

Missionary

HERALD

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A MEDITATION ON EASTER



by Clinton Bennett*

God made the world and made it good, so the Bible says.
God made the world and made it good, and God's a God of Love.
Yet in the world I don't see Love
But blood and toil and tears.
In Bangladesh the years roll on
And still the peasants die
And from their hearts and from their minds comes the frenzied cry
'It's food we need, not Love.'

The lonely cry, the hungry shout,
The screaming cry goes forth
'God in your Love we can't believe
And of your truth we take our leave.'

Lonely hearts and lonely lives
Strive and search for Love,
For Love and life for life and Love
The human soul cries out.

The gap is there, the gap of Love —
I try to fill it up.
But mockingly the voice replies —
'I'm not for you, I'm not for you,
Go and look again.'

I look to East I look to West
But still I seem to see
Not life but death not love but hate
And misery on misery.

From here to there and everywhere
I wonder in my dreams —
I look I feel I search I touch
But fail to find my God of Love.

Yet Easter was and Easter is, so the Bible says,
An Act of Love, a sacrifice, to save the world from sin.
But on that Cross did Christ know Love, life or love or peace?
— only suffering, only pain, a sense of dereliction.
Alone He was, alone He stood, yet there, we say, was Love.

'For God loved the world so much that He gave
His only Son, that whoever believes
In Him shall not die but inherit everlasting life.'

(John 3:16)

*Clinton is at present studying at St Andrew's College, Birmingham in preparation for doing church work with the BMS in Bangladesh.



Arrival

Miss M S Wood on 23 December from Chandraghona, Bangladesh.

Departures

Miss L J Carr on 2 January for Upoto, Zaire.

Miss M E Philpott on 2 January for Kinshasa, Zaire.

Mr A J A Romanis on 2 January for Bolobo, Zaire.

Miss J A Townley on 2 January for Kinshasa, Zaire.

Miss R G Knox on 3 January for Mbanza-Ngungu, Zaire.

Rev N B McVicar on 4 January for Diptipur, India.

Mr and Mrs A P North on 12 January for study in Belgium.

Rev F J Grenfell on 23 January for Kinshasa, Zaire.

Rev J and Mrs Fumage and family on 23 January for Dois Vizinhos, Brazil.

Mr and Mrs A G H Davies on 24 January for Kathmandu, Nepal.

Death

In Southlands Hospital, Shoreham, on 24 January, Mrs Mabel Gladys Reynolds (widow of Rev W D Reynolds) aged 92 (Zaire Mission 1917-52; 1959-60).

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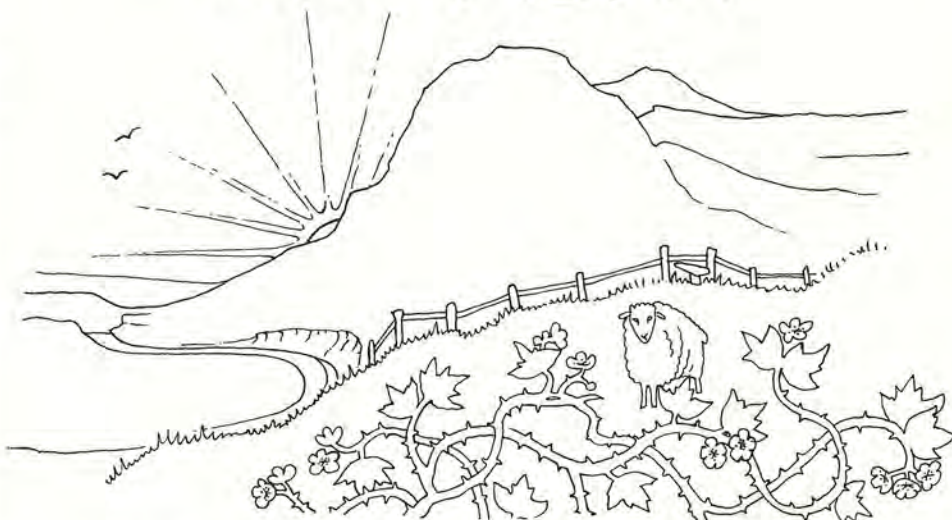
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COMMENT



How will Easter Day be distinguished by your fellowship from all the other Sundays of the year? It is certain that the sanctuary will be decked in floral splendour and maybe the window ledges as well as the communion table will carry vases of spring flowers as tokens of a new life surging into being.

Undoubtedly the worshippers will gather with the keen anticipation of joining in 'the grand old Easter hymns' which are welcomed and sung with gusto because of the memories they awake of other Easter festivals — sometimes stretching back over many years.

Notable reminders

'Jesus Christ is risen today, hallelujah!'
'Thine be the glory, risen, conquering son'. There is a triumphant ring about the words of our hymns for this occasion and we are happy in the thought that we are declaring the triumph of our Lord and reassuring ourselves that he is alive for evermore.

