mexico.

*Tony Thompson*



## Mexico



*Terry (centre) with the Semillas team: left to right - Isidoro Ortiz (Dean of Studies), Presb. Raul Martinez - founder and leader of Semillas, a volunteer coordinator, and Javier Hernandez - Executive Administrator.*

This church is led by Pastor Baltazar Arizmendi, two bishops and five deacons (all SEMILLAS/SEAN graduates). From this central church they have ten mission outposts in different parts of the country.



*Pastor Baltazar Arizmendi with his wife.*

## "Welcome back to SEMILLAS".



*The Maranatha Church on 'graduation' day.*

This was the warm welcome, accompanied by the typical embrace, to usher me into the modest but very efficient office flat of the ministry that represents SEAN in Mexico. (SEMILLAS means 'SEEDS')

Pastor Baltazar was a police officer on bank guard duty, when twenty years ago in a violent bank raid, he was shot in the spine and paralysed. A miraculous healing brought him to faith in Jesus, and he joined Maranatha, then a small fledgling church. At that time, the church asked SEMILLAS (SEAN) to help them set up their congregational Bible School. Baltazar started to study and due to his faithful and efficient service advanced in his ministerial commitment, until fifteen years ago, on the retirement of the founding pastor, he took over.

SEMILLAS was founded in 1993 thanks to the personal sacrifice and financial generosity of the Martinez family, who saw the great need to provide Theological Education by Extension (TEE) to the hundreds of working class and indigenous churches in this vast nation.

He said to me, "We owe so much to SEMILLAS/SEAN. We have our own Bible School using SEAN materials which have brought us so much blessing. No one can serve in this church unless they study and train and we are spreading this to other areas. You can see the results - so much blessing".

Now, eighteen years later, three full time workers and a vast army of volunteers cover the main provinces of Mexico and cater for roughly five thousand students a year. Now come with me to the 'Maranatha' Pentecostal church on the outskirts of Mexico City to see what this 'statistic' means. I arrive to find a large team of workers – all evidently knowing their jobs well. I am impressed by their fervour and efficient order before and during the service! All 450 members are in their seats before the service starts and - miracle in Latin America – it starts on time!! The singing is real praise, the service orderly and up-lifting - the SEMILLAS/SEAN graduation dignified and solemn - a real blessing to attend.

I wholeheartedly agreed. I could see it all with my own eyes!!



*The Graduation.*

**Alf Cooper, besides being a Church Mission Society Partner in Chile and Protestant Chaplain to Chile's President, is also a Trustee of SEAN International.**

In the churches that he pastors, SEAN Courses form the backbone of their discipleship and training programmes.

Alf led the prayers of Chile during last year's miner crisis at the San José mine. During a special tour in the UK in January and February 2011, Alf translated for José Henríquez, one of the 33 rescued miners and the spiritual leader of the group.

During that tour, they received an invitation from the White House to fly to the USA to address the Presidential Prayer Breakfast.

Here is the text of the address given by José Henríquez.....

“ My name is José Henríquez, one of the 33 Chilean miners rescued from la Mina San José in Copiapó. I had already escaped from various mining accidents in the past, for which I thank my God, but this event seemed to have a purpose - it has united the entire world.

*On 5th of August 2010, the bicentenary year of our nation, having already experienced a terrible earthquake in February, our dangerous mine finally caved in. A loud explosion, a powerful shock wave and a cloud of dust that didn't allow us to see more than a metre for 3 to 4 hours was what I remember. Gradually all 33 miners on my shift appeared in the Shelter where I was when the accident occurred.*



*José Henríquez and his family*



*Alf Cooper with the President of Chile*

*We took stock, discovered we had food for only 3 days and water for one. We faced the fact that we would be down there for at least a week before they rescued us - if we could only get in touch with the outside world. We rationed food and gave out practical jobs to everyone. My job was the best, in charge of prayer. They knew I was an "evangélico" (evangelical) and so I said to them that my condition was that we pray to the living God.*

