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Introducing the MIDDLE RIVER REGION of Zaire

IN December, 1972, the three daughter churches of the B.M.S. in Zaire united to form the Baptist Community of the River Zaire (CBFZ). The CBFZ is divided into four administrative regions: Upper River, Middle River, Kinshasa and Lower River.

The Middle River Region is the second largest (much larger than Wales), and lies between Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire, and Mbandaka, an important river port astride the equator. (See Map 1.) It is in an area of low hills and swampy plains, shaped rather like a right-angled triangle with the mighty River Zaire as hypotenuse.

Mai Ndombe, the largest lake on its eastern edge, was once a vast inland sea covering much of the Zaire basin. Scrubby grassland with scattered patches of forest in the south gives way to dense, tall treed equatorial forest in the north of the area.

The climate is hot all the year round with average daily temperatures around 80°F. Humidity is high and enervating much of the time. (Even for the Zairians!) In most of the area there is a short dry season in January and February, and a longer dry season from mid-May to mid-September.

Rainwater, collected in drums, and used for drinking and cooking, finishes, and those who do not want to use river water have to find springs which have not dried up. Most of the rains come in short, heavy storms and it is difficult to believe that the area gets twice as much rain as most parts of England.

Compared with the other three regions of the CBFZ, the Middle River is sparsely populated and underdeveloped. Such wealth as there is

comes mainly from trading and providing Kinshasa and Mbandaka with fish and other food. There are some plantations (coffee, cocoa, rubber) in the Tondo and Lukolela districts, and a few sawmills.

Roads are few and as none are yet asphalted, they are quickly eroded in the rains. The main arteries of transport are the rivers and lakes, especially the Zaire River, along which large passenger and cargo boats ply a regular traffic. Hundreds of canoes line the banks of the main riverine villages.

The Middle River is a region of several hundreds of small villages. Mushie (14,000) and Bolobo (12,000) are small towns, and Yumbi and Lukolela have several thousand inhabitants. One can count on one's fingers the number of other villages with more than a thousand inhabitants.

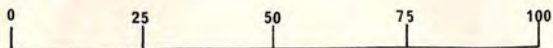
No one tribe is dominant in the region. The Banunu, the first tribe to be converted in large numbers, live close to the River Zaire between Bolobo and Lukolela. Around Lake Tumba are the Ntomba branch of the Lokonda tribe. The other main tribes, Basengele, Mpama, Batende, Bateke and Baboma each have their own areas of settlement, though there is some intermingling particularly in the large riverside villages. All tribes still proudly speak their own tribal language though Lingala, the common language of the region as well as along the River Zaire, is taking over among the young.

For some years now large numbers, particularly of young people, have left the region to settle in Mbandaka and especially Kinshasa, in search of employment, since there are no industries and therefore few jobs for the educated, apart from teaching.

GLOSSARY

CBFZ	Communauté Baptiste du Fleuve Zaire Baptist Community of the River Zaire
CBMF	Communauté Baptiste du Moyen Fleuve Baptist Community of the Middle River
CO	Cycle d'Orientation The first two years of secondary education
ETEK	Ecole de Théologie Evangélique à Kinshasa School of Protestant Theology Kinshasa
FOMEKO	Fonds Médical de Co-ordination Foundation to assist Medical Work
USAID	United States Aid