Many churches will mark that day by holding an early morning communion and meeting with the risen Lord by His invitation to share the meal with Him much as He invited the disciples to breakfast beside the lake one morning after His resurrection.

Other fellowships will hope to arrange a baptismal service for this very special Sunday indicating the continuing grace of Christ to transform our lives by His risen power.

The outsider does not see

All of these approaches are expressions of our belief and rejoicing in the truth of the gospel and they make Easter Day for us exciting and stimulating spurring us on in the work of the Lord. Yet all take place

within the four walls of our building and whereas we note the occasion and mark it off in the calendar of our church life, it is doubtful if those passing by on the road, or our neighbours in the street, notice anything different about this Sunday from any other.

A witness which cannot be missed

In contrast, many of our fellowships with whom we serve overseas usually begin that special day with a sunrise service. As one missionary writes, 'It always seems appropriate to begin Easter Day praising God, in all the beauty of His creation, for His love to us in the resurrection.' So the church in Nepal climbs up into the mountains and there, surely, as the sun rises in the east the company of Christians can truly sing, 'Welcome happy morning'. Further, in such places where the still air carries sounds great distances, there can be little doubt in the minds of those over a wide area that a special day has begun because the sounds of praise echo down the hillside and along the valleys. Likewise, those around cannot fail to receive the message when in the light of dawn the pastor cries, 'The Lord has Risen', and a great shout is echoed back, 'The Lord is Risen indeed'.

The promise of victory

So around the world this Easter morning as the sun begins its journey, the Church of Jesus Christ will be making its testimony, out in the open air, to the resurrection of her Lord. It is a real joy. A sincere shout of exultation in spite of all the fearful circumstances of present day living in many places. A note of hope sung by the church to people shrouded in darkness and often gripped by despair.



One big happy family

by Marion Bushill

Basking in the sun in the hostel compound

Near the Kashmiri gate, one of the famous entrances to the old walled city of Delhi, stands the Gange Hostel. It has been given a new name and is now known as 'Baptist Anand Bhawan'. *Anand Bhawan* means 'Happy Home'. During term time there are about 160 students, between the ages of 5 and 20, living together here and they attend two schools.

The younger ones go to the *Nisheman* Primary School — *Nisheman* means nest — where they study for the first five years of their school career. The older ones attend the Gange School where they can study up to the twelfth year of school.

The parents of these children are connected with a number of church denominations and groups. Some are Baptists while others belong to the Church of North India. Some are Methodists, some belong to Independent Missions, others to the Delhi Bible Church and some are Roman Catholics.

The children come from different regions. They come from cities, from villages, from the hills and the plains. The economic

background of their parents also varies considerably. Some are illiterate and among the poorest of the poor while others are well educated and well off.

The hostels are closely linked

There is also a boys' hostel, the Stephen Thomas Home for Boys, situated just a short walk away along the road. Many of the boys living there have sisters in the *Anand Bhawan*. These boys attend a number of schools in the area but some go to the Delhi United Christian School for Boys which is jointly the responsibility of the Baptist Union of North India and the Church of North India together with the Baptist Missionary Society and the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

Mrs H Williams has been matron of the Girls' Hostel from the time her husband died over 30 years ago. He was a much loved pastor evangelist in the Baraut area and because of her long association with the hostel she now has in her charge daughters and even grand-daughters of her former students. Mrs Williams is assisted by Mrs Memoni G Lal, one of Amy Carmichael's

family from Dohnavur in South India. She also has a great love and concern for the children and holds a responsible administrative job in the hostel office where she works. Through her work she comes in contact with the parents of students.

The close link between the Girls' and Boys' Hostels is indicated by the fact that Mr Anwar Fazl Masih, the Warden of the Boys' Hostel, is chairman of the Managing Committee of the Girls' Hostel. He himself was once a scholar in the hostel of which he now has charge, and under his care are about 75 boys.

Sharing the workload

A very warm welcome is extended to visitors at the Baptist Happy Home. The hostel is a single storey building built round a quadrangle and has nine dormitories, in each of which there are about 18 girls of different ages and classes all living together as a family. One of the senior girls is in charge of this group and each girl takes it in turn to look after their dormitory, taking turns for sweeping, dusting and carrying the beds out into the sun to air before going off to

school. They also share the work of keeping the dining rooms clean, of clearing up after study hours and various other jobs. They lead quite a busy life.

A typical dormitory could house a girl who has come at an earlier age than usual because of her very poor background. Her family live in a suburb of Delhi and attend a Baptist church but due to the extreme poverty of the family they decided to send their younger daughter, even before she was of school age, to join her older sister in the hostel. Her older sister would see that she was ready for school each day and that she had done her studying the previous evening.