*We began a Survival Community where we prayed every day in a circle and shared our fears and pains. Gradually we became aware of the 34th Miner down there with us the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the Lord of Glory. As we humbled ourselves in the mud, he began to do miracles in answer to our prayers. Men were miraculously healed, relationships were restored among us.*

*Then came our worst moment, when we heard the first drill pass us by. We thought they might give us up for dead as at least 15 days had gone by. Then the miracle - the second drill hit a rock and came in sideways to us, penetrating our chamber a few metres away from the Shelter. We rejoiced!*

*After that the world came to us. We were able to appreciate what the Chilean authorities, the President himself, so many experts from all over the world were doing for us. We worshipped God. We carried on praying and*

*the last thing we did before any of us got into the Capsule was to thank God again and bless those who had laboured so much for our rescue.*

*I believe God is speaking to the world through this event, so different to the many accidents where thousands lose their lives. He is calling us back to him, to a loving God who does not want man to perish, to a powerful God who answers prayer, who is there as the 34th miner in whatever mine you or I get trapped in. Praise to his name. ”*



# Nepal

## The study of SEAN Courses frequently leads to transformed lives and communities.

The following story, from the mountain kingdom of Nepal, was sent to us by Tanka Subedi, Director of ITEEN (Institute of Theological Education by Extension in Nepal). SEAN courses are widely used in ITEEN's teaching and training programme. .

“ Ramche, is a remote village in Makwanpur district. Though relatively close to Kathmandu, provision of roads, electricity, education, healthcare and sanitation is limited. The village has 60 - 70 households of which 30 - 35 households are Christian.

The people of Ramche are poor and superstitious. Witch doctors are often consulted when illness strikes. Their problems have been made worse by widespread drinking and smoking. Children start drinking and smoking as early as seven. Many do not go to school and, amongst those who do, early marriage (by the age of 14) has led to their dropping out from education. Various development initiatives have been tried there but with little success. In the midst of these problems, ITEEN started work amongst the Christians and there have been remarkable results.

Two local pastors, Chitra B Praja and Krishna B Praja are among those who benefited from ITEEN courses. They say that the courses transformed them and their group members spiritually, socially and economically. They acknowledged that, even though they had accepted Christ years ago, they had not really been living as Christians. “When we started studying the ITEEN courses we began to meaningfully understand the Bible,” says Pastor Chitra. “Though a Pastor, I myself was addicted to alcohol and used to drink secretly. I stopped drinking after I read the second lesson of Abundant Life, ‘Repentance from sin’.”

Not only have the ITEEN courses helped the pastors in their ministry, they have also strengthened the faith of the believers. They attend church more regularly and, over the years, the number of Christians in the village has increased.

Giving has also grown. “ITEEN has taught us to ‘give for God’s work’. We have become an example,” Pastor Chitra proudly says.

The way the Christians live is proving to be a strong witness to the community. More now send their children to school thus making the school more viable. Literacy amongst the adults has improved. Early marriage has been discouraged.

Money previously spent unwisely is now being used for income-generating activities such as poultry, rearing goats, bee-keeping, etc. Increased income through these initiatives provides for daily household needs. Sanitation has been improved. Better health is being enjoyed. People seek proper medical assistance.

Thus the courses offered by ITEEN have been blessed with positive impacts in various walks of life. This clearly is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen! ”



Younger ITEEN students taking their final exams



Pastor Chitra B. Praja

## Supporting SEAN International Financially

If you would like to give a donation please make your cheque payable to ‘SEAN International’ and post it to: Mr Philip Tadman, Ferndale, Cranston Road, East Grinstead, W Sussex RH19 3HL

So that we can acknowledge your kind gift, please enter your details below. Thank you!

Name..... Address.....  
..... Postcode ..... Email .....

If you would like to give regularly to SEAN International by Standing Order, please tick box   
If you are a taxpayer and would like to ‘Gift Aid’ your donation, please use the Gift Aid form overleaf.