Map 2 The Church Districts Of The Middle River Region



SCALE IN MILES

----- Approximate boundaries of districts

—— Routes useable by lorry

IKOKO District centre

H. Bolobo Hospital

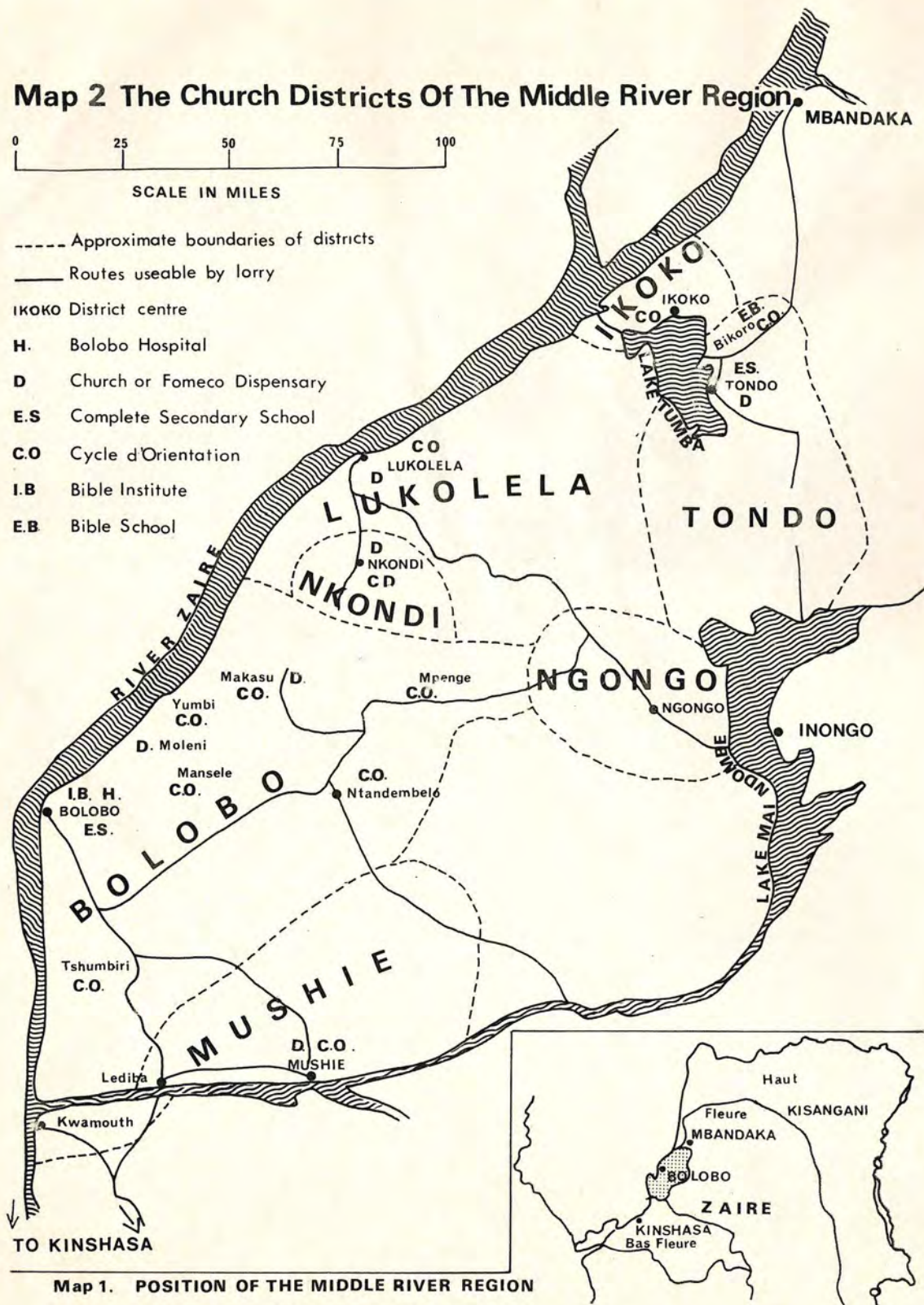
D Church or Fomeco Dispensary

E.S Complete Secondary School

C.O Cycle d'Orientation

I.B Bible Institute

E.B Bible School



Map 1. POSITION OF THE MIDDLE RIVER REGION

Country and Church become independent

In June, 1884, the famous B.M.S. missionary, George Grenfell, completed the construction of the boat, Peace, at Kinshasa. The next month he made his first journey up the River Zaire to Lukolela over two hundred miles away, where the following year the first mission station up river from Kinshasa was founded.

Three years later, Grenfell founded the station at Bolobo, about eighty miles closer to Kinshasa. The work in the Lake Tumba region was begun by the American Baptists, who built a station at Ikoko in the late 1880's which, because of periodic flooding, was later abandoned in favour of Tondo. Tondo, together with another American Baptist station at Tshumbiri, was transferred to the B.M.S. at the beginning of this century.

After the first years with few converts, the missionary work, centred on these four stations, gradually won many to faith in Christ. The pioneer missionaries undertook many a long trek to the interior preaching the gospel, teaching inquirers and dispensing elementary medical help.

Some, like A. E. Scrivener, played an important part at the turn of the century publicizing the "rubber atrocities". In the area of the Basengele tribe, agents of concessionaire companies exploiting rubber and ivory in the Congo Free State, tortured and chained the people, burned villages and demanded excessive taxes in rubber in a frenzied attempt to "get rich quick".

Capable indigenous converts who showed a good understanding of the Christian faith were placed in strategic villages as catechists to carry on evangelism and teaching under the supervision of missionary pastors. This pattern

continued for many years. Despite the B.M.S. joining with the American Baptists and the Swedish Covenant Church in founding the pastors' school at Kimpese in 1909, the number of theologically trained Zairian pastors in the Middle River Region was very small.

The evangelistic and pastoral work of the Church became increasingly the responsibility of the Zairians, but until 1960 (Independence) this was under the close oversight of missionary pastors. Since Independence this has completely changed. All the seven district pastors in the Middle River area are Zairian, and indeed, there is only one missionary pastor in the whole region.

During the period of Belgian colonial rule, the B.M.S., along with other missions, greatly increased their educational and medical work. In the Middle River region, hospitals were built at Bolobo and Tondo, and primary schools on the mission stations and in important villages. This work was hindered until 1948 by the lack of government subsidies to Protestant schools. Since Independence, the educational work has greatly increased. Secondary Schools were founded at Bolobo in 1961 and Tondo in 1963, and since 1969 over a dozen *Cours d'Orientation* (first two years of secondary schooling) have been created.

