



MISSIONARY

3p

HERALD

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 1974





The Rev. Rajen Baroi (right), Secretary of the Baptist Union of Bangladesh, with members of the church at Shonandanga, Khulna, Bangladesh.

(Photo: B. W. Amey)

Bengal— East Pakistan— Bangladesh—

Gordon Soddy, B.M.S. Missionary from 1933 reflects on the changes and growth of forty years.

I first arrived in Dacca, East Bengal, in November 1933, at a time of great political agitation and the rapid development of the nationalist movement, which culminated some 14 years later in the withdrawal of the British from the sub-continent, and the emergence of the two independent nations of India and Pakistan.

It was also a time of rapid development in Church and Mission relationships, and I was extremely fortunate to be in on this from the very first. As a result of a series of International Missionary Conferences, the policy of "devo-

lution" was very much in the air, and the Bengal Missionary Conference of the B.M.S. was well in the fore-front of this thinking. After long negotiations, the First Assembly of the Bengal Baptist Union met in Serampore in October, 1935, when the Bengal Conference of the Society ceased to exist as such, and full responsibility for the work of the Mission in Bengal was taken by the new Union.

This Union was in all senses a fully co-operative body in which both nationals and foreign missionaries had an equal chance of serving, but the big difference from the previous set-up was that now the foreign missionary could only serve on the council and other committees of the Union if he were elected to that post by the Churches—he lost the automatic right to govern that he enjoyed under the Bengal Conference. So the foreign staff now served as missionaries under the control and guidance of the Bengal Baptist Union,—with the Society in London as it were acting as referee to ensure fair play!

This change was by no means unanimously

approved by the foreign staff. Some of the seniors were frankly sceptical about the whole thing, and one or two were really naughty in holding up the new Union to ridicule at most unfortunate times—resulting in several quite unnecessary “incidents” which had to be resolved by the authorities. It did mean of course that some people came under the active criticism and control of those who had previously been subordinate to them,—and this was often hard to take.

I was personally very fortunate indeed, as I was tutored throughout those early years by four men, all extremely forward-looking, who welcomed the new developments and were prepared to make considerable allowances for the inevitable mistakes that occurred. These men were Charles Headland of the London Missionary Society, W. E. French and Harold Angus of our Society, and S. K. Chatterji, the Principal of Siksha Sangha, Bishnupur, who was our “boss” at the School. I owe a tremendous debt to all four, but especially to French and Angus, both of whom really believed in devolution wholeheartedly, and were eager to teach their young colleague about the country and the churches.

The new Union got off to a fairly good start and things looked quite hopeful up to about 1942 when the impact of the 2nd World War really began to make itself felt in India. However, there

were difficulties. One was a tendency for individuals to try and grab office just to enjoy power, which led to more unfortunate incidents and much heart-ache for the senior foreign staff. Another was that sometimes people were put into positions for which they were not really qualified, just because of the colour of their skin.

But it was the impact of the war, with staff shortages, rising prices, and especially the Bengal Famine of 1943–44 that stopped the progress of the Union effectively for some time. Some of those who had risen to positions of authority earlier were only too eager to get out of the hot seat when difficult and unpopular decisions had to be made, and it was the foreign staff who reluctantly had to resume the control in extremely difficult conditions.

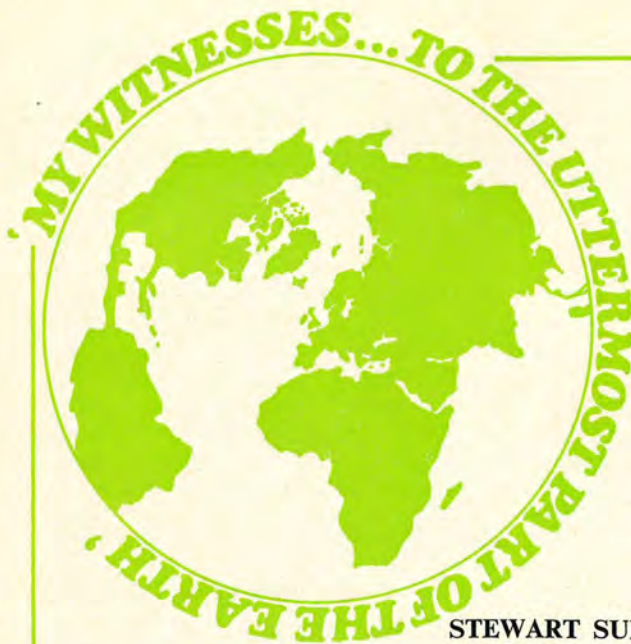
Difficulties about the treasurership, which were, I believe, the direct cause of the premature death in 1947 of the first Bengali Secretary of the Union, Rev. N. A. Sarkar, meant that the executive officers of the Union once more became foreigners, a step greatly deplored by those involved who were Harold Angus and myself, but there seemed no alternative. Nirmal Sarkar was an outstanding man and a fine secretary, but the burdens of office had weighed on him physically, and his premature death was a serious blow to the Union.

