

Missionary

HERALD

The magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society



DECEMBER 1977

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*'worship christ,
the new BORN king.'*

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happy christmas

Truly to mean these words we must be expressing the hope that those who hear them will experience the blessing of the Christ child present in their lives.

It is His coming we acknowledge and celebrate but He came not to a specially favoured group. He came to the world, and the way we can sincerely wish the world a Happy Christmas is to ensure they hear the Good News of His coming.

Proclaim this truth to the world through the BMS. Send a tenth of what you will spend on your own celebrations to:

Rev A S Clement,
BMS, 93 Gloucester Place,
London W1H 4AA.



A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Help us to see, beyond the tinsel trappings,
The glittering globes, the fairy-lighted trees,
Beyond the greetings on the coloured wrappings,
Less transient, more intangible than these
The warm and lovely symbols of believing,
The adoration of the great and wise
Bearing their gifts, the Outcast Child receiving
All that our love can bring or art devise . . .

And further still; how, in unbearable glory,
The Great Doors open; and out of timeless light
In cosmic wonder more than humble story
Could ever tell, what gift is made tonight
Greater than any statement ever heard;
For here, as in the beginning, is the Word.

Author unknown



NOMINATIONS

for

GENERAL COMMITTEE

Nominations
for the
Baptist Missionary Society
General Committee
should be received in the
Mission House by
13 January, 1978

Nominations should be sent to:

Rev A S Clement,
93 Gloucester Place,
London W1H 4AA.

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COMMENT



There is a little poem of three, two line verses by Richard Fanolio which begins:

They expected a general . . .
And were given a child.

As one looks round the world today it is to discover in so many places that generals have taken, or accepted the government of this nation or that. Many of the South American countries and those in Africa and Asia find themselves ruled by military people in the supposition, presumably, that the martial arts are the skills best suited to ensure stability and economic advance for a people. But it would seem that often this hope has been unfulfilled for, not infrequently, one coup follows another in the search for a more reliable saviour. Tragically, too, there are so many incidences of those objecting to such rulers, being savagely repressed.

It is right to ask, then, what leads generals and other military ranks to suppose that they hold the solution to the well being of a nation? What induces a country to look to such, as being those who will secure the future prosperity of all? It has been argued that a strong arm is needed to control the affairs of state just as a strong police force is required to maintain the peace of society. But how often the world has witnessed an

over enthusiastic police force create a police state which yields anything but peace for the society it manipulates. How often, too, history has recorded that the strong arm, hopefully accepted as the guarantee of security and prosperity, had become an oppressive tyranny which made life nigh unbearable. Uganda is an unlovely example of such a condition. When General Idi Amin seized power in that country he was hailed as the one who would save his people and ensure the nation's rightful place in the world. Now, alas, the nature of his might is all too clearly seen.

The canvas of man's life on earth is full of scenes depicting powerful military regimes exercising their muscle and claiming to establish empires which would live for ever. But over and over again the lesson has had to be relearnt that such societies do not afford fulfilment, satisfaction and abundant life for those who are forced to live in them.

It might have been expected that Israel, who had been so lovingly nurtured by God and so blessed by revelations of His truth through the prophets, would have avoided being ensnared by such day dreams. Yet, they were so eagerly anticipating a military messiah who would ruthlessly deal with the Roman usurper of their liberties that they failed to realize that the overthrow of a military oppressor by a military uprising would not bring in a utopia, it would merely exchange one power for another. They expected a general and were given a child. So they did not recognize Him as the Messiah. When God's long promised deliverer appeared they ignored and rejected Him because their sight had become so blurred to the truth.

Yet there were so many pointers away from the generals. Isaiah had left them with a detailed definition of those who could be accepted as rulers. In the eleventh chapter of his prophecy he gives an account of the

qualities which must be looked for in those who are to be considered worthy to govern.

The prophet declares that those who would rule others must themselves be ruled by the knowledge of God. He urges that such people must be under constraint to live according to God's moral demands. When such a person as that controls the destiny of a nation then a just and fair government is the outcome and he gives a perfect pen picture of the result.

He then shares with his readers a vision of an ideal situation. There is, he declares, to be reconciliation in the world of nature when the predator and the prey will rest together and all will be shepherded by a child.

On another occasion he had proclaimed that a child would be born to them who would attract to himself the noblest titles. The government would be upon his shoulders and he would be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace and Everlasting Father.

Zechariah also had pictured the entry of a ruler not on some charger of war but on the animal which denoted an ambassador of peace. Yet they still looked for a general. It was one of Christ's most daring and beautiful statements that citizens of His kingdom must have the heart of a child. 'The one hope of the world today lies,' as James S Stewart says, 'in the Advent Message: Emmanuel, God with us, God in Christ reconciling the world. But the world keeps looking in other directions' and in this issue we learn something of the ways in which they are seeking.

Some are looking to political institutions and developments to fashion a new earth; some to culture and technology; some to humanitarian enterprise and ethical endeavour. Unless there is a surer foundation than these then we are heading for disillusionment.

They expected a general . . .
And were given a child.

'It was a marvellous divine strategy that laid this child Emmanuel upon the doorstep of the world's heart, and immense the responsibility of those who had to receive the gift into their midst.' The character of every man and nation, every society and culture stands revealed in its true colours by the light of this child. The critical, decisive question all have to face is, 'What shall we do to the child?'



Food, joss sticks and prayers offered for spirits of ancestors

Of the five major Chinese festivals celebrated in Hong Kong, New Year is the most important. Held according to the lunar calendar, it can occur any time between late January and mid February. For many people this is the only time they close their businesses and take a holiday. And it is quite a holiday, officially lasting two full weeks, during which various public entertainments are enjoyed, including Chinese opera, lion dances, variety shows, fun fairs and the like.