In the village area of Baraut the Christian Primary School teacher lives with his family in a mud brick house along the unmade streets of the village. They and their neighbours are poor. When his daughter joined the dormitory she was very small and undernourished but now she has reached the Higher Secondary Department of the school and is one of the senior girls. Her brothers are at the Boys' Hostel.

Then there are two sisters from a broken home. Both parents are earning good money and provide extras for their daughters, but they try to visit at different times. Should their visits coincide one would sit in one part of the hostel and the other in a different part so that their girls could come to them by turn.

Three sisters come from a Roman Catholic background. Their mother, a well educated Jewess, was deserted by her husband and she had to support the children. This was a tremendous problem for her. Then one day

she received permission to go to Israel and so the girls went with her.

Chequered life

There is another hostel in Palwal known as the Salamatpur Hostel. An orphan girl studied there up to the eighth year of school. Her brother went to the Boys' Hostel in Delhi and then became a teacher. This girl was sponsored by Kindernothilfe, a German fostering organization. At one time the Hindu relations of the girl tried to arrange her marriage to a Hindu boy. But she was a Christian and terribly unhappy about this. Fortunately some of the church leaders were able to rescue her from this situation. She went on to take her teacher training in the Angus Teacher Training College in Patna, and later married a Christian. They both teach in a Delhi suburb and have a son and a daughter.

A widowed mother is glad of the hostel to take care of her daughter. The mother is employed by an Indian family working abroad so mother and daughter are seldom able to see one another. In the holidays the girl and her brother, from the Boys' Hostel, have to rely on relatives or friends for hospitality.

Another girl comes from a non-Christian background. Her mother died when she was quite young and it was some time before her father decided to marry again. He had only just become a Christian when he sent his daughter to the hostel because he, being a teacher, wanted to obtain the best education he could for his only child. She has reached the stage where she must select subjects to study for her chosen career. She is a keen Christian and has offered herself for teaching



Palm Sunday tableau

in the hostel Sunday school.

God given opportunities

What a mixed family there is in the hostel but what a wonderful opportunity the Church has in this situation. It has, among these boys and girls, the greatest opportunity for evangelism, Christian teaching and upbringing, Bible study and training in Christian service to be found almost anywhere.

The students learn to live with and accept one another. The 'haves' and the 'have-nots' learn to respect each other and talents latent among them. Some can paint, some can sing, some can keep order, some are good cooks, but others shudder at the thought of taking any responsibility at all. Each makes a contribution to the family life in the hostel.

There was a time when there was no chapel attached to the hostels. Then someone had a vision which was taken up and after 17 years' hard work and continuous effort at last, on 18 March 1961, the chapel was opened. Behind the platform there is a cross of light created by glass bricks in the wall. It is a continual reminder that the cross is central to our faith and that the meetings in the chapel are a God given opportunity.



'Welcome' dance by Gange High School girls

continued overleaf

One big happy family

continued from previous page

The family atmosphere of the hostel is the ideal setting for Bible study which was formerly given in the schools but now less frequently. A number of young people and old students volunteer to help with the Bible study programme which arranges a class to correspond with each class in the day schools.

What a joy it is when these students accept Christ and become Young Disciples. This group continues to grow and many are keen not just to know more about the faith for themselves alone, but to tell others.

Preparation classes are held for those who want to be baptized and when they have made their witness to the Lord they may

join the church at which their parents worship or the Civil Lines Baptist Church which is near the hostels and where Osmond John is the pastor.

The hostel Sunday school provides a training ground in Christian service. A group of senior girls are the teachers and they are helped by a regular preparation class. When the final class students leave there are always new volunteers who want to take up their work; indeed at times there is an overflow of offers to help.

Joining with the local church

The students join in the life of the Civil Lines Church and each Friday evening the pastor's wife gathers a group in the hostel chapel to train them in singing. From time to time this group sings a special song in the morning service.

The Christian festivals are also occasions on which the students can make their witness. They join in the local church festivities. On Easter Sunday morning there is the candlelight procession and on Palm Sunday

the procession with waving palm leaves. For several years there has been a united procession of witness through the streets of Delhi on Palm Sunday by most of the churches in the city. The hostel has presented tableaux in this procession. They are constructed on bullock carts and watched by many non-Christians as they wend their way through the capital. Last year they prepared a drama on the life of Amy Carmichael for World Sunday School Day and presented this on three different occasions.

Both within and outside the hostels there are many doors of opportunity open, yet these are very easy to miss. They look all right on paper, but there are strong forces working against the seizing of these opportunities. There are many falls by the wayside; many difficulties to face and many problems to solve. There have been many sorrows and failures, for the forces of evil are very strong. Nevertheless our God is great and can use the presence of evil to bring glory and honour to His Name and to glorify Christ in the midst. But we need and covet your prayers for the work in the hostels.