Work in the hospitals has been frustrated by lack of doctors. For some years there has been no doctor at Tondo. The failure to find a missionary doctor for Bolobo hospital in 1972 has led to the convention whereby FOMECO, a para-state organization, has taken over the running of the hospital for ten years. During recent years there has been an increasing emphasis on medical work in the district, and six dispensaries have been set up in villages distant from Bolobo.

Shortly after Independence, in 1962, the three areas of B.M.S. work in Zaire became three autonomous Baptist communities; Upper Congo; Middle and Lower River; the Middle River Baptist Community (CBMF) comprising the mission districts of Bolobo, Tondo and Lukolela. Hours of discussion and negotiation were spent in efforts to unite these three communities before their unification in December 1972 under pressure from the *Eglise du Christ au Zaire* (the body uniting the Protestant denominations in Zaire).

The administration had to be shared

Like the Baptist Union in Britain, the CBFZ has its General Secretary and Area Superintendents. The Superintendent of the Middle River region is Rev. Mompoko mo Ikombo, who studied at Kimpese and, for a year, at Bristol Baptist College. He is a pastor well experienced in church administration, as he was Secretary-General of the *Communauté Baptiste du Moyen Fleuve* (CBMF) several years before the unification of the three communities. At that time his home and office were at Bikoro in the Tondo District.

The first General Assembly of the CBFZ in May 1973, decided, after much discussion, that the Secretariat of the Middle River region should be moved to Bolobo. There is no large town or obvious centre for the region, but Bolobo is already an important church centre (hospital, secondary school, Bible Institute) and has frequent communication by river and road, and daily radio contact with Kinshasa. Also the construction of the church air-strip at Bolobo has brought it only 1½ hours away from the capital.

Together with Pastor Mompoko in the Regional office are citizens Lotoy and Boyanga, former primary school headmasters who now supervise the education work in the part of the Middle River region which lies in Bandundu Province. From his office in Mbandaka, Citizen Nze fulfils the same function for the northern half of the Middle River Region which is in Equator Province. Also in the Bolobo office are Citizen Nganka in charge of Christian Education (Sunday Schools, youth activities), and Mama Bonkisa (Beryl Fox) in charge of Women's Work in the Bolobo district.

In recent years it has been found necessary to subdivide the former large districts of Tondo, Lukolela and Bolobo, which were too large to be supervised effectively by their district pastors. Intertribal and intervillage rivalry also led to the



Citizen Basonya Mbaka, former hospital director, with Citizen Mokakali, pharmacist, Bolobo Hospital.

formation of four new districts; Mushie, Ngongo, Nkondi and Ikoko Bonginda in 1971. This process of subdivision is still continuing, e.g., the three parishes of the Bolobo districts have now become ten.

Each district is in charge of an experienced pastor, while each parish is supervised by a pastor, evangelist, or senior catechist. (See training of church workers.)

Church government is more Presbyterian than Baptist. The local village church decides little more than internal discipline of its members. Most questions and problems are dealt with by the Church Councils in the early months of the year at parish, then district, then regional levels. Recommendations and requests from the four regional councils go to the General Assembly of the CBFZ held in May. One example of the authority of the different councils must suffice: Parish Councils recommend new catechists, District Councils appoint them, the Regional Assembly places evangelists and the General Assembly places pastors.



Newly qualified nurses with Joan Parker and Dr. Miatudila, the hospital director.

You may have to walk miles for help

THE vast area of the Middle River Region is poorly served for medical help. Much of the population has many miles to travel when they would seek medical aid, in an area where villages are scattered, communications poor and public transport virtually non-existent.

Three State hospitals circle the area—at Mushie in the South, on the Kasai river;

at Inongo in the East, across Lake Mai Ndombe; and at Bikoro in the North, on Lake Tumba. State dispensaries are run in many of the larger villages, but the nurses are given very little supervision, and there always seems to be a shortage of medicines.

B.M.S. established two hospitals in the Middle River Region, at Bolobo and Tondo, with a dispensary at Lukolela between the two. Lukolela is now one of the network of dispensaries attached to Bolobo hospital.

No doctor

The Hospital at Tondo was the first to fall victim to the lack of doctors offering for service with the B.M.S. For a number of years now, there has been no doctor there, and the work has been continued on dispensary lines by a team of missionary

and Zairian nurses. An important aspect of the work now is the monthly visits into the surrounding villages, lasting several days, and combining evangelization with the medical work done.

It looked as if Bolobo would follow Tondo when, in 1972, there was no replacement for the doctor who was leaving. As well as the work of the hospital itself, there were six satellite dispensaries, scattered over a vast area, the school for auxiliary nurses had at last received official State recognition; and the first phase of the construction of new buildings had been completed. The opening ceremony was overshadowed by the fact that the whole future of the medical work there was so uncertain.

To safeguard the continuation of the medical work at Bolobo, an Agreement was

made between B.M.S. and FOMEKO, a Zairian organization which runs one of the big hospitals in Kinshasa, whereby our hospital has been leased to FOMEKO for a period of 10 years.

Two doctors

A year has now passed since the first FOMEKO personnel arrived here and we became a "State" hospital. After a stormy (galeforce) beginning, things have now settled, and we can begin to assess the situation.