The house is cleansed

Preparations for the New Year festivities



Bringing home the peach tree

begin long beforehand. Housewives turn their homes upside down, throwing out old or damaged utensils, cleaning, painting, scrubbing, polishing; everything must be spick and span, ready for welcoming the New Year, or else there will be bad luck in store! New clothes are bought to wear for the festival. Flowers and fruit are purchased, and plenty of food is prepared, for this is a time of family feasting and celebration.

Prices, of course, zoom high and millions of dollars change hands in those few days prior to New Year. Also, employers have the unenviable responsibility of paying double wages as well as granting holidays to their staff, and all debts have to be settled before the old year ends.

Red is for happiness

Gifts for family and friends are bought and exchanged and children and young people receive 'lucky' money in red packets from their married relatives and friends. The latter custom was originally to help young people save for marriage, the significance of the packet being that red is the colour associated with happiness. Not long ago, a few cents were enough, but times have changed and nowadays children not only expect but receive anything from one to twenty dollars in each packet. The festival is a time of feasting, fun and excitement for all who can afford it.

Peaches are for wealth

But the underlying importance of Chinese New Year is to invoke the aid of supernatural beings in obtaining good luck and prosperity for the family in the coming year. Some people think that the more they spend at New Year, the greater their future prosperity will be. Peach trees, a symbol of wealth, are

used as decoration in the home, just as the westerner displays the traditional Christmas tree. The more blossoms there are on the peach tree, the greater the wealth in store, so a large tree may cost a thousand dollars or more. After the festival these beautiful trees are dead and discarded. The poorer people will just buy, or steal, a branch of peach blossom with which to decorate their home or they will buy a little orange tree, complete with tiny oranges, in a pot. Oranges, because of their shape and colour, also symbolize wealth and prosperity, as do chrysanthemums and narcissi which will be found in almost every home at this time. Homes may also be decorated with coloured lights and paper chains, with 'good luck' slogans, written on red paper, draped around the door.

Whether actively religious or not, most Chinese are superstitious and believe in spirits. These spirits may or may not be associated with their ancestors, but in any event they are to be kept happy so that the bad ones will bring help and favour. The more actively religious people will burn joss sticks, visit temples, leave gifts of fruit for the spirits to eat, and pray for their protection

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A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

by Dorothy Smith

and benevolence. Also in some houses there can be seen pictures of the kitchen god, door god, or one of the other household gods.

Everyone has a birthday

Certain days during the two weeks of Chinese New Year have particular significance. New Year's Eve is the night of the big family feast, and the following day everyone stays at home to eat the leftovers. This ensures that there will be no shortage of food during the coming year, or so the belief is. On the second, fourth, fifth and sixth days everyone goes out to *bai nin*, literally to 'worship the year' which just means to wish all their friends a happy New Year. The seventh day is 'everyone's birthday'. Age is generally reckoned according to how many New Years a person has seen, so a new born baby may suddenly become a year old on the seventh day of the two week festival! On the last day of the New Year, peanuts, sesame seeds and special spherical cakes made of rice flour are eaten, the round shape signifying completeness.

Chinese New Year celebrations in some ways compare with the secular celebrations of Christmas, for there are similarities such

as the family togetherness, exchange of gifts and cards, and use of trees and decorations. But if we are to compare the religious significance, they are very different. Loosely, we could say that at Christmas the emphasis is on giving, whereas at Chinese New Year it is on getting.

Using principalities and powers

Life for the Chinese is to a large extent controlled by unseen but, to them, very real supernatural forces. Therefore the appeasing and petitioning of these forces for protection and well being in the coming year is a necessity. In the case of these people, even their giving has a basically selfish motive, for if a person spends much, he will be rewarded much. Prosperity is the theme song and the obtrusive objective of Chinese New Year. Even the traditional New Year greeting, *Gung hei, fat choy!* means 'Congratulations and prosperity to you!' Chinese Christians, though, will usually omit the second half of the greeting and just wish people a happy New Year. For them the celebration of Chinese New Year is as a family festival, and their observance of any traditions are without religious or superstitious significance, just as Christians in the West will decorate their houses, eat turkey and hold parties, all of which actions really have little to do with the coming of the Christ child.

The challenge to Christians

Chinese Christians have a hard time financially because they have to celebrate both festivals in the traditionally accepted way at great expense to themselves. If only we could lay tradition aside and concentrate on the true significance of the Christmas festival! For the Christian of any nationality



A baby holds a packet of lucky money

who really loves the Lord, Christmas is a time of joy and thanksgiving. We celebrate, not for what we hope our God will do for us in the future, but for what He has already done in sending His beloved Son to be our Saviour.

Photos: by South China Morning Post Ltd



Preparing the peach trees for market



Photo: by T Reeve

LIGHT IN DARKNESS

by Donald Monkcom

It is quite common for Christmas Day services in Jamaica to begin at 5 am. We used to hold them at this time on the verandah of a bungalow in a new housing estate on the outskirts of Kingston. We were trying to establish a church there. When the services began all was dark outside apart from the light of a few street lamps. By the

time we had finished the morning had come by stealth, and in the distance we could see the Blue Mountains standing erect in the sunlight.

Dawn is an appropriate time for a Christmas service. The New Testament likens the

coming of Jesus Christ to the sunrise. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, spoke of it as the rising of 'the morning sun from heaven', and the prologue to John's Gospel declares that 'the real light which enlightens every man was even then coming into the world' (Luke 1:78-79, John 1:9 NEB).

Mission ebbs and flows

Since the first Christmas was the dawn of God's new day we should expect to find that the light had gone on spreading steadily and uniformly throughout the world. It has not done so. K S Latourette has shown how the movement of Christian mission during the past 2,000 years has been like that of the sea, subject to ebb and flow. Periods of rapid advance have been followed by periods of recession, when the Church as a whole has been sadly unresponsive to the Lord's directions concerning worldwide evangelization. The period AD 1790 to 1914 was one of progress and achievement in which most branches of the Church had a share. Yet today the world is still a mosaic of light and dark areas.