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Members of the church at Mirerdanga, Khulna, Bangladesh; a new church fellowship on one of the estates of Khulna.

(Photo: B. W. Amey)



STEWART SUMMERS

I was born in 1949 at Aberfeldy, a small highland town in central Scotland, and educated at Breadalbane Academy where my father is a teacher.

The family attend Pitlochry Baptist Church of which I have been a member for eight years.

I attended Glasgow University medical school, graduated last year, and am now in the process of completing my house jobs.

I wish to take up paediatrics, and indeed, have a post awaiting me at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Glasgow.

My principal pastime is music. During the last year at Medical School, I decided to give one year's service as a Christian doctor where the need for medical aid is always great.

Although only one year is set aside for work in this particular way, I hope that I will consider my entire life and work as given to Christ who loved us and gave his life for us.

DAVID and IRENE McCLENAGHAN

My wife and I were baptized into church membership in our early teens. Irene's church was the Gospel Hall in Bishopbriggs, near Glasgow, while mine was the Baptist Church, Dumbarton. After our marriage in 1970 we lived in Glasgow for a short time, then moved to Stirling where I became student pastor of an extension charge from the Stirling Baptist Church.

Several years before I began training for the ministry Irene felt challenged with service overseas while at a missionary conference. In my second year of theological studies I was made aware of the work of the B.M.S. in Brazil and after some time in thought and prayer we felt led to apply to the Society with an offer of service.

It is our hope to go eventually to the new work in the northern part of Brazil, Mato Grosso, and perhaps Amazonas, if the way is opened for us.



GEORGE and ISABEL TWEEDDALE

We met in the choir at John Knox Street Baptist Church, Glasgow, where we were married in 1937 before moving to Bristol. Since then we have lived in Farnborough, Bromley, Hextable and Maidenhead.

Most of the time George shared in the work with young people, as Sunday School Superintendent and as a lay preacher. He has served as a deacon for over thirty years and Isabel was missionary secretary in Kent at Maidenhead.

Trained as an engineer and specializing in welding construction and design George has been a lecturer (latterly a senior lecturer) in the Department of Metallurgy, Imperial College, London, since 1946, during which time he has written a number of text books.

George feels that the Lord has called him to use this experience in His Service in Nepal under the United Mission to Nepal at Kathmandu and Isabel feels that she too has been called to Nepal and expects to do secretarial work.



VIVIENNE GREEN

"Act on your emotions!" These compelling words finally prompted me to offer my services to the B.M.S. in October 1973.

I grew up in Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Northampton, and I was baptised and became a church member there. My teacher training at Darlington College of Education was prompted by the vague feeling that perhaps, one day, I would be called to serve the Lord overseas.

After teaching in Northants I returned to Darlington and taught R.E., transferring my membership to Grange Road Baptist Church. The belief that God was calling me gradually grew stronger and was finally confirmed by the B.M.S. deputation in September 1973 when the words quoted above were used.



After doing a course in Primary Education I hope to go to St. Andrew's Hall in September, followed by language study in Belgium leading to service in Zaire.



There followed the Partition of Bengal in August, 1947, when three-quarters of the Union found itself in the new country of East Pakistan while one-quarter remained in India. This completely changed the situation. We struggled on as one Church Union for the next ten years until we were forced in 1957 to acknowledge that political circumstances were too much for us, and that it was impossible to run one body in two countries that seemed determined at that time to be bitter enemies, so that passage from one to the other slowly became impossible.