Two doctors are guaranteed, which means there is always one doctor here, most of the time, two.

Although there are still financial problems, the burden no longer has to be borne by the Church or Mission.

The number of personnel has increased, nursing staff, administrative staff and work-

men, thus creating more jobs and sharing the work load.

How then does the Church fit into this situation? It would be easy to say that it is now a State hospital, and so we have no more part to play in the medical work here, but that is far from being true.

Chaplain

First, missionaries are still welcome to join in the work. At present there are two missionary nurses, who are concerned mainly with the teaching of the student nurses, but more would be welcome.

The church has appointed a chaplain, to minister to the spiritual needs of the patients. In his work of bedside evangelism, he also finds those who are in material need—shortage of food or money, especially those from a long way away, and can bring them help. He also has pastoral oversight of

the hospital personnel, especially the students, and organizes monthly Bible Studies for them.

Chapel

In January of this year, work began on the building of a hospital chapel, situated in the centre of the hospital compound, between old and new buildings. The walls are now almost up to roof level, and we hope to be holding services in it by the time you are reading this issue of the Missionary Herald. Finally, there are still the Christian nurses, working now in a secular set-up, but who can still witness to the love and compassion of Christ in their daily work.



Building the hospital chapel at Bolobo.



Bible students at the Bible Camp (students' houses), Bolobo.

Church workers now receive training

Pastoral training within the CBFZ is at three levels:

- (a) Theological school (entrance level four or six years secondary education), producing fully fledged "Pastors".
- (b) Bible Institute (entrance level two years Secondary education), training "evangelists" i.e., village or parish pastors with slightly less responsibility.
- (c) Bible School (entrance level six years primary schooling), training "supervisors" i.e., senior catechists in charge of a group of village churches.

The theological school of the CBFZ is at Yakusu in the Upper River, where the Middle River has at present seven students. Most of the

older pastors in the Middle River were trained at the inner mission pastors' school in Kimpese. This has now moved to the capital to become ETEK (Ecole de Théologie Evangélique du Kinshasa), where three Middle River pastors recently completed their training.

The Middle River founded a Bible Institute at Lukolela in 1965. Three years later it was moved to Bolobo, where church members constructed a pleasant mud walled, thatched roofed building, with two classrooms. In 1973 this Bible Institute became the school for training evangelists for all the CBFZ and in the present First Year there are five students from the Upper River, two from the Lower River, as well as four Middle River men.

Team work

We are also proud that this year the Bible Institute has its first Zairian Director, Rev. Eboma Dweme, former chaplain to the Bolobo Secondary School, a wise, loving and humble pastor.

Besides Biblical, pastoral and general studies, all taught in French, the students (numbering about twenty over the last three years) are divided into teams for working in the seven

districts of Bolobo village for pastoral visiting, evangelism, morning prayers and Sunday School work. The students have often worked too in the hospital and military camp and teach inquirer's classes.

The Bible School was started at Bikoro in 1967 by Pastor Mompoko. At first the course was mainly a year's preparation for entry to the Bible Institute; but since then it has evolved a two year course of Biblical and general studies, mainly in Lingala, and practical church work, to equip senior catechists for their responsible work. Until recently most catechists had no special training, although they have an important job as part time village pastors, conducting worship, preaching, visiting and generally looking after the welfare of the church in their village. Now some of the brighter catechists are able to go to the Bikoro Bible School.

In recent years too; several short courses have been held in some of the Middle River parishes, bringing catechists together for a week of Bible

studies and sessions on different aspects of their work.

The main aim of this is to encourage them in their work and refresh them spiritually, and hopefully give them some new preaching material.

Missionaries are closely involved in this pastoral training programme. Winnie Hadden and Roger Gray are at present teaching at the Yakusu Theological School. David and Mary Norkett are both full time teachers at the Bolobo Bible Institute where David Boydell, Paul Chandler, and Madeline Diver also give some lessons.

Missionaries have also helped run several of the short catechists' training weeks, but we are thankful to God that the direction of the training of church workers is now in Zairian hands, Citizen Ndongoboni at Yakusu, Rev. Eboma at Bolobo and Rev. Basengi at Bikoro. Please pray for them and their students.

Women value the Christian fellowship

"Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus'." (John 12: 20-21.)

These words were read to Hazel Pilling and myself as we were being welcomed by the church in Ntandembelo. The Pastor read these words to us as words of welcome and carried on to say that these words were reiterated in the hearts of all the fellowship, that together with us, they might "see Jesus".

We had gone to Ntandembelo to hold a class for the women there. We had already taken two other classes, one in Yumbi (up river from Bolobo, a four hour canoe journey), and another in Bolobo itself. We had already enjoyed some real times of fellowship and as we were sitting there, being welcomed at Ntandembelo, we knew we were in for another good time of fellowship and learning together.



Mama Miliama, nurse to many missionary children, with Mama Ngalula, head of Women's Work for the Middle River Region.