A group becomes a church

Let us look at some of the light areas. Christian advance in the present century has been most marked in the countries of the Third World. 'Darkest' Africa is now a continent of Christian growth where the soil is thrusting up new, indigenous forms of life and worship. Some of the news reaching us from Brazil is astonishing. A Brazilian speaker recently told us that 2,000 new churches had been established in his country during one year, and that during a five-day evangelistic campaign, held in a Baptist church, 2,445 people had come to faith in Christ. Brazilian Baptists are pleading for more missionaries to help them capitalize their opportunities. There has been a gladdening response in Bangladesh during recent years. As for Jamaica, if we do not hear much about it in BMS publications nowadays, it is because the Jamaican Baptists, now have a strong, progressive Union which is only to a small extent dependent on the Society. The little house group to which reference has already been made can serve as a symbol of this development. It is now a growing church with a set of buildings and a minister. Evidence of this kind supports the views of Latourette when he says: '... in the past each ebb has been followed by a fresh advance and each advance has set a new high mark for the influence of Jesus in the total life of mankind'.

The darkness is not impenetrable

What of the darkness? A change of vantage point presents a very different view of the contemporary world. Many millions have never heard the Gospel. One fourth of the world is closed to normal missionary activity, and over 11% of the world is completely closed to Christian workers from outside. Over 100 million people are without any Scriptures in their mother tongue. Christians

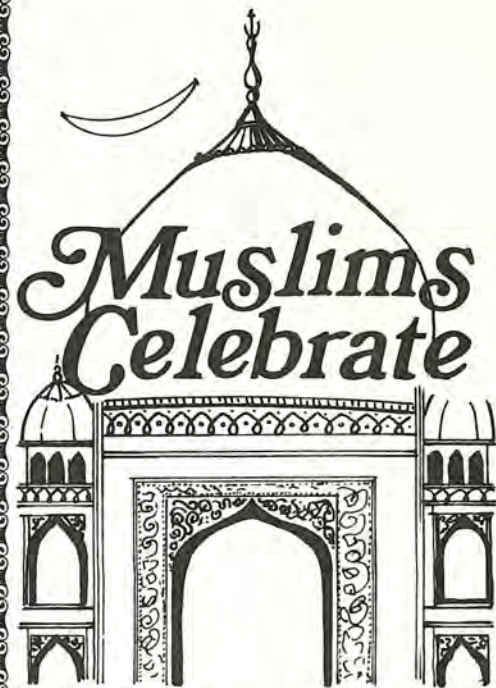
in Communist lands are facing heavy odds, if not suffering persecution. Islam and Buddhism are gaining an increasing following. Europe at present is a Christian twilight zone.

The world scene is a confusing and perplexing one, tending to produce alternations of hope and despair in thoughtful Christians. When and how will the darkness be banished? Some Christians believe that it will happen suddenly and soon with the final coming of Christ. Others incline to the view that the day of Christ in history has only just begun, and that the struggle of light against darkness must go on until his far-off noon day. Whatever our views on this, we shall agree that the darkness cannot overcome the light and that the end will be with Christ. God has declared it, and to be a new creature in Christ is to have a conviction arising from personal experience.

Called to be torches

We shall also agree that Christ has given to his followers an indispensable share in the transmission of his light. 'I am the light of the world' . . . 'You are the light of the world'. We are called to play both a passive and an active role. Christ is the source and we are to reflect his light by Christian character and 'presence'. Unguided busyness prevents this: we must learn to be still. On the other hand, we are to be active witnesses. 'Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.' Christ has entrusted to us a variety of gifts for this purpose: gifts of mind, speech, administrative ability, practical skills. To us all comes the call to prayer, obedience, personal evangelism, and sacrificial giving. Some invest their gifts in work at home, others in the manifold tasks of the Church overseas. Wherever our work is done, and whatever form it takes, it is costly — costly for mind, heart and nerve. Richard Hooker wrote, 'Ministers of good things are like torches, a light to others, waste and destruction to themselves'. The advent season is an annual reminder of our need to go constantly for supplies to the one who gives.

On 2 October, 1792, William Carey and his friends lit a lamp which is still giving light in many parts of the earth. There were only 14 of them, and their working capital was a little over £13. We are living in a different world from Carey's and we have not his gifts. But each of us, given confidence in our Lord and in ourselves as indwelt by him, can kindle lights and maintain lights which will go on shining long after our day is done.



by Paul Biswas*

I myself was a Muslim Moulvi and as a result of becoming a Christian I was turned out of my home. But because of that background and because I know Arabic I can preach to Muslims in a way others cannot.

When the new moon is seen, after keeping the month of *Ramzan* (month of fasting), on the first day of the new moon the Muslims celebrate *Eid* with much joy like we celebrate Christmas Day. For example, they wear new clothes, they eat special food and give gifts to the poor. Congregations gather for worship especially in open places or large mosques and like Christians they greet each other. This *Eid* (festival) cannot be compared with any other. It is a festival of joy governed by one's position. There is no spiritual meaning in it. We Christians celebrate Christmas Day because it is the birthday of Jesus Christ our Saviour. We have a spiritual reason for our action but Muslims have no thought of this kind in connection with *Eid*. Therefore from the spiritual point of view it cannot be compared with Christmas though Muslims often think of it as comparable with Christmas Day.

Some Muslims then fast for another ten days immediately after *Eid*. This is called *Ramzan Ashura*. The reason for this observance is that Jesus, whom they regard as a prophet, fasted, or went without food, for forty days. Because of this example they fast for these additional ten days and then think their duty is completely fulfilled.

*Principal of Regent's Park Hall, Dacca, Bangladesh.