At that time I found myself on the Eastern side of the Union's work once more, in East Pakistan, and during the fifties we were struggling to keep the church there intact and to persuade the community against joining those of their brethren who had fled as refugees to West Bengal and were in terrible distress there as a result. It was a time of great fear in the churches, because they were living for the first time in an Islamic country and many were convinced that martyrdom was their inevitable fate.

It did not work out that way, of course, but at that time the Church was pre-occupied with the

question of its own survival, especially as the cream of the community and the senior leadership had all previously been living in West Bengal, or had moved there after partition, leaving the churches in East Pakistan with no senior leadership and with very little even in the way of educated youth that could be developed as leaders.

These were hard years for the churches, until a few of the younger men began to emerge as leaders. The first of these was Rajen Baroi, who had to be pushed into a position of great responsibility some time before he was really ready for it, but who has developed into a Church leader of the highest possible calibre. After a period when he was doing Theological teaching, he has now returned to the Secretaryship of the Union where he is doing magnificent work. I hope he has many more years of service before him. I should like here to say how thrilling it has been to watch his development over the years, and how much I owe to him in the last few years for his constant encouragement and enthusiastic support, as well as for his criticism and occasional opposition, which was usually well justified in the event!

One of the usual phenomena in such a situation is of course the emergence of a group of young "rebels", marked by their noisy enthusiasm and their lack of experience. Some of us were at times greatly disturbed by the activities of such men, but I have learnt over the years that there is nothing to be feared from such people, if their motivation is genuine. It is when the motivation is personal ambition and self-seeking and not the progress of the Kingdom that trouble comes. We had our share of this, of course, but it is an interesting fact that in some cases what started as personal ambition developed into really selfless service over the years.

There are several of our best leaders to-day who were in this group of "rebels" and are now a source of great strength to the Churches. So I am not greatly disturbed at the noisy activities of a similar group of "rebels" to-day: I do not always understand exactly what they want, and I don't think they always know themselves, but I know the Lord is able to lead them into paths of His choosing, so long as they are not just seeking their own good.

(To be continued)

Rev. Gordon Soddy (centre), Rev. D. Rowland and Miss S. Le Quesne, at Dacca, Bangladesh.

(Photo B. W. Amey)





Members of a leaders seminar at the Mama Ekila Centre, Kinshasa.

The Mama Ekila Centre Kinshasa

1967 saw the centenary celebrations of the Baptist Zenana Mission. This was the Mission begun by women for work among women. One aspect of the celebration was the raising of money for women's work. Over £12,000 was received during the year and the Mama Ekila Centre, Kinshasa, was the main project to which the money was allocated. Hazel Pilling, B.M.S. missionary in Zaire, writes about the work of the Centre.

A COUNTRY IN REVOLUTION

The country has changed its name—from Congo to Zaire. All street names are now African. People who had Biblical or other foreign names have changed them. Everything must be African. There is one political party and everyone is a member of it. Students must be members of the junior branch of the Party. There is no

room for other youth groups—no Girls' Brigade or Scouts now.

Everyone works for the good of Zaire. They are encouraged to tend their vegetable plots to increase food supplies, and to have their babies in the hospital so that they will be healthy. They teach their children the Party slogans and revere the President who symbolizes the unity of their great nation.

A GROWING CITY

Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire, is now the third largest city in Africa. Families have come in from the villages and settled in the city. A family may have as many as thirty members if you count the children of distant relatives who are studying in the city. It falls to the women to find the food. They may sell in the market, or outside their own door—anything to bring in some money.

The security of village life is gone. Gone also are the controls imposed by a small village com-

munity. Temptation, danger and fear are everywhere.

A VISION

Christians in Kinshasa saw the need for a social community centre in the heart of the city. Women in Britain caught the vision as they gave their thank-offerings for the Zenana Centenary in 1967.

THE MAMA EKILA CENTRE

It was officially opened in November 1972. The Centre is named after one of the first women leaders in the church in Kinshasa. Mama Ekila, who was trained as a district midwife by the early missionaries, was church bell-ringer, local preacher and choir member. It is fitting that the Mama Ekila Centre should commemorate a loyal church worker who was also involved in welfare work among Christians and non-Christians alike.