There were thirty one women present in the class, three of whom had walked for two days with small babies on their backs, so that they could join the class. Our theme was "*Bomilatisa*

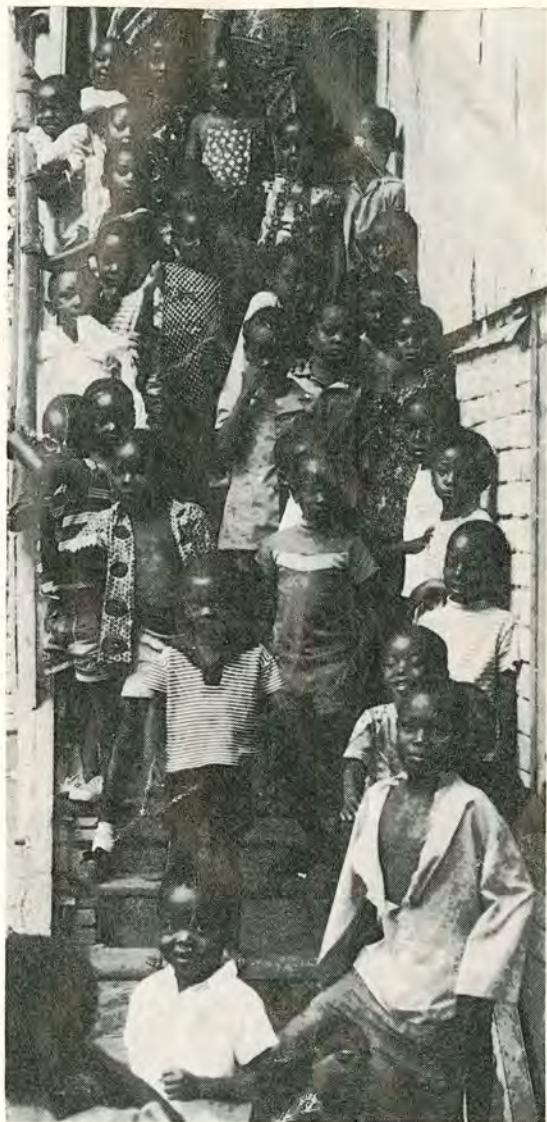
Bolingo”, which means “Put on love”, or “Clothe yourself with love”. Our programme was varied. It included drinking tea and eating minkaties (a sticky doughnut ball, delicious) for breakfast at 6 a.m.; taking morning prayers; leading the class with lessons such as Bible Study, Child Care, Health Nutrition, singing, etc., and talking and generally “sharing fellowship” in the pastor’s house, with the noise of a tropical storm going on outside.

My work, as you will see from this short account, is very interesting and rewarding. It is not only concerned with Bolobo, but with nine large centres around Bolobo. Up to now I have visited six of these centres, and been able to hold a class in three of them. My hope is that during this year I will be able to go to some of the other centres and to organize classes with them too.

All the ladies are so keen for classes in their village. At the recent district council meetings all the ladies who gave a report said, “We would like Mama Bonkisa to come and hold a class for us in our village”. (Mama Bonkisa is the name which they have given to Beryl Fox.) Their desire to learn is astonishing, I never cease to be amazed to see the women after a very long, hard, hot working day, come into the class to learn to read and write, their eyes heavy with sleep from the burden of their daily work, yet their hearts and minds awake and alert to learn.

In general, the women make up the larger percentage of the church. Their giving too is regular. In many villages the ladies have a Caisse na Mawa—a poor fund, and with this they help the poor people within the village. Many villagers too have a garden (to us, more like a big field) where they grow kwanga and vegetables, etc., and then they sell them and give the money to the church, or put it into their fund to help the poor, or save it to buy cloth for their sewing class.

Each of the centres has its women’s committee to organize any meetings or classes etc., and often the presidents of these committees will travel around the smaller villages of their area, mainly for evangelism, but also to see how their women’s work is going on. One lady in particular, on her last voyage managed to visit twenty-one villages, holding services and preaching in most of them. Her name is Mama Ngayolo Ngani. She is a grand Christian and really does give all her time to the Lord.



The Nursery School on the steps of Grenfell’s house, built 1900.

Please pray for the work with the women here in Bolobo district. Pray for the committees in the different areas too and especially for the presidents of the women’s committees, that as they travel around, or as they stay in their own village, they may carry out their work in love, in wisdom, with the other women in their fellowship that they might all see Jesus.

Christian Churches share in education

EDUCATIONAL work in Zaire is divided into three main sectors: Protestant, Roman Catholic and State. Most of the education in Bolobo and Tondo areas is carried on by the churches; and this article is to give some idea of the work done by our Protestant schools.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

There are thirty complete six year primary schools run by the CBFZ in our area where teachers are paid by the State. There are just under 9,000 pupils in these schools. Many more schools do exist, and moves are being made to gain government recognition and subsidies for these also. This is only granted, in many cases, after the school has functioned for several years. The wages of teachers in these schools are provided by meagre church funds. There is a primary school in most of the villages of the interior, though often only a first and second year may exist; pupils have to go to another village to complete their primary education.