MAF plane being prepared

August and January. In Britain we experience very different weather conditions during these two months. In Zaire, too, it is a similar story. My first visit took place in August 1966 and memories of the occasion, kept alive by coloured slides, include dry dusty roads, brown grass and controlled burning which at night was a sight to behold. I chose to make my second visit ten years later during December and January. I chose that time so that I would be able to share in the Christmas celebrations and also see the countryside when the grass was green and growing fast. I arrived almost too late to see the frangipani and too early for the poinsettia to have turned red, but at just the right time to taste the delights of mangoes and pineapples.

Hope is fulfilled

My base, as before, was with Edna Staple and Jean Comber at the leprosarium attached to IME (Institute Médical Evangélique) near Kimpese. Its name, Kivuvu, the place of Hope, has certainly been an apt description of its function over the ten intervening years.

Instead of two full wards, houses for resident patients all occupied and lengthy queues of people at the clinics, I found wards with empty beds, some of the houses no longer needed by in-patients and clinics of reasonable size. Thus the situation at Kivuvu had improved but the need for care, attention and education was still great. New patients kept coming. I saw several being examined and undergoing tests to find where they had lost the sensations of touch and temperature. There were still some quite ill patients, one of whom had been sent up from Matadi because a Zairian nurse, having received leprosy training at Kivuvu, had recognized the symptoms.

I was able to be present at two out-patients' clinics held some distance from IME. At these some patients were seen who had not been following their prescribed treatment. When the wrong sort of sandals are worn and the soaking and oiling of the feet are neglected, bad feet become worse and long, deep cracks develop which can be very raw at the bottom. Failure to attend the clinic

when she should have done meant that one woman I saw needed hospital treatment at Kivuvu but because she had young children to look after, she made many an excuse for not going.

A new way to travel

In 1966 the holding of leprosy clinics some way from Kivuvu involved a bumpy and often lengthy journey over almost impassable roads. Now a new method of transport can sometimes be used. The Missionary Aviation Fellowship, or MAF, has an airbase at IME and a single engine plane capable of carrying the medical boxes and up to four passengers, can cover in about 40 minutes a distance which might take all day and perhaps all night, by road. This makes possible in one day, journeys and consultations that formerly took four or five days. While I was there in January of this year candidates were being put through a very stiff examination for admission to the first training course for African pilots and air mechanics with the

ZAI REVIS

MAF. The competition was keen since only a few can be trained at a time.

Difficulties overcome

Missionary work has many aspects and the aviation service is one of its newer ones. It was used to take the leprologist, Edna and myself to Sundi Lutete situated near the border of the People's Republic of Congo. After the first clinic here we had to get to the church centre, Kingoyi, which is an old mission station. Our means of transport was a landrover in such poor health that it died at the bottom of a steep muddy hill about five kilometres short of our destination! It was dark and raining and lightning flashes were a portent of worse weather to come. We expected to have to walk lighting our path by a torch, but the driver of a lorry approaching from the opposite direction, after inspecting the stuck vehicle, decided to return with us to Kingoyi, stay the night and



Kingoyi Church

then with help from the centre get the road clear the following day. But what about the return journey when the clinic was over? We were supposed to travel by landrover to Luozi, a town on the River Zaire with a good airstrip, where the MAF plane would meet us. This was now impossible. The only quick communication between Kingoyi and the outside world was by radio transmitter at eight o'clock in the morning, so word was sent to IME that we could not get to Luozi that day by road. By this time the doctor was due back at IME for other clinics. However we were soon informed that permission had been given for the plane to pick us up from a new airstrip, made near Kingoyi, but at that time not yet officially opened. The strip was laid on two mounds, there being no flat land in the region, and the airsock showed a steady crosswind. After circling twice the pilot made a landing but he said afterwards that if the wind had been any stronger he would not have been able to land at all. A high standard of flying efficiency

IRE SITED

by Mary Peters

and the dedication to use these God given talents in His service are vital links in the present day fulfilment of the missionary challenge.

Differing cultures meet

At Mbanza-Ngungu, formerly Thysville, I saw women gathered together in conference to plan, with the help of Phyllis Gilbert and Lesley Fuller, their programme for the coming months. I also saw Angolan wood carvers at work. Margaret Stockwell took me into the surrounding countryside where I could look over the wooded hills towards Angola and, closer at hand, see the cultivated land from which the women brought their produce to sell at the town market. I also visited the Training College for Secondary Teachers where Margaret is the Head of the Science Department. The buildings are new and represent a challenge to the students to rise to a high standard of professional efficiency. One lecturer in English has been



Waiting for Christmas parcels to take to the wards

doing the linguistics course at Moray House College of Education in Edinburgh during the past year. Two other Zairians have also studied there and their meeting with people of different nations has helped towards a better understanding. Another way in which students of different persuasions are being brought together is through the Bible studies Margaret holds at her home. One of the people attending these is a Roman Catholic priest and lecturer who seemed very glad to come.

Christ's coming celebrated

Christmas activities at Kivuvu and IME had been planned and prepared well before the day. On the Sunday before Christmas, the school for missionaries' children enacted the Christmas story in reading and song. The offering taken at this English service realized the equivalent of about £50 which was used to add tins of pilchards to the Christmas parcels given to the 350 patients at the hospital. I was able to help members of the Women's Meeting to distribute the gifts and joyful singing could be heard from the wards

well before we actually arrived with our trolley laden with tins of evaporated milk and pilchards, small packets of sugar and tea, long French rolls and soap.