The Centre consists of two buildings facing each other. There is a large room for meetings, with a store-room for belongings when people stay overnight. A sewing-room, literacy classroom, office and rest-room are included as well as cloakrooms etc., and an outside lean-to kitchen.

LEADER OF THE CENTRE

There are living quarters at the Centre for a



full-time worker. The first to be appointed is Mama Ditina, a Zairian Baptist who is well-qualified, having successfully completed four years' pastoral training at the Lower River Bible School.

CENTRE FOR CONFERENCES

Numerous conferences and residential courses have already been held for women leaders. They may be as short as two days or as long as three



A teenager, typical of those attending the Centre for sewing classes (above).

Leaving the Mama Ekila Centre after a day's session.

weeks. Nobody minds sleeping on a mat on the floor. They are not deterred by limited washing facilities—the late night washers have just finished when the early morning ones begin!

Together the women study the Bible to build up their own faith. They discuss practical ideas to help organize work in their churches, or parishes as they are called. There are courses on home and family life, so important in this rapidly changing society.

Sunday School teachers have had weekend conferences; choirs meet for rehearsals; church councils use the premises. If the leaders and those responsible can catch the vision of the opportunities for such a centre, the doors will always be open, with something always going on.

CENTRE FOR THE COMMUNITY

The Mama Ekila Centre provides amenities for the citizens living around:

A reading room is open daily and is used by men and young people as well as women. There is also a bookstall doing a steady trade.

Regular classes are held daily in literacy, sewing and French.

Women, otherwise unemployed, use the

sewing-room to make children's clothes to sell.

Refreshments and cool drinks are on sale during the day.

THE FOCAL POINT FOR WOMEN'S WORK

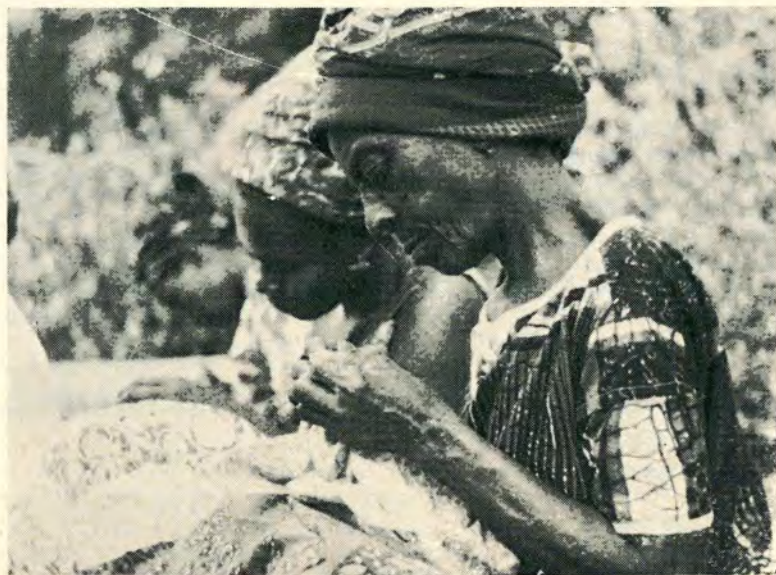
The Mama Ekila Centre is fast becoming the focal point for all the women's activities in the church. The office of the Women's Department is there and the Women's Committee meets there once a month. This Committee has two representatives from each of the sixteen Baptist churches. Three of these churches are in the centre of the city, each with over 1000 members. Ten are fast-growing churches in the suburbs. The other three are in little more than villages on the outskirts of the city.

A CENTRE FOR UNITY

Village unity is lost in the city. As women of many tribes meet at the Centre, barriers begin to break down and they begin to know a new unity in Christ. They say that the Tribe of Jesus Christ includes all tribes.

A CENTRE FOR SERVICE

It is not a one-way system with all roads converging on the Centre. There is two-way



The old and the young meet at the Centre.

traffic as the women go out from the Centre to serve others. They often go in a group, travelling along the hazardous roads with Hazel Pilling driving. Before setting out, a member of the party commits them to God's care, "We are going in this thing. It has no eyes or ears. O Lord protect us." 'This thing' is the 12-seater Land Rover, suitable for use on the roads to all the sixteen parishes. Sometimes it has to get through thick sand or mud, but the passengers sing cheerfully all the way.