Ironing the washing



Sheila Finch



Parliament Street Free Church, or the church in the garden

At the hub of New Delhi

by Sheila Finch

Fifty years ago when New Delhi was being built, the foundation stones of two churches were laid within a mile of each other. One church, later to become the Cathedral Church of the Redemption, was Church of England; the other was a joint project of the Methodist and Baptist Missionary Societies. This was to be known as the Free Church, New Delhi. The name Free Church will be understood by those of British background but is many times misunderstood, and some think you do not have to pay anything to go inside!

Free for all

Free Church from its inception has been a united church, and through the years has been a spiritual home for many people from various church traditions. Notably, before the Mar Thoma Syrian Church and the Orthodox Syrian Churches had their own church buildings in Delhi, their people were members of the Free Church. Throughout, the traditions of the founding church have been followed, namely we practise both infant and believers' baptism and the church has both a font and a baptistry. Also the

holy communion is received at the rails one month and the next month is distributed in the seats. Now, since 1970, we have entered into a fuller union with the six uniting churches of the Church of North India.

Until 1970 the pastors of the church were provided by the Baptist and Methodist Missionary Society alternately. The names of some of the Baptist pastors who are lovingly remembered are Rev E G T Madge, Rev R Tucker and Rev G Grose. It was in 1971 that the first Indian took over as Presbyterian-in-charge. Now that we are part of the Diocese of Delhi, our presbyters are appointed by the Bishop.

Spiritual home for many

The church occupies a very central position in the city and is surrounded by the banking, business and commercial world. Parliament Street itself leads to the Parliament House, one kilometre away from the church, and just a few yards from the church lies the posh Delhi shopping centre of Connaught Place.

Being a central church with our main service conducted in English, our members come from practically every part of the city. The church provides a spiritual home for the many people who come from various states of India to work in the Government offices, private firms, hospitals, schools and colleges etc. Therefore, on any Sunday, the congregation is made up of people from practically every state of India, as well as people from overseas who happen to be passing through the city. This means, too, that various branches of the Church are also to be found within our church.

A membership of over 300 communicants with their families makes more than enough work for the presbyter and his assistant. For a year we were without a presbyter-in-charge as the previous presbyter, Arjun MacCune, was elected bishop and installed as Bishop of Chandigarh. Then in September last year Rev Salim Sharif took charge as Presbyter. He is a young man with a large vision and we pray that under his leadership we will indeed 'expect great things from God; attempt great things for God'.

Whenever a Christian is asked by God to do something for Him, he has already been more than adequately prepared for the task, even though he may not be aware of it. From the time that Iris and I became cognizant of the fact that God wanted us in Nepal, we were convinced that our children, Gareth and Bethan, would remain in England, and that each of us would be prepared for periods of separation.

Separation of children from their parents for educational reasons has been normal in the experience of our family. Most of my teaching has been in Boarding Special Education, and the early years of Gareth and Bethan were spent in a house in the grounds of such a school in Shropshire. Thus, Gareth and Bethan have had much to do with children who have been separated from their parents for one reason or another, usually unpleasant, and so separation as a concept is not alien to them.

However, that we should be separated for long periods is unusual and has necessitated drawing upon resources of which we were unaware until our separation became a fact rather than something to be discussed.

Hurtful comments were made

When we as a family came to terms with the need for separation, we shared with others what God was doing in our lives and were amazed at the response. We were unaware that a decision to separate a family, even for the most noble of reasons, could have such an effect upon people. We experienced upset, opposition, dislike and anger from Christian folk as well as non-Christian:

- 'God would never separate families.'
- 'If that is what your God does, I want none of Him.'
- 'You are abandoning your children to go off and enjoy yourselves.'
- 'You are denying your responsibilities as parents.'
- 'What a time to leave your children! They are teenagers and need you now more than ever. Look at the trouble teenagers are getting into nowadays!'
- 'I could never leave my children.'
- 'You can't love your children!'
- 'You disgust me.'
- 'Call yourself a Christian?'

This past year has been quite a painful and a stressful time for all of us. I say 'all' because most of the cutting comments have been made within hearing distance of Gareth and Bethan! If any harmful effects of separation were to arise it is highly likely



Gareth, Iris, Bethan and Allan Davies

that they would be caused by the comments of those who could not bear to be separated from their children even for the sake of Jesus and the gospel. I should comment at this stage that both Gareth and Bethan are baptized believers, and know something of witnessing to Jesus as Saviour and Lord – even here God has gone before us and prepared the way!

Positive outweighs negative – in this case

But for the fact that God has confirmed every step along the way, and through the understanding of brothers and sisters who have the vision of the kingdom in their hearts, we could so easily have decided against answering the call to each of us; Iris and I to Nepal, Gareth to Eltham College and Bethan to Walthamstow Hall.