There were two carol services at Kivuvu. One for the patients and another for the Angolan refugees living in the area at which the Kivuvu staff formed a tableau of the nativity scene. The service for the patients, held on Christmas morning, was conducted by the Rev João Matwawana, former chaplain of IME, who preached for 30 minutes to the obvious delight of his hearers. Many of the overseas staff at IME had formed themselves into a choir and had learned, under the able direction of Edna Staple, a number of very beautiful carols. These were sung at the English service on Sunday, 26 December and together with readings about the coming of the babe Emmanuel, God with us, made a fitting climax to Christmas week.

continued overleaf



Angolan woodcarvers

ZAIRE REVISITED

continued from previous page

The trade may not come

As I think now of the changes that I noticed on my second visit and the progress that had been made during the ten years I must point out first of all that Zaire is a vast country and I was only able to see a tiny part of it. It would be foolish to assume that my impressions applied to the whole country. Nevertheless there were several points of change. Apart from the aviation service already described there were other differences in travel. There was generally much more traffic on the main Kinshasa to Matadi road, with cars and buses as well as the lorries I had seen in '66. Usually the buses were packed full to overflowing with passengers and their belongings. Then there were more goods in the shops, but these were also more costly. Kinshasa has its large stores but the ordinary everyday requirements like margarine were often in short supply. Bread prices had doubled since I was first there. Petrol had gone up alarmingly, so had oil



Angolan children at Kimwana

when this was available, and many missionary hospitals were depending upon the electricity they generated for themselves. On the outskirts of Kinshasa, near the river, a large building bearing the letters WTC was nearing completion but whether it will ever be used as a World Trade Centre remains to be seen. Wages were controlled by the government and the wives of men in the professions looked very fine in their native dress of beautifully designed materials, the price of

which was far more than I was willing to pay. While I was in Zaire the second time there was a move to get the Church to resume its earlier control of some of the schools there and this has since been brought about. Out in the villages it was almost as if time had stood still; there were more radios perhaps, and more furniture, even a three piece suite, but houses are primarily for sleeping in and conversation takes place outside unless it is raining when visits would be curtailed anyway.

'Even so Lord, come'

Thus it is with fond memories that I recall my visit to Zaire this time last year. To the many folk connected with BMS whom I met and who are not mentioned by name, I say a very warm 'thank you' for the kindness of their welcome. And as the Christmas season comes round once again a verse from the carol service runs through my mind —

'Hope of the world,
Mary's child,
You're coming soon to reign:
King of the earth,
Mary's child,
Walk in our streets again.'

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously or without address. (19 August-22 September, 1977)

General Work: Anon: (Cymro) £10.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £30.00; Anon: £10.00; Anon: £30.00; Anon: £50.00; Anon: (Cymro) £15.00; Anon: £15.00; Anon: £20.00; Anon: £15.00; Anon: (G W) £2.00; Anon: £10.00; Anon: (Cymro) £11.00; Anon: £1.75; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £50.00.

Agricultural Work: Anon: £5.00; Anon: (Cymraes) £40.00; Anon: (HLW) £10.00; Anon: £1.00; Anon: (Edinburgh) £5.00; Anon: (BJK) £5.00.

Relief Work: Anon: (EMW) £5.00; Anon: £5.00.

Legacies

	£	p
Dorothy Ruth Balmford	100	00
Mrs M G Coles	2,503	91
Mrs E Cox	250	00
Mr H J Ewart	50	00
Mrs E H K Harding	500	00
Mr F L Islip	500	00

Miss D B Knee	12,000	00
Mrs Le Quesne	300	00
Morton Trust	122	34
Mrs E R Stone	500	00
Mr D W Symmons	200	00
Mrs E K Vaughan	100	00
Miss E A Weaving	500	00

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Mrs J K Skirrow and sons on 28 August from Barisal, Bangladesh.

Miss S M LeQuesne on 29 August from Dacca, Bangladesh.

Departures

Miss W Aitchison, Mr R Nield, Miss O Satterly and Miss P Walton on 30 August for study in Wavre, Belgium.

Miss M A Stockwell on 3 September for Mbanza-Ngungu, Zaire.

Mr and Mrs O W Clark and family on 8 September for Kinshasa, Zaire.

Mr L Alexander on 9 September from Belgium for Pimu, Zaire.

Mr and Mrs P Chandler on 16 September for Bolobo, Zaire.

Mrs F W J Clarke and two children on 18 September for Cascavel, Brazil.

Mrs A G Lewis on 20 September for Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

Miss H M Hopkins on 27 September for Ngombe Lutete and Miss E N Gill for IME Kimpese, Zaire.

Miss S M LeQuesne on 27 September for Dacca, Bangladesh.

Death

On 16 September, Mr Edward Lloyd Phillips, MA (China Mission 1925-47).

Engagement

Mr Andrew Philip North and Miss Anne Hilary German, both short-term missionaries in Kinshasa, Zaire.

AN APOLOGY

We apologise that there was an omission in the 1977 Prayer Guide on page 60.

The entry under Saturday 17 should read — 'Rev L G and Mrs West (Zaire 1931-61)'.

BAPTIST HOLIDAY FELLOWSHIP

Offer a varied programme for 1978

CONTINENTAL

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THE MISSIONARY

And they that were sent, went (Acts 13:4)

Not much romance, though still the sense
Of high adventure, not much glory
Though contentment of obedience still is
theirs,
Rather a story full of visas,
Passports, tickets and the endless wait
And with it all a test of faith;
And having reached their destination
Long grapple with strange words, the trial
Of heat, mosquitoes, weakness of the flesh;
How shall they stand, these servants of the
Light,
Except we bear them up by day and night
Invoke for them the laughter of the Spirit
His gaiety to keep them in the fight,
Aware that with them stands the Lord
Unseen but not unfelt, His solemn Sword
To guard, to pierce the armies of the dark
And bring them harvest for their selfless
work?
Blessed are these and blessed also they
Who, Moses-like, remain at home to pray.
S L Henderson-Smith*

*Dr Henderson-Smith was a missionary with
the BMS in China from 1943-51 and then
at Pimu, Zaire from 1951 to 1955.

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Hindu Festivals



by Leslie Wenger



The god Shiva

The first Sunday in Advent marks the beginning of the year in the Christian calendar. The Advent season prepares the mind for the celebration of the coming of the Christ child, and to this end culminates in Christmas. On 6 January, Twelfth Night, comes Epiphany, the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, which commemorates how the Wise Men brought their treasures to worship the new born King.