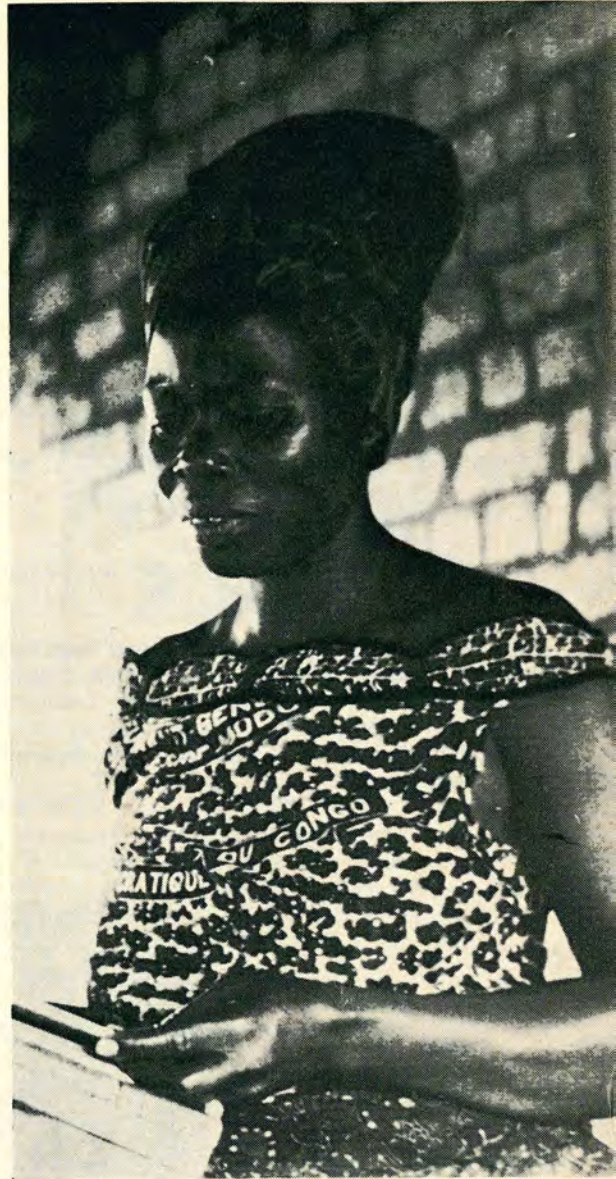
These journeys are part of the OUTREACH programme.

- They help people suffering from illness or bereavement
- They visit lapsed church members
- They conduct house-meetings
- They go through the large gates of the prison, and are welcome in the women's section where they hold a service and afterwards leave gifts of food, soap etc. for the women there. As women are released from prison they hope to give any help possible.
- Mama Ditina and some members of the Women's Committee visit each parish in the city at least once a year.

By visiting each other's churches, the women come to understand problems which arise in different places. They encourage, advise, and enjoy a wonderful sense of fellowship.

OUR CONTINUING PART

"Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain". Except the Lord keep the city of Kinshasa . . . Let us pray for the Christian women in Kinshasa, that their waking may not be in vain. May they look continually to the Lord Jesus Christ and go forward in His strength, witnessing to His love which transcends all barriers.



Women share in the leading of the services.

More information about the Women's Work of the Baptist Missionary Society can be obtained from:

Miss M. C. Moon,
Women's Department,
B.M.S.,
93 Gloucester Place,
London, W1H 4AA

Preparing canoes for a journey at Upto, Zaire.



There are supply problems in Zaire

Mr and Mrs Raymond Andrews, of Ilford, have visited their son at Pimu, Zaire. Mr Andrews writes about one of the problems which he noticed.

Communications and transport have always been a problem in Zaire (Congo). The completion of the railway from Matadi on the west coast to Kinshasa (Leopoldville) in 1898 finally breached the 300 mile barrier of terrain that hid the interior of Congo for centuries. Twenty-five years previously the explorer Stanley had discovered the vast rivers that crossed Africa and offered uninterrupted passage for thousands of miles.

Overseas missionary work must always involve travel and transport difficulties. The vastness of Zaire, and the policy set by our Baptist missionary pioneers of a chain of missions up the Congo river—1500 miles into Africa—has left us with an enormous supply problem.