The medium of expression in the schools is Lingala at first, then French in the upper

classes. Many of the staff are untrained and may only have completed primary schooling themselves. The Government is at present taking measures, however, to replace untrained staff. In the Bolobo Secondary School a special one year course exists for experienced, but unqualified primary teachers who may thus qualify for government recognition.

In the Bolobo area, out of a total of 153 primary school teachers, there are only eight women — and even infants' reception classes are normally taught by men.

Buildings are often a problem and mud and thatch classrooms are normally erected in the villages, by parents of the pupils. During the past year, in the Bolobo area, fourteen permanent home made brick buildings, with tin roofs, have been erected as well, much of the work having been done by the teachers and pupils themselves.

Many teachers are doing excellent work, in face of obstacles inconceivable in European schools: often antiquated teaching methods, very large classes, and sometimes a complete lack of classroom furniture, the children sitting on logs hewn from the forest.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

There are secondary schools at Mbandaka and Inongo, and some of our young people attend schools in these centres or at Kinshasa. The only complete secondary schools offering a full six year course in the entire Middle River region are our own schools at Tondo and Bolobo.

In many villages of the interior, however, there exist "*Cycles d'Orientation*" (C.O.'s), which offer secondary education at first and second year level, after which pupils hope to transfer to Bolobo or Tondo. Due to the lack of space, the majority are disappointed. This means of course that they have no possibility of continuing their education.

There are 2,150 students in Protestant secondary education, of whom 86% are boys. Almost all of the girls are in the C.O.'s, since many are married by the time they reach third year. In Bolobo there are no girls in the sixth form, only one girl amongst fifty fifth formers, and four amongst over ninety fourth formers.

There are many Roman Catholics as well as Protestants in our Secondary schools, although following the practice in all sectors, pupils from Protestant schools usually have preference in third year entry. The great majority of our pupils are nominal Christians, though many, as in Britain, are going through a rebellious stage. In the classroom situation, however, one can assume an interest in spiritual matters and a certain amount of Christian belief in all.

Many pupils at Bolobo and Tondo may live as far as 200 miles from home and have to take casual work to support themselves at school, and may well only go home once, or maybe twice in the year.

Although, as has already been mentioned, places from third year secondary upwards are severely limited, the pupil does have a certain amount

of choice in the course he follows. He can follow an academic course up to sixth form level culminating in a State Diploma, which could lead to university entrance. As this course is very demanding, weak pupils must be eliminated and many pupils never reach the sixth forms.

Other courses available include an agricultural section in Bolobo, a nursing course at the Bolobo Hospital, and the one year teaching course already mentioned. Even in these vocational courses however, the approach tends to be very theoretical and over academic, and in all courses there

is a great need for competent teachers, and missionaries and volunteers are still needed to help.

More qualified Zairians are leaving the universities but many are reluctant to come to work in the interior. Such is the staffing situation that our own sixth formers, if they obtain a State Diploma (roughly equivalent to 'A' Level) often teach for two or more years in the lower forms of the Secondary School while awaiting university entrance and make a very valuable contribution.

The government has recently been taking steps to rationalize

the educational system, which has suffered in the past from being divided into sectors, (e.g. Protestant, Roman Catholic and State), and there is now talk at government level of a widespread reform of the educational system.

Schools are still being opened in all parts of the Republic and more and more young people are now able to receive secondary education. The Church of Christ is very much involved in this expansion, as we seek not only to educate the leaders of tomorrow, but also to seek to bring them to a full understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A headmaster builds his school

ALL the important visitors to the Tondo secondary school had enjoyed a good meal of goat and fish, with rice or manioc, at tables set out under spreading trees which effectively protected the guests from the fierce midday sun. As they ate, the secondary school pupils had marched past, singing at the top of their voices, and could now be heard chanting and drumming in the distance.

At half past two the visitors made their way, in a slightly straggling procession, through the mission compound towards the new school building. It was easy to see that people of all kinds were present on this special occasion.

First came the representative of the regional commissaire, the principal administrator of the whole area, for all the State officials were proud of this achievement under the new political regime. Then came the educational personalities, inspectors of schools and neighbouring headmasters and teachers (and Bolobo counts as

a neighbouring school even if it is 160 miles away as the crow flies and twice that distance by river boat and Landrover). Mingling with them were church leaders, including the General Secretary of our own community who had come specially from Kinshasa.

But the real personality, the man everyone wanted to see and hear, was the Tondo headmaster, Citizen Mompongo. So the guests settled themselves under the shelter of palm branches erected in front of the school building. Pupils and villagers, standing in a tight circle, resolutely disregarded the sun blazing down on them. After some preliminary singing and dancing, introductions of visitors and a brief prayer, headmaster Mompongo stepped on to the shallow platform in the centre of the ring of spectators and began his report on the construction of the new school building.

When the school was founded in 1963 it worked in borrowed buildings, but when Citizen Mompongo became headmaster in 1965, on his return from the United States with a degree in science, he determined to begin work on a new permanent building, big enough to accommodate the school when it developed to maturity.