For Bengali Hindus there is also a kind of advent season. This is known as the great *puja* period and occurs between the end of the monsoon and the reaping of the harvest. The meaning of *puja* is worship and during this period, when colleges are closed for five weeks and government offices for ten days, three major festivals take place.

The family gathers

The first of these is the *Durga puja*. *Durga* is one of the names for the wife of the great and terrible god, *Shiva*. The other two supreme Hindu deities are *Sakti*, which is the female and active aspect of *Shiva*, and *Vishnu* who unlike *Shiva*, is wholly good and kind. *Durga* then, is a personification of *Sakti*, the Divine Energy. She is the Mother-goddess and the *Durga puja* is therefore the great family festival when everyone tries to come home, at least for

the special four days which bring the celebrations to a climax.

The festival begins on the eighth day from the new moon in the month of *Asvin* (between 15 September and 15 October). Wealthy landlords arrange for one of the prepared images to be set up in their courtyards. Nowadays in towns, streets organize house to house collections in order to erect a booth as a temporary shrine in which they can have an image of their own.

The image is possessed

After the image has been set up, a priest offers a special prayer: 'Let the spirit of *Durga* descend and take possession of this image.' *Durga* means 'difficult to approach', so when the Mother-goddess who is unapproachable comes to dwell among people it is a time of much rejoicing and the family reunion is especially fitting.

The image itself combines the two aspects of Divine Power, terrible strength and grace. So *Durga* has eight or ten arms and is attended by lions, but her face is gentle. In earlier times many devotees worshipped with ascetic practices such as swinging with hooks fastened in their backs, but this no longer happens. Animal sacrifices have also been stopped, except at Kalighat in Calcutta.



This terrible aspect of the divinity is the main theme in the first days of the festival but towards the end the gracious element dominates. The climax of the festival is full of merrymaking and processions, especially on the tenth day which is often called *Dashara*, *dash* meaning ten.

On the final day the priest deconsecrates the image by special rites and the spirit of the goddess departs from it. The image is no longer of any worth and is carried in procession with shouts and music to the river Ganges, or some other flowing water, for the ceremony of *Bisarjan*, the casting off. It must be remembered that the worship of *Durga* is not idol worship; the image is only the temporary clothing of the divine spirit who inhabits it for a time and then departs.

The darkness is revealed

The second of the three major festivals is the *Kali puja* which occurs at the following new moon. *Kali* means black and is really another name for *Durga*, the wife of *Shiva*, but the emphasis is now on the destructive aspect of power. From her black face her red tongue lolls out; often it is spattered with blood, the blood from devouring her children, some say. She has a necklace of skulls and stands on her husband *Shiva*, who lies prostrate, one of her feet on his

breast, the other on his thigh. She has four arms. One holds a bloodied sword, another the head of a giant, clasped by its hair. Sometimes in the past one hand held a strangling noose, for *Kali* was the goddess worshipped by *thuggee*, the gangs of professional assassins, but nowadays one or two hands are open, offering blessings.

Kali is a picture of Nature, who is sometimes terrifying in the floods and storms that devour people and who sometimes blesses with rich harvests. Christians find the image repulsive but some Hindus retort that it is no more repulsive a sight than a picture of Christ bleeding on a cross.

The lights are lit

The dark night preceding the new moon is made bright by hundreds of little clay lamps with wicks burning in oil. For this reason the festival is known as *Diwali* from a word meaning lamp. In modern sophisticated cities such lamps are replaced by electric lights, still or flashing, and fireworks are also used in celebrations. Each year people vie to make the illuminations ever more elaborate. The lights and fireworks are intended to frighten away demons and the spirits of the deceased. The festival is also a fine opportunity for gamblers.

Hope takes possession

A fortnight later at the next full moon comes the third of the major festivals, the *Lakshmi puja*. The goddess of fortune, *Lakshmi* is the wife of *Vishnu*, the Great Preserver in the supreme triad of Hindu gods. Her image is beautiful, she sits on a lotus, the pure white floral symbol of India. The November air is crisp and clear for the monsoon is long past. The sky is unclouded, and the moon shines with special brilliance. The main rice harvest is nearly ready for reaping and there is promise of wealth. The writer caste put aside all their writing materials for the day, for their purification, and businessmen open new accounts in the hopes of a prosperous new year. For the Hindus this is new year, though the Bengali new year proper comes in the spring.

Christmas means so much more

Several parallels may be found between these Hindu *pujas* and the Christian and western festivals. Just as the Christian family celebrates the birth of Emmanuel, 'God with us', Hindu families in Bengal gather together to worship the Mother-goddess whose spirit descends to be with them. On a lighter note fireworks and lights at *Diwali* parallel the Guy Fawkes and Hallowe'en festivals of the autumn nights and similar celebrations the

world over. In contrast, there is the Hindu festival of fortune for oneself at the full moon and the selfless offering of rich gifts by the wise men.

The *puja* period is marked by the family reunions and merrymaking but the religious significance is still recognized, even if perfunctorily, by many. No doubt the colourful expression given to the ceremonies keeps the religious meaning before people's minds. In Britain, in sad contrast, the colour and glitter of Christmas has very little to do with its spiritual meaning. Indeed, it is often noted by Bengalis that the Christian festivals are very colourless compared with Hindu

pujas. To meet this lack Bengali Christians in many places have taken from *Diwali* the practice of decorating their homes during the Christmas period with lamps and candles, and fairy lights to adorn the Christmas tree. This surely is an appropriate way of celebrating the human birthday of the Light of the World!