Often have we wondered how many would-be missionaries have been put off and had their spirits quenched because of the 'well-meaning' comments of their families, friends and even brothers and sisters in Christ! What about

those who wanted to serve God overseas but were dissuaded and now never even fellowship with God's people? What will the 'well-wishers' answer when God asks them why? Do they not know that every word is to be accounted for?

Both Gareth and Bethan, we have been assured, are well settled into their schools and appear to be content, for which we thank God. What they really believe in their heart of hearts may never be expressed, especially when most of their schoolmates visit their parents every holiday while they visit their guardians instead. They may well prefer to visit their guardians for any number of reasons, but guardians can never be their own parents, no matter how loving and caring they may be – and Barbie and Brian are very loving and very caring!

God's organization is best

God's hand was in the selection of guardians as well as in everything else. Both Iris's parents and mine are not in the best of



EACH RECEIVES THE CALL

by Allan Davies, written just before he and Iris left for Nepal in January

health. They all live in South Wales and know the children very little, as we have always lived considerable distances from them. Barbie and Brian are in their thirties, fit, and live 15 minutes from Eltham and 30 minutes from Walthamstow Hall. We did not request that they act as guardians; they asked to be considered first if the need arose, and this was some weeks before we offered to the Society. When God is in control His organization can only be the best! To accommodate Gareth and Bethan, Barbie and Brian are seriously considering converting their loft so that the children can each have a room, just as they had at home. We are relying on the Lord to provide all that is needful!

Throughout 1978 we read and re-read Mark 10:29, 30:

'And Jesus answered and said, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall

receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life."'

The promise is not only to those who leave the UK to go to distant lands; it is to those who are separated but stay at home to attend school, or for any other reason.

We have been encouraged by the promise and by experiencing its fulfilment already, in the homes provided for us, by the support and giving of our church fellowship corporately and individually, and by the assurances of the schools that Gareth and Bethan would receive the very best opportunities possible.

Questions to be faced

Encouragement has been given by a number of long-serving missionaries who themselves have experienced long periods of separation from their children: their families are much closer than those who have never been separated. I cannot help wondering if their

closeness is a belated attempt to compensate for the childhood separation. Is such closeness an indication of a lack of maturity? Can the Society justify the prolonged separation of children from their parents for periods in excess of one year? Do Christians who support the Society by their giving expect missionaries to suffer so that others may marvel at their sacrificial giving? These are questions that must be faced by all and particularly by those who decide how Society funds should be spent. The missionary who is no longer on the field and who was himself perhaps separated from his parents for long periods as a child and from his own children later, may well be of the opinion that as he suffered so must the missionaries and their children today. Medical, agricultural and other equipment demands are more important than the well-being of personnel, may be the criteria upon which decisions are made, especially when costs escalate and giving to the Society seems to be a problem to so many.

God provides through His people

I am amazed at the comments made about missionaries on deputation: 'They wear clothes that are way out of fashion and present themselves as poverty stricken' — I wonder why! Christian comment and yet they do not give. It seems that some gain pleasure in the 'sacrifice' of others: 'Isn't it wonderful? Giving up such a good job to become poor! I could never do that!'

The above does not purport to be a gripe, or to give an impression that I am on an ego-trip or that I am being judgemental. The comments are genuine, I have heard them being made. The opinions are those which need to be voiced, faced and not ignored. The Society cares remarkably well for its workers, within the resources provided by God's people, and we are so very grateful for our experiences so far. The question arises yet again — with further resources what more could be done?

Our hopes for Gareth and Bethan, and for the children of all our missionaries, are that God will continue to make provision for them and will meet all their needs, including the softening of the effects of separation. We pray that all who are called to be separated for Jesus and the gospel may cling to the promise of Mark 10:29, 30 and claim it for themselves. May it be claimed by all who are called but are tempted to 'look back' by those used by the adversary.

The victory is Christ's alone; His promises are honest and true for He is the Truth.



Almost there

Reaching Their Full Potential

by a member of staff
Walthamstow Hall

Walthamstow Hall has certainly grown since it was founded in Walthamstow, then a village near London, in 1838, to provide schooling and a home for five daughters of missionaries serving overseas. Now, with over 400 pupils altogether, more than 100 of them boarders, the school has probably reached its optimum size; in other ways, however, growth and change continue. This year the school has changed its status owing to the government decision to end the Direct Grant System, and has chosen to become fully Independent. Governors and staff felt that this was the only way to keep faith with those who founded the school and laid down that it should provide a permanent base and a thoroughly good, all-round education for the daughters of missionaries. Though day-girls now outnumber boarders this aim is still central, and indeed, extended, so that where the school's activities multiply and prosper they do so, we believe, by the light of Christian understanding, faith and caring love. A few glimpses of the last school year may give some idea of how this works out in practice.