An available site on the mission compound lay on a slope and was covered with trees and

tangled bushes, so the first major job was to clear the forest and dig out a level site. Then the work of construction could begin digging and laying foundations, making concrete blocks and putting them in place so that the walls began to rise.

How could the money be found for such an enterprise? No grants were forthcoming from the education department, no large offerings from an impoverished church. The battle of fund raising began. On the home front appeals were made to church members and many interested friends, while the parents of all pupils were required to give a certain amount each year.

On the overseas front help was obtained from Mompongo's friends and colleagues at Washington State University, who formed a special committee to raise and send funds, and more recently help was given by USAID. But it was a continual struggle and Mompongo never knew what resources would be available. In fact, work stopped once for a whole year when there was no more money. But Mompongo and his helpers never lost heart and were convinced that, in spite of difficulties, the work would one day be finished.

The walls began to rise and the form of the ambitious building could be seen—an E shaped structure which would contain eleven classrooms, a library, a laboratory, an auditorium and a music room as well as the headmaster's office and a staff room. Local masons were hired and later carpenters were needed to make the roof trusses, but a great deal of the heavy manual work was done by pupils and teachers, by church members and by the local village people. These voluntary workers cleared the site, transported stones, made concrete blocks.

So the building rose, the skilled and the unskilled working together. Walls were finished, roof timbers erected, and then corrugated roofing sheets nailed down, the last of them just two days before the opening ceremony. The bare statement of fact gives little indication of the struggle against difficulties, of the dynamism of the headmaster—a lesser man would have abandoned the project long ago.

Continually appealing for money, continually chasing supplies of building materials, continually chivying and encouraging workers

of all kinds, this would seem a full time job; yet he has combined it with running an expanding school and teaching almost as many classes as an ordinary full time teacher. On Friday, 25 January, 1974, he saw the realization of the first part of his dream—the official opening of the new building in which the Tondo school can function more efficiently and more pleasantly.

So after the headmaster's report and speeches of congratulation and good wishes by several visitors, everyone moved over to the main doorway, where the representative of the regional commissaire cut the white ribbon and was the first to enter the building, now well and truly opened.

The crowd swarmed after him through the corridors, peering into classrooms, imagining what it will be like when the job is really finished. For there is still so much to do: doors and windows to be bought and fitted, walls to be plastered, ceiling board to be obtained and put up, and, most urgent need of all, desks to be made so that pupils no longer have to bring their own stool to school or sit squashed tightly together. All this will need not only a great deal more effort but also a great deal more money, in fact almost as much as has been spent on constructing the shell of the building.

Citizen Mompongo cannot yet rest from his labours, nor can his helpers. But the school building stands there, an impressive witness to his vision and energy, and is already being used by hundreds of boys and girls, the pupils whose welfare and education Mompongo has always had in mind.

Those who have shared in the preparation of this issue of the *Missionary Herald* are:

Rev. Mompoko-Mo-Ikombo, Superintendent

Citizen Nze } Area Education
Citizen Lotoi } Supervisors

Rev. Ngando, Tondo district pastor

Barbara Diaper }
Joan Parker } Bolobo missionaries
David Norkett }
David Boydell }
Beryl Fox }

**John Sassaman, American Peace Corps Volunteer,
Bolobo**

Rev. Mompoko, Superintendent of the Middle River, welcoming Rev. Mfwilwakanda, General Secretary, to Bolobo.



The villages need pastors

The Regional Assembly of the Middle River for 1974 took place at Bolobo in March. Here is part of Pastor Mompoko's report:

We thank God our father for the opportunity he gives us today and give grateful thanks for peace in the Zaire Republic.

Last year (1973) we had two important meetings in Kinshasa: (a) The General Assembly of the CBFZ in May, (b) The Executive Committee in November. The General Assembly confirmed the creation of the CBFZ, elected its officers, and voted that the administration centres of each region be moved to more suitable places. The Middle River Superintendent's offices have been moved to Bolobo.

Here in Bolobo we started our Secretariat office with great difficulty because of lack of decent buildings and suitable furniture. We are preparing the old building and have bought

some pieces of furniture. We desperately need a good building because the wooden one in which we work is very, very old and much of it is rotten.

It is rather difficult here regarding correspondence, and meeting with the state authorities, because our centres are very far away in Bandundu, Inongo and Mushie. Letters have to go via Kinshasa and take several weeks.

Journeys also are rather difficult, since there are not many private lorries here, and the Church vehicles are not in good condition. Also the river boats are often up to two weeks late and upset plans. However, I have managed journeys to the Tondo, Ikoko, Lukolela, Mushie and Bolobo regions, in order to see the educational work and also to help sort out several problems.

We were happy to see that there are many inquirers among the children in the Bateke area, since the Church was not very strong there. It was also good to see the lively fellowship among the Batende, and how many villages have managed to build nice churches of mud brick with tin roofs. There is a need among the outlying villages to see their district pastors more often; to talk to them and tell them of their needs.

Slow growth in agricultural knowledge

THE revolution in Bolobo takes on many forms, from chanting shouting to pious reflection. What the revolution is and where it is going we do not always know. However, being that we are here we are part of it.