Photos: by Methodist Missionary Society



The goddess Durga

**BOOK
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Hope in Captivity: The Prophetic Church in Latin America
by Derek Winter
Published: Epworth Press £2.25

Now head of Religious Studies at St Paul's College, Cheltenham, Derek Winter was for thirteen years, until 1970, a BMS missionary in Paran , Brazil. Since his return from Brazil he has made a study of the writings of Latin Americans on what is termed 'the theology of liberation', and has been much influenced by them. He came to see in a new light some of his experiences in Brazil. Last year, during a period of study leave, he visited Brazil again and other countries of Latin America. At Rimac in Peru he called on Gustavo Gutierrez, author of *A Theology of Liberation*, and then went to centres where other Roman Catholic priests associated with Gutierrez are working. He travelled on by road to La Paz and there interviewed Javier Albo, Director of Rural Research and Development, travelling on later a hundred miles to a young people's camp in the heart of Bolivia in order to meet Mortimer Arias, Bishop of the Methodist Church in Bolivia. In Brazil he talked with Rubem Alves, author of *A Theology of Human Hope* and *Tomorrow's Child*, now teaching sociology in the University of Campinas, and Helder Camara, Bishop of Recife, author of *Spiral of Violence*, *Race Against Time*, and *Church and Colonialism*.

He was able to have conversations also with Juan Luis Segundo, author of *The Liberation of Theology* and other works, at Montevideo, and Jose Miguez Bonino of Buenos Aires, author of *Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age* and *Christians and Marxists: The Mutual Challenge to Revolution*.

The first four chapters of the book give a lively and most interesting account of

journeys and meetings. They help to an understanding of the circumstances in which the various writings originated and make clear the variety of emphases within 'liberation theology'. The last chapter is a spirited defence of 'liberation theology' and a discussion of its implications.

The author and publishers are to be congratulated on a well written book, well printed and presented.

ASC



The Bible BC: What can archaeology prove?
by A R Millard
Published: Inter Varsity Press 50p

A R Millard is Rankin Senior Lecturer in Hebrew and Ancient Semitic Languages at Liverpool University, and he has shared in numerous archaeological expeditions. A recent series on BBC Television called 'The Archaeology of Bible Lands' appeared to him to present a somewhat distorted view. He believes that to ask, 'Does archaeology prove the Bible?' is to ask the wrong question. It is equally erroneous to claim that lack of archaeological data disproves the Bible. So he examines various ways in which ancient and near eastern texts and antiquities can be correlated with the statements of the Bible. He believes that archaeological research is a welcome aid to a richer knowledge of the Bible's message. 'Nothing,' he asserts 'has been found which can be proved to contradict any statement in the Old Testament.'

There is a useful list of books for further reading and a Time Chart of the Old Testament period together with a map.

AEE

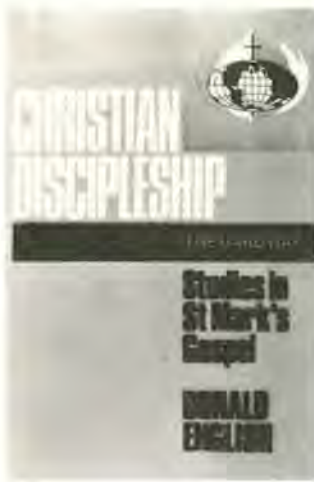


God Incarnate
by George Carey
Published: Inter Varsity Press 60p

Recently a book called *The Myth of God Incarnate* was launched with a lot of advance publicity claiming that it was a breakthrough in Christian thinking and the media presented it as a challenge to the traditional belief in the divinity of Christ. It was not to be wondered at, then, that others would feel led to re-state the traditional point of view and support it. This booklet has been offered as a contribution to the debate. It is written by a Durham vicar who has served on the staff of two theological colleges, one in London and the other in Nottingham.

He does not claim that this is an exhaustive treatment of the subject but presents it as an introduction. To help the reader further he adds a useful bibliography suggesting books written from differing theological positions which would give helpful insights into this matter. The author approaches the subject biblically and introduces the readers to passages of scripture supporting the divinity of Christ.

AEE



Christian Discipleship by Donald English

Published: Methodist Publishing House 25p

This slim book of seven Bible studies based on Mark's Gospel has been commissioned by the Evangelism Committee of the World Methodist Council. The author is a Methodist minister who has served as a missionary in Nigeria and who at present holds the Lord Rank Chair of Practical Theology and Methodism at Wesley College, Bristol.

The studies are practical and devotional and deal with some of the key passages of the Gospel. Besides the set questions at the end of each passage, the studies are liberally interspersed with rhetorical questions, and all these invite self examination and group discussion.

There are many references to the basic study books that are suggested at the beginning of the book; and for discussion of the deeper theological issues that the passages raise, the reader is given the appropriate page numbers. But as these Bible studies are to be translated and distributed 'in parts of the world where otherwise it would be difficult for them to reach local churches' one wonders whether those local churches would have the basic study books, in translation, to be referred to! Nevertheless, these Bible studies can certainly be commended for use in group study, for the author brings home the present day challenge of the Gospel to personal discipleship, and relates that very practically to the missionary and evangelistic task of the Church.

But Baptists will find it hard to forgive him for misquoting William Carey's famous couplet, 'Expect great things from God: attempt great things for God,' by reversing the two lines, and then attributing them to Hudson Taylor!

VGL

NEWS IN BRIEF

BIBLES IN POLAND

A special documentary film being shown in the United States on Bible distribution in Poland reveals growing interest in the scriptures. Despite the fact that Marxist philosophy is ultimately opposed to Christianity there is freedom to print and distribute copies of the Bible. The Bible Society which is celebrating 160 years' work in Poland, co-operates with the Polish Catholic Church as well as with Orthodox and Protestant churches. With a population that is 95% Catholic, Poland is one of the most Catholic countries in Europe. Eighty per cent of its citizens attend church regularly and in recent years, as the film shows, they have received strong encouragement to read the scriptures for themselves.