Looking back, I see first the cover design on a programme for school assembly which illustrated the subject 'Communication' in a

striking and eloquent way. The middle-school girl who made the programme for her form's assembly is a boarder who has herself found communication difficult, but who is beginning to gain confidence and a sense of her own identity, partly through using her artistic gifts and having them appreciated by those around her.

Determined not to give up

I remember studying, in August, the usual lists of GCE results at Ordinary and Advanced Level, with the usual mixture of pride and pleasure, tinged with some disappointment, and finding that one comparatively modest record stood out from all the rest. This list of grades was not merely an achievement, but a triumph for someone who, for five years, had faced repeated failures in examinations but never gave up or once slackened her costly effort.

I remember listening, late one July evening, to a small group of boarders who had taken their 'O' Levels in June, and just returned from a post-examination week on an Adventure Holiday Course at Woodside Centre, Bideford in the care of the head of the Physical Education Department. Two come from missionary families and one is from Hong Kong and, though all three were to leave for their holidays the next day, they all talked non-stop until long after 'lights out' of the joy and sense of achievement they had found in the physical challenges of capsizing and righting canoes, sand-yachting and rock-climbing.

I clearly recall another day in the summer term when I met an eleven-year old, along with her family, her guardians and their baby, and introduced them all to the school she was soon to join. In September I saw her again as a member of the new Junior House and like the rest of her year, a bit of a pioneer. They all found that the room which was designed to join up and unite two next-door houses owned by the school into one Junior House was still only a thought in the mind of the planners. Where it should have been, the girls saw a large, deep hole, and a pile of rubble which actually made it much more difficult than usual to get from one house to the other!

Double loss

These two meetings with one new boarder illustrate many of the issues involved in caring for the children of missionaries. When parents take up work overseas, a child at one stroke loses the security both of a loving family and of a permanent home. The guardians and school together must fill the

gap, not only in legal and material terms, but in the child's emotional life, by providing a desperately-needed sense of security and permanence, a background of love and concern, and they must be ready to do so throughout childhood and adolescence.

Neither child nor parents can survive this experience without pain: the child feels bereft, deprived of parents' love and interest, very often homesick too, for Hong Kong, an Indian village, or an English town. The parents, while recognizing that this is part of the sacrifice involved in a call to missionary work, often have a deep sense of loss, because they cannot share the day to day details of a child's growing-up; they feel out of touch and anxious; they fret and worry over problems often actually trivial, which they are too far away to solve. Over such problems guardians and school can help; for example, by sharing between them the burden of travel arrangements and holiday storage of property, and above all by keeping in close touch both with the parents and with each other.

Looking to the outside world

In various ways, Walthamstow Hall tries to be a community which cares for all its members, but it is a poor kind of caring which is labelled 'For members only'. So it is pleasant to remember a Sunday afternoon in autumn when a coach-load of mentally handicapped men and women suddenly appeared in the boarding school looking expectant and hopeful. Plans made by the local schools' Voluntary Service Unit to entertain them elsewhere had collapsed and some of our girls in the Unit had resourcefully



Practice makes perfect

brought them back to school to avoid disappointing them. Miraculously it seemed, after a few chaotic moments, they swiftly arranged impromptu games and served light refreshments to the visitors in one of the dining rooms. Meanwhile, and this time according to plan, another team was running an afternoon swimming session for boys and girls from a home for disturbed children.

Again, on the last Sunday of the autumn term in its Christmas celebrations, the school looked towards the outside world. On this occasion, the girls of the boarding school were hostesses to friends from the churches of Sevenoaks, friends in a special sense, who either as families or as individuals, have entertained them in twos or threes in their homes and helped them feel at home in the local churches. They shared a buffet tea with mince pies and Christmas cake after taking part in a Christmas service planned by the Seniors. This included a short play telling the old legend of the Fourth Wise Man. As he died, having failed after long searching to

find Christ on earth, the Fourth Wise Man heard the voice of Christ saying: 'I am the King of the Jews whom you have been searching for, and though you have not known it, you have found me. I was in every single person you helped along your way: for I was hungry and you gave me food; was thirsty and you gave me drink . . .'

Tell them the 'old, old story'

The meaning of these words is still fresh in my mind, along with the jaunty, insistent beat of the opening lines of a modern carol we learnt:

'Have you heard the story they're telling
'bout Bethlehem?
Have you heard the story of the Jesus Child?'