George Grenfell's famous surveys were all accomplished by boat, and successive generations of missionaries have also relied on river transport. But rivers present difficulties too. Great

areas of central Zaire's forests are criss-crossed by innumerable streams making road building extremely difficult.

During the 60 years of Belgian rule much road building was done and missionaries in the interior were able to make limited use of motor transport. Since Independence the Zairian Government has concentrated on developing its industrial resources in the Lower River area, Kinshasa and Shaba and therefore there is still much to be done in road maintenance and construction.

This is particularly true of long distance roads into the interior. The transport problem to our mission stations varies widely. In the Lower River and Kinshasa a car or van solves the problem. Our extensive work at Bolobo largely depends on the river boat (2 days to Kinshasa) and Upto and Kisangani on river transport and the scheduled air service.

The growth of air travel is vital to Zaire's future and Air Zaire is providing an increasingly efficient service. Our B.M.S. involvement in Zaire now depends on the facility of air travel.

But Zaire is a country of enormous contrasts—so too our work there. In Kinshasa our missionaries enjoy the amenities of a great capital city. By contrast our work at Pimu, 700 miles away in the heart of a vast tropical forest, is as

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EILEEN TALBOT

As a member of South Street Baptist Church, my sphere of service had been clearly shown to me at Exeter, with involvement in youth work, Sunday School teaching and Girls Brigade. Secretarial work in hospitals would occupy me until retirement, I thought.

I have three friends serving overseas and this gave me considerable missionary interest, but the challenge did not come to me until eighteen months ago. Before that I had felt rather relieved that the need was more often for doctors, nurses and teachers! When I faced the call and offered for two years' service the assurance was given that this was His way for me.

The Lord had challenged me regarding Asia, so I was glad when I was accepted for service in Nepal to work in the Community Health Office of the United Mission to Nepal. I anticipate that by the time you read this I shall be in Nepal sharing in the work with Christians from many countries.

ELIZABETH WAINWRIGHT

I come from a Christian home and went with my family to the local Baptist Church where I learned of Jesus and gave my life to him as a child. In my teens I questioned the reality of God and struggled to find answers; he lovingly guided me through this time bringing me back to him as a student in Newcastle upon Tyne.

I was a member of the Girls Brigade and through this became involved in Durham Road Church in Gateshead where I was baptised, coming into membership of the church at Wednesbury, my home town.

I was challenged about serving God overseas whilst at college and first contacted the B.M.S. then. I have been teaching in a multiracial school in Walsall for four years. Now I leave to teach nursery children in the British Association School, Kinshasa.



**GERALD and JOHAN
MYHILL**

Pastor Bressington of the First Baptist Church, Lima, Peru, thundered out from the pulpit, "Go, spy out the land, see why God has put you in this place and do something about it!" I thought to myself, "You are not talking to me this morning". In the next few days, however, God showed me through people I met how much difference the good news of Jesus could make in a person's life.

My work kept me in Peru for four months and by the time of my return to England Johan and I had no doubt about our future. We wrote to the B.M.S. and, after a series of interviews, we both entered college. Johan began a three year course at Kesteven College of Education, Peterborough, while I entered Spurgeon's College for four years.

Now we are becoming excited at the prospect of taking up language studies in Brazil and we look forward to the day when we will be able to share the Good News of Jesus in the place that God puts us.



MARGARET POPHAM

I was a late convert, 31 years before I recognized my need of a Saviour and Lord to rule over and guide my life.

After a variety of jobs God called me to deaconess work involving three years' training at what was then Carey Hall, and then, pastorates at Ludlow, Alvechurch near Birmingham, and The Downs, Clapton, 12½ years in all.

Now, breathtakingly, a new call has come, and with just the same unmistakable clarity; the Lord in His infinite understanding knew I needed it, on the "wrong" side of 50! Missionary service overseas was the last thing I ever anticipated would happen to me, but with the call and the offer to the B.M.S. to serve in Trinidad, there has come a great joy and peace at the realization that this is indeed the next step in God's will for me. To Him, through our wonderful Lord Jesus, be all the glory.