Development in agriculture is not an easy task. It is not simply changing the methods of agriculture. It is not simply the introduction of new varieties of seed or new breeds of livestock. It is not simply the teaching of a classroom of students. It is much more. Anyone in agriculture must face the problems of the land and

climate, management problems, transportation and marketing problems and problems of financial investment. An understanding of these problems must be preliminary to the development of agriculture.

We hope that in Bolobo the agriculture centre associated with the mission will stimulate and guide the development of agriculture in the area. This will take many years and much hard work.

Building up

This year at Bolobo's Farm School has been a year of construction. There has been the addition of a new chicken coup as well as the completion of fencing for our sheep. Student housing is presently being built and a water system will be installed within the next few months. We now have twenty acres of land in cultiva-

tion and hope to double that amount this coming year.

In the way of achieving our goals we have established a two year course of study with emphasis on the practical application. Classroom instruction will also be given when necessary. Emphasis will be on crop management and poultry raising. This next year our extension programme will begin. This will offer continuing education for students after they have begun their own work, as well as advice to the general public. We are also hoping to establish a work programme to help finance our students in poultry raising.

This next school year our farm school will be properly established after this year of construction and organization, and maybe, with a little help from our friends we will get agriculture moving.

Acknowledgements

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously or without address, (29th March, 1974, to 3rd May, 1974)

General Work: Anon. (O.A.P.) £2.00; Anon. £6.00; Anon. £5.00; Anon. £1.00; Anon. (R.B.) £1.00; Anon. (Prove Me) £5.00; Anon. (O.A.P. Cardiff) £10.00; Anon. (Dinas) £25.00.

Medical Work: Anon. £5.00; Anon. (Edinburgh M.C.) £2.00.

Relief Work: Anon. (R.P.) £1.00.

LEGACIES

	£
Miss D. M. Burnett	100.00
Mrs. D. Campion	45.55
Mr. F. J. Catliff	406.76
Annie S. Clark	100.00
Miss S. G. Cunliff	5,000.00
Mrs. P. A. Davies	20.00
Mrs. G. O. Dingle	225.00
Mr. L. A. Freeman	50.00
Mr. H. W. Garman	100.00
Miss F. Goodwyn	9.94
Mrs. E. Hudson	25.00
Mrs. E. M. Lacy	25.00
Rev. E. J. Roberts	100.00
Miss A. M. Robinson	136.30
Miss E. G. Robson	100.00
Mrs. Roderick	100.00
Mr. A. G. Rumbold	200.00
Mr. J. E. Wilkinson	500.00

Missionary Record

Arrivals

- 5 April. Miss C. Whitmee from Balangir, India.
- 16 April. Miss M. White from Bogra, Bangladesh.
- 19 April. Mr. and Mrs. B. Windsor and family from Calcutta, India.
- 23 April. Miss E. N. Gill from Kimpese, Zaire.
- 25 April. Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Taylor from Ludhiana, India.
- 26 April. Miss P. D. James from Cuttack, India.

Departures

- 8 April. Miss G. J. McKenzie for Scripture Union, Kinshasa, Zaire.
- 22 April. Miss S. James for Kinshasa, Zaire.
- 3 May. Miss G. S. Evans for Kinshasa, Zaire.

Birth

- 9 April. In Francisco Beltrao, Brazil, to Rev. and Mrs. John Furnage, a daughter, Joy Mary.

The B.M.S. acknowledges with gratitude the gift of £80 in memory of Mr. A. E. Cleverly of Southfields, London.

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There is room for more missionaries

Are missionaries still needed in the Middle River Region? "YES". Last year the Middle River Council asked for two pastors, one women's worker, a nurse and six teachers. This year the list is longer and there is an urgent need for a pastor and his wife to replace David and Mary Norkett at the Bolobo Bible Institute during their year's furlough.

However there will almost certainly be fewer missionaries in the Middle River in 1974/75 than in 1971/72. This was the peak year for numbers when there were about fifteen in Bolobo, more than half of whom had been in Zaire over six years. Of the B.M.S. missionaries at present working in the Middle River (ten at Bolobo, and three at Tondo) only three have been here more than six years.

Since Independence most missionaries have

been involved in teaching either at Secondary, Bible or Nursing school, though many have also shared in more direct church work; evangelistic journeys, catechists school, leading Sunday services, sitting on church committees, delegates at church councils etc.

Now several missionaries are considering whether they should not leave full-time teaching to qualified Zairians and be more footloose like the missionaries of old, on "journeyings oft" helping with the pastoral and evangelistic work of the church. One or two missionaries are also wondering whether they need to be based just in Bolobo and Tondo. The two Missionary centres of the Middle River in recent years. Particularly at Bolobo one can feel that one is living in a "white" colony divorced from African village life.

With the accent on "authenticity" and Africanization in all areas of Zairian life, we can be thankful that the Gospel and Church of Jesus Christ is firmly rooted in Zairian soil and by God's grace will grow in depth and quality under Zairian leadership.

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