It is this story, the story of Jesus Christ, the Good Tidings of Great Joy, which brought Walthamstow Hall into being in 1838 and still sustains it, uniting all its activities, miscellaneous, fragmented, trivial, even common-place as they often seem, when one is in the thick of them. Most of all, it is this story, the 'old, old story' of the hymn, which Walthamstow Hall tries to convey to the young people of today, as they travel the road from childhood to maturity. In lessons and school-work, in music and art, in acting and dancing and games, in singing and praying, through love, caring and friendship, we try to say: 'Listen to the story of the Jesus Child'. So our faith in the good news unites us with all who go to serve Jesus Christ overseas, and with those who serve him just as faithfully and generously through the interest, prayers and financial gifts which they offer to missionaries and their children.



Juniors tasting the cooking



Careers mistress in consultation with student



by Alan Easter*

There was one frightening natural calamity which so impressed itself on the mind of the prophet Amos that he felt obliged to date the most important event in his life from it. 'Two years before the earthquake' he writes 'God revealed to me all things about Israel.'

The night of the tidal wave

Equally it was a great natural calamity from which we must date the highly commendable New Life Centre schemes which are to be found in India today. One night in October 1971, just after midnight, a giant 16 foot high tidal wave rolled inland from the Bay of Bengal and devastated over 100 miles of the coastal plain of Orissa. In the previous 12 hours the area had been pounded and torn by a furious cyclone and the havoc it caused has never been fully assessed, though it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of houses, at least 10,000 people, thousands of cattle and the annual rice crop was swept away.

Following such devastation a great surge of relief was sent to the area. Food for work schemes were inaugurated by which over 600 houses and 16 schools were built and

12 wells together with several miles of dykes were constructed — the dykes to act as flood barriers. At this period over 25,000 children were given one meal a day at food centres and women in special need were given help.

Enough was not enough

Six months after the cyclone and tidal wave occurred most of the Relief Agencies had withdrawn their workers, but another eight months would pass before the next harvest could be gathered in. The prospect, therefore, for many a child was pretty grim.

At this point, BMS missionary Lily Quy, had the vision of finding a house in which she could gather some fifty of these children and keep them alive until the next harvest. The search began for suitable premises and one day she discovered a large, empty, mud and thatch house standing amidst the rice fields. She shared her idea with Bishop Mohanty who encouraged her to go further. The Executive Committee of the Church of North India, Cuttack Diocese also gave its blessing to the venture and work was put in hand to make the house ready for its occupants. Additions had to be built. A dormitory, a school cum dining room, a kitchen, a staffroom, a store room and a

small room for Miss Quy, all constructed of mud, bamboo and thatch.

The vision expanded

But by the time all this work had been completed and the official opening had taken place on 9 August 1972, the idea had grown into something far more ambitious and worthwhile than the original thought of staving off the death of a few children until the harvest could be gathered in. Why not keep the children for at least two years so as to restore them to complete health, the while providing them with a basic education and equipping them with a skill in some village craft so that when they returned to their village they would be assured of the ability to earn a living?

'We would call it a New Life Centre and we would strive to give these children a life of new dignity and beauty, a life of new purpose and usefulness in which they could grow in favour with God and man.'

Setbacks and advances

In the September another cyclone hit the area and partially washed away one of the new buildings but none of the children was harmed. By Christmas the number of children

had risen to 60. Then at the beginning of 1974 a high Government Official made a visit to the Centre and was greatly impressed with what he saw, especially with the skills which the children had acquired and which they demonstrated to him. But he strongly disapproved of the fact that one room had to serve as dormitory, dining room and classroom. 'You must build a classroom' he insisted. But how could this be done when the whole scheme was housed in borrowed premises and where there was just no room to expand? Turning to the local Government Officials who accompanied him, the visitor said, 'Find two acres of suitable land and give them to Miss Quy so that she can build a school.'

1973 brought more cyclones and floods and, as though to ring the changes, a severe drought was experienced in 1974 which occasioned as much distress in the area as had the storms.

In 1975 it was possible to move to the new site which was about one mile away and by this time the number of children being cared for by the project had risen to nearly 100. Most of the children were being helped by a West German evangelical organization and some were supported by the 'Save the Children Fund'.

A house built on rock

It was determined that the new site would be made as safe as possible so the buildings were erected on a high plinth to keep them dry in times of flooding. The foundations were made firm on laterite stones which had

to be transported by barge on a four day journey from Cuttack. The roofs were made of reinforced concrete to withstand cyclonic winds.

Both boys and girls are received at the New Life Centre. They are children from the surrounding villages who otherwise would have little opportunity in life. They come, now, for a three year period during which time they live and grow in a Christian atmosphere. Just as the buildings are built on a firm foundation so the life of the Centre is established on the rock of Christ. In the mornings they receive their basic education – what we would term the three R's while in the afternoons they are trained in a village craft. The girls may learn embroidery, spinning, weaving or knitting and they also share with the cooking of the centre. The boys may be taught cycle repairing, tailoring or carpentry.