A M.A.F. plane lands at the Bolobo airstrip.



far from "civilization" as one can imagine. So Pimu has a big supply problem. As the hospital, nursing school and public health work has developed so too have its transport and supply difficulties. To reach Pimu one travels to Upoto (nearly 700 miles by air from Kinshasa) crosses 5 miles of river, and then drives over tortuous tracks and frightening log bridges. On a good day the drive may take four hours but the record, however, is twenty-nine hours. Every piece of equipment, all medical and food supplies and large quantities of fuel oils, and all personnel

have to make this journey by Land Rover or Bedford lorry.

Under God, a great deal has been achieved by the B.M.S. in Zaire during the past 90 years. Zaire is determined to rush its progress into an important future. The Zairian Church needs our help to seize its opportunities—it needs a supply of specialist skills in administration, medical work, teaching and the practical knowledge of building, engineering and transport maintenance.

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LOOKING AHEAD

The October issue of the *Missionary Herald* will be featuring Christian witness in the Kisangani area of Zaire.

The second part of Gordon Soddy's article on Bangladesh will appear in November, together with articles on Christian medical work overseas.

Missionary Record

Arrivals

- 1 June. Mr. and Mrs. G. Cato and family from Kinshasa, Zaire. Miss A. Bean from Upoto, Zaire.
- 2 June. Miss J. M. McLellan from Ludhiana, India.
- 8 June. Rev. P. D. and Mrs. Brewer and family from San Fernando, Trinidad.
- 9 June. Miss J. I. Bell (retired) from Nepal.
- 11 June. Mr. and Mrs. A. Mason and family, and Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Hope, from I.M.E., Kimpese, Zaire. Rev. G. and Mrs. Soddy from Chittagong, Bangladesh.
- 21 June. Rev. A. G. and Mrs. Lewis and family from Dinajpur, Bangladesh.
- 25 June. Rev. G. H. and Mrs. Grose and family from New Delhi, and Miss M. Bushill from Delhi, India.

Departures

- 8 June. Miss M. Popham for San Fernando, Trinidad.
- 20 June. Rev. B. K. and Mrs. Taylor and family to Umuarama, Brazil.

Birth

- 31 May. In Rugby, to Mrs. M. Ogle and the late Rev. A. J. Ogle (of Yakusu, Zaire), a daughter, Kathryn.

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MAUREEN LACEY

Though I originally come from Yorkshire, I have moved around a little, working in several different hospitals in the country as a physiotherapist. Having been a Christian for twelve years, I know I must have asked God for guidance hundreds of times, but it was not until I put the serious question, "What do You want me to do with my life?", in December 1972, that I got a quick and surprising answer asking me to go to Bangladesh. I had never had any leanings in the missionary direction, but that answer seemed so definite that now, after many months of prayer, advice and, recently, a six months Training in Mission course at St. Andrew's Hall, I find myself looking forward to setting out for Bangladesh in October. After language study I hope to go on to the Christian Hospital at Chandraghona and work as a physiotherapist there.

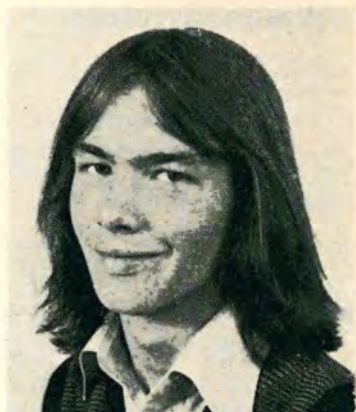
PAUL GOCKE

I have lived in Northampton for most of my life during which time I have gone to College Street Baptist Church, along with my family. It was in fact my brother Martin who first introduced the idea of going overseas to our family and he went to Bolobo for a year's work in September 1972.

I will be leaving Northampton Grammar School in July and I expect I will miss it at first, along with my other regular activities, but I feel sure that I will be thoroughly happy to go to Zaire to enjoy a totally new life style.

When I return from Zaire next year I am hoping to take up a place at Liverpool University to study Geography and I am fortunate in the respect that much of the Geography course is concerned with tropical Africa, the area in which I will be serving.

Paul has been awarded a



grant of £300 towards his Zaire trip by the National Publishers Association. This Association makes grants, through a scheme known as Communicator, to newspaper delivery boys for any scheme which is considered by them to be beneficial for educational purposes. The Newspaper's Executive agreed that experience in Africa would be useful and therefore Paul's name was, successfully, submitted.

