



SPREAD

SEAN's International Newsletter

Issue #

Spring 2003

First, an Apology

It's been many months since readers received news of SEAN International from wider afield than the UK. For this we apologise wholeheartedly. The long gap really does emphasise what an excellent service Derek and Judy Birmingham provided, in regularly producing previous issues of *Spread*. Since their retirement, this aspect of SEAN International's communications has fallen behind. The recent focus has been on developing SEAN UK. As the fourth edition of *Forum* accompanying this shows, work in the UK is forging ahead, spearheaded by Jacqui Brown and her team. See also the web site www.sean.uk.net – and if you don't have the means to do that yourself, ask someone with a computer to show you!

Secondly, our Heartfelt Thanks

Thank you to readers and churches who have continued to support the world-wide work in prayer and giving. We want to equip you to persevere in prayer – and as you are able to support financially the work of writing, translation, design, production and distribution. Please be encouraged by what you read here – brief though the items are. There's much prayer fuel! Thank you again to all those who take an interest in SEAN's ministry. ■

A Partner Agency Reports

As people around the world get to know about the existence of the Chinese translation of SEAN materials, they are requesting them. We have been shipping *Abundant Life* and *Abundant Light* to the Chinese communities in such countries as Australia, Russia and the United Arab Emirates. We plan to put *Abundant Life* and *Abundant Light* on the internet so that anyone can download them.

We have completed the translation of *Ephesians* and *The Pentateuch* into Chinese, and our next projects are *Jeremiah* and *How to Preach*. The *Compendium* is fast spreading in China. It is gaining popularity among missionaries. However, the persecution is getting tough. We were going to have a seminar in a city in China, but our partner was arrested, jailed and kicked out of China. They are tracing the source of the books. I pray that everyone involved in our project will be safe. With the political leadership change in China, the situation will persist until early 2003. I am trying to introduce the materials to the Chinese communities in North America. A Chinese church started a small group to study the books. ■

Use in your Church Magazine

Why not pass a copy of this SPREAD to your magazine editor, for inclusion in a future issue? Maybe there are other ways of letting others know of the good news of the Good News being spread!

SEAN (pronounced 'Say-Ann')

Study by Extension for All Nations

Publishing printed materials for evangelism, discipleship, and training:

- a wide range of carefully graded workbooks and tutor manuals
- for use in small groups within the local church
- Bible-based
- translated into the local language (now more than 70)
- written with an understanding of the local culture
- used in well over 100 countries world-wide

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Report from the Revd Terry Barratt International Director of SEAN

After a lull, the last couple of months have seen renewed interest in SEAN from many places round the world. Some places are in areas of conflict and/or persecution of Christians, and we are very encouraged to see that, despite the difficulties and dangers, the brethren are determined to grow and multiply the word!

Russian Jews

The Korean Mission which plans to expand and deepen their ministry (among Russian Jews recently emigrated to Israel and who have come to faith there), is finding that the continuing tensions between the Israeli and Palestinian factions is severely hampering their ministry. There are at least five Russian-speaking churches – all in need of SEAN Bible-teaching and leadership training as they grow.

Fruit from the Gulf

In the Gulf State of Bahrain, SEAN's use is expanding, motivated by someone who previously used SEAN in Oman. Another result of the Oman SEAN is a former student from there who is making the initial move to get SEAN going in Sri Lanka, linked to the SEAN Extension College.

News from Asia

We have heard from Kyrgyzstan that a Bible Seminary there has 40 students doing *The Life of Christ* series and another 250 involved in *Abundant Life*, while in Nepal there are several thousand students doing various courses in the country-wide programme. Further north, all the main courses are now being used in Mongolia (*Abundant Life*, *Abundant Light*, *Life of Christ* and *Paul's Life and Letters*.) In China the production and use of materials by several agencies continues, but cannot keep up with the pace of church growth! See below for more news from China. In Singapore a new initiative may soon be under way, to take on SEAN for training leaders of children's ministry especially, headed up by an experienced and well-trained SEAN graduate.

In Africa

The Nigerian Bible Translation Trust is in the initial stages of seeing how SEAN materials can help with the teaching and assimilation of Scripture in newly translated minority-languages, while in Mali translation and production in French and native Bambara is under way.

In Canada

Apart from Anglicans and Presbyterians in the early days of SEAN's ministry, and latterly the Christian and Missionary Alliance in both French and English, Canada has not been one of the greatest users of SEAN; however there is a slowly growing interest, which we hope to see blossom!

In the USA

More and more groups are discovering SEAN, especially in Spanish, but also other languages. With so many US mission partners spread across the world, there is great scope for promoting contact and interaction between groups – whether in their own countries or as migrants to North America. For instance, materials in Hmong, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Russian, Indian sub-continent languages and many others are printed in other countries and then used in the USA. Or they are translated and printed in the USA and administered from there, and used in the other countries.

In Europe

In France headway is being made with translation, but the take-up of courses is slow; there's a general apathy towards the gospel. We have just heard from the SEAN programme in Spain. It is not large, with only 200 students. Of these 50 are from the Gypsy Church and for the first time ever, they have been able to study God's word systematically. One of them, an older man, is totally illiterate but he has just graduated having completed all six books of *The Life of Christ* with good grades – doing all his studies, including the exams, with the aid of his 10-year-old son acting as reader and scribe! These stories, certainly

keep us going!

Outstanding advance with T&M (Train & Multiply)

This complete TEE (Theological Education by Extension) programme entrusted to SEAN by founder Dr. George Patterson was edited and perfected by SEAN during the 1980's. Phenomenal growth meant it was impossible to cope with the outreach, so SEAN shared the copyright of the material with Project World Reach of Canada. PWR has now taken over the administration of this ministry and the results have been wonderful.



Alf Cooper (SEAN) and
Lloyd Niles (PWR)

Above are Alf Cooper (SEAN), who had much to do with this project, and Lloyd Niles, the leader of PWR in a workshop in Maui, Hawaii. Alf comments: 'God put us together here in Maui! I was flabbergasted at the way T&M has spread and is being used. No wonder we suffered so much!'

Summing up

Terry Barrett sums it up: 'There is truly a great SEAN network worldwide, which despite problems of civil strife, religious persecution, lack of finance etc, is reaching and teaching the people it was designed for – people working in and from their local churches, and within the realities and limitations of their society. We praise the Lord for His overwhelming love, power, provision and protection for the international SEAN 'family'. ■