## Daily Bible Readings

Earlier this year, we posted on to our Spanish website a plan of 'Daily Devotional Bible Readings'.



This is offered free of charge and has now been downloaded by 43 people.

This seven-year 'plan' is the result of 25 years work by Liz Richards who was one of the original SEAN 'writing team' and, for many years, a Trustee of SEAN. It is a magnificent contribution to the ministry of SEAN.

## Course Editing

Work continues on the up-dating of the Portuguese 'Life of Christ' Course for use in **Angola and Mozambique**. This is a pain-staking and time-consuming work.

Alongside this we are working on a version of this course for use in **Northern Paraguay** and possibly **Brazil**.

Careful detective enquiries followed by hi-tech computer work has been going on over the last few weeks to enable us to 'find' and use translations in the language of **Tajikistan** that we thought we had 'lost'!

A standard **American English Version** of the 'Life of Christ' Course is almost complete. This reflects the latest revisions and represents a major editorial 'advance'.

## Gift Aid Changes

Currently, 'Gift Aiding' donations to charities, increases the value of the donation by 28%.

From the beginning of April 2011, the amount that charities will be able to claim back from tax paid on 'Gift Aided' donations will be reduced to 25%.

You may be thinking of making a 'Gift Aided' donation to SEAN International? If you are, and can make that donation before the new tax year starts, we, in SEAN, would be most grateful as your donation will still be able to increase its value by 28%. Thank you!

## For Thanksgiving and Prayer

### Terry and Pancha

We give thanks that Terry continues to make excellent progress following major surgery last year. Such is his improvement that, whilst in Chile, he has been able to make visits to key SEAN Programmes including Mexico and Peru.

### Mexico

Whilst we rejoice in the achievements of the 'SEMILLAS' programme, we also recognise the difficulties and dangers that exist in that country and remember the SEMILLAS workers in our prayers.

### Nepal

Pray for Tanka Subedi and his wife, Rita, as they head up the ITEEN programme there.

Pray too for the pastors and people of Ramche.

### SEAN Trustees and Executive Committee Members

The piece about Alf Cooper illustrates the fact that SEAN Trustees etc have other demanding responsibilities too. Please pray for us all as, in the midst of busy lives, we seek to make wise decisions and do useful work for SEAN.

## Courses

For courses in US English, + other languages, contact SEAN International at: **contact@seaninternational.com**

For courses in UK English, contact SEAN UK at: **admin@sean.uk.net**

## Websites

**www.seaninternational.com** (English & Spanish)

**www.sean.uk.net** (English)

## Addresses

**SEAN International**, Ferndale, Cranston Road, East Grinstead, W Sussex RH19 3HL, UK

Registered Charity No. 286965

**SEAN UK**, Weycroft Hall, Axminster, Devon EX13 7LL, UK

Tel: 01297 630104. Registered Charity No. 1102491

## A new way of giving

It is now possible to give to SEAN International using your debit or credit card

via Charities Aid Foundation [www.cafonline.org](http://www.cafonline.org).

Once on the website, do as follows:-

Select: **For individuals** Press: **Donate now**

Type in: **SEAN International** Select **Search** Select **Donate**

Choose method: credit or debit card or CAF charity account

Enter Donation details: **Amount** Give anonymously if you wish option: **Y or N**

Instructions to the charity eg for **Nepal Conference**

Gift Aid the donation, if you wish/ are able Provide Your personal details

Provide Your card details Continue as instructed ....

*giftaid it*

## SEAN International GIFT AID DECLARATION (Registered Charity No. 286965)

I want SEAN International to treat the enclosed donation of £..... as a Gift Aid donation; and all future donations from me until I notify you otherwise (delete the statement about future donations if you wish).

I pay income and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax SEAN International reclaims on my donation in the tax year. I will inform you if my circumstances change.

Signature ..... Date ...../...../.....

Use space overleaf in which to provide your details. Thank you.