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KNITTING FOR THE BMS

Mrs Cuthbertson, the daughter of a Baptist minister is now in her eighties but still active in her support of the Society. She lives in the charming Devon village of Thorverton near Exeter and for a number of years has been making toy poodles for sale. These are knitted and then stuffed with soft filling and sold in aid of the BMS. Over the years Mrs Cuthbertson has raised quite a lot of money in this way. Her son is also a Baptist minister. He has a pastorate at Coseley in Staffordshire.

A NEW APPROACH

At the Welcome Meeting organized by the Leicester Auxiliary for the BMS deputation, young people from the churches enacted three playlets. One depicted a situation in Brazil, another a scene in Asia and the third an incident in the life of Zaire. After each playlet the missionaries from the area depicted in the scene were introduced and asked to comment on the points made in the playlet and to add their own observations. This approach provided a very interesting and helpful evening and involved people from the churches as well as the deputation.

SURPRISE CALL

A deacon from the West Cliff Baptist church, Bournemouth recently had an opportunity to make an unexpected telephone call to the Rev Michael and Mrs Wotton who are BMS missionaries in Curitiba, capital of the Paraná state of Brazil. On Monday, 15 August International Direct Dialling was introduced to Brazil and the deacon was involved in making test calls to ensure the system was working correctly. He availed himself of the opportunity to speak to his friends in Brazil so a very surprised Gill Wotton answered the call and in no time Michael had been summoned from his study. Michael was minister at the West Cliff church before going out to Curitiba where he and his wife are engaged in teaching at the Baptist Theological College and Bible Institute. He also has pastoral care of a church at Itupava.

A FIRST MISSIONARY

Last year the Methodist Church in Guyana requested the Methodist Church of Cuba to send a missionary to help with the work in Guyana. In September of this year Rev Joel Ajo became the first missionary to be sent from the Cuban Methodist Church to work overseas. He and his wife and family have taken up this new appointment for a period of two years.

Thoughts on Mission

'The Cross is both an event and a principle. As an event it is unique and once for all, lying at the heart of the Christian Gospel. But it is more than an event, as Jesus made clear when he told his disciples that they too would have to bear a cross, and most of them were not crucified. In this context he is using the expression metaphorically. The cross belongs to the whole structure of the Christian faith, life, and mission. Discipleship means cross-bearing. The cross is a basic principle of Christianity: it is the way it works and the way it works itself out. The world which crucified Jesus could be expected to deal roughly with his friends.'

(Douglas Webster: Yes to Mission)

'Christians do not merely *send* missionaries, they *are* missionaries.'

(Elton Trueblood)

'The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning.'

(Emil Brunner)

'Although we cannot fathom the mystery of mission we can perceive some of its patterns. In Holy Scripture and in the history and experience of the Church it is clear that mission is no simple, one-way, one-level movement. It is composed of two movements in four directions. There is the perpendicular

movement of the Gospel, redeeming love coming down to earth and lifting up the redeemed people of God to his own heights. And there is the horizontal rhythmic movement of the Church in its relation to the world, going out, dispersed for witness and loving service, and returning inward and

together for fellowship and worship. When this horizontal movement of out and in is continually intersected by that other movement of the eternal Gospel which is down and up, mission is taking place. The results we do not know and cannot judge. But the ultimate pattern is a cross.'

(Douglas Webster: Unchanging Mission)

'I find myself wondering whether Christians have not forgotten what it means to seek in order that Christ may save. Yet in every situation in the world nothing is more needed than this. Whatever professional skill he may offer in the service of men, however deep and consistent the devotion of his Christian life, a Christian will only become a missionary as he learns how to bring the healing grace of Jesus to another life through personal evangelism.'

(John Taylor: For all the World)

'Life's real altars are *outside* church buildings. They are places in the world where Christians get maltreated and misunderstood and sometimes mocked because they are Christians. When this happens to men and women anywhere, they are having a tiny glimpse and share of the passion of the Lord. Mission leads into passion. The cross is all about bearing. It is a principle as well as an event. It has to be re-enacted time and again in some form or other as Christians give their witness, for this can be more articulate than words. In this world the cross is an inevitable consequence of effective mission, for it is the world preferring darkness to light because its deeds are evil. "The Cross as an event is no artificial scheme. It is what happens when a love like Christ's encounters a world like Jerusalem." (K. Cragg).'

'Our task is to be engaged with God in his mission. He continues in his mission. Let us never get it into our heads that Jesus has finished what he came to do and that now he has handed the business over to us to work for him. We never work for him. We are only allowed to work with him. He is at work all the time. And this mission of God is to weave together into one the history of the nations until creation has become the new creation in its wholeness.'

(Daniel Niles: The Message and its Messengers)

'The Christian mission is to affirm both God's reign and the offer of participation through Christ in that reign. This is not to say that the reign of God is present only where the mission is, or to confine his Kingdom to those times and places where it becomes articulate through mission. That would be to make God subject to his witnesses, and to testify not to the Lord of all, but to a tribal Baal. God's reign is over all, and is not dependent on human testimony to it.'

(R K Orchard: Missions in a Time of Testing)

'There is always a cross where holiness meets with sin. The uniqueness of Christ's Cross is that there in one man's body and will, the full and perfect holiness of God met with the sin of all the world. The reality of our crosses is that our very partial holiness, namely the fact that we belong to Jesus Christ and are dedicated to him, meets with resentment and resistance inevitably in that segment of the world where we try to witness and serve. If we meet this resistance with love a cross will form.'

(Douglas Webster: Yes to Mission)

'The old picture of the missionary as one who sallies forth from a geographically defined Christendom into the outer world of barbarous superstition is no longer valid. Today the mission field is everywhere, and the home base is wherever the Church exists. Today the pagan world is no longer something away over the horizon; it is here in the midst of us. We live in a world in which the competing faiths, no longer separated and insulated by distance, jostle one another in every city and even in the minds of ordinary Christians.'

(Lesslie Newbigin)