Extending the diet

Attached to the Centre is a paddy field in which the children are taught to cultivate and harvest rice and nearby is a vegetable patch in which they can learn to grow vegetables which will augment their diet. As with many Indian communities the Centre has a large 'tank' or pool in which the children bathe themselves, wash their clothes and also are taught to cultivate fish, a much sought after addition to the food supply.

There is, however, a practical problem which as yet has not been solved. Drinking water for this community has to be carried from a

distance. A tube well on site was planned and started, but at a depth of 600 feet the boring tool struck hard rock and the only water discovered down to that depth has been bitter. Experts estimate that the well will need to reach a depth of 800 feet before a satisfactory supply of water will be found. So far the boring tool has had to be turned by hand because no power was available and so the hard rock proved a real obstacle. Fortunately electricity has now been brought to the site and it was my privilege officially to switch it on, so perhaps now, with this source of energy, new efforts can be made to pierce the rock.

Growth is assured

So worthwhile has this project, to help disadvantaged children, proved and so encouraging have been the results that the Cuttack Diocese is creating another in the Baliguda district of the Kond Hills. It is to be opened on the site where the Revd Bruce and Mrs Henry lived and worked for so many years and will bring a new hope and a new dignity to a number of children in that area. Further, there is little doubt that this method of giving children a hope for the future and of making clear to them the promise of eternity in Christ, will be extended to other places.

Six months after the cyclone an idea was born which, under the guidance and blessing of God, has led to security for the children who have benefited from it and to the salvation of not a few of them.

*Notes were supplied by Lily Quy



The tank for washing and fish breeding and the paddy field at the Centre

a replica of family life

by Christopher Porteous, Headmaster of Eltham College

One day in the 1960's a missionary family gathered outside the chapel at Eltham College. There were six boys, aged eight upwards: their parents were about to return to service overseas: one by one the boys smiled a brave, trembling good-bye: their mother could not, dared not, express her feelings, and with a brisk, poignant farewell, walked away: and the six brothers mingled again with other boys and returned to their boarding houses, expecting to see their parents again 'next year, or the year after?'

About the same time a boy of 18, soon to

leave school and enter university, told me that his missionary father had returned home and wanted to see him. That was understandable, for almost five years had passed since father and son had been together. They met again in the privacy of my house; but such was the strain of the long-awaited moment that neither could do more than shake hands formally and ask of each other, 'How are you?'

The school with the extra dimension

These two incidents, imprinted on the memory, indicate in extreme form the extent of responsibility undertaken by the staff of Eltham College (and, in the case of daughters, by Walthamstow Hall, Sevenoaks) as a school for the children of missionaries, linked through its governing body with the Baptist Missionary Society and the Council for World Mission.

Founded in 1842 by a Congregational Committee, soon joined by Baptists ('... it was unanimously resolved that considering the extreme difficulty to which our missionary brethren are subject in obtaining a suitable education for their children in the countries where they reside and the serious practical inconveniences connected with placing them at Boarding Schools in England, it appears to this meeting most desirable that an Institution should be formed for the accomplishment of that object...') Eltham College has provided education and the security of a caring community for sons of missionaries, as an obligation and a priority, despite its growth as a thriving day school. For housemasters, particularly, and their wives, this has meant an extra dimension to their work. 'How shall we help young John, from the South Seas, to learn to wear shoes? How can we encourage Peter from Zaire to do his very best when he thinks other boys are so much cleverer? What must we do for Arthur, who hasn't the least idea of his tables? How is James taking the separation? Is Alan getting regular letters, and is he writing home every week? What will Robert's parents think of his report this term? How can we help them not to worry unduly, and praise him for his efforts? What do we do to make sure that all the opportunities of school life — even the ones that cost extra — are open to him?'

Staff must be gifted for the task

In their separation from their children, missionaries have done much to help us at Eltham College by their own faith and trust. But they have naturally also needed the assurance that their sons were among Christian people who supported their

enterprise and vocation. This need has always been borne in mind when staff have been appointed to teaching, pastoral or domestic posts; and recruitment of men and women with the right combination of virtues for this special task has been of great importance. One of my greatest delights has been the pride taken by members of the teaching staff in the happy development and eventual achievements of so many sons of missionaries, and their recognition that it is our particular responsibility for these boys which has given the school its character and Christian purpose.

Fortunately, long family separations are now very rare, and the children at school can spend time with their parents either overseas or in this country usually at intervals of not longer than a year. Though a great blessing and improvement, this still means that missionaries' children may not have the same regular alternation of family and school life as others whose parents work overseas in industry, commerce, or the Forces. For this reason, the housemasters at Eltham College have continued to exercise their special duty of care, remembering that, though they must encourage the irreplaceable father-son relationship, they also often need to decide and advise in practical matters as a father would; and this calls for insight and judgment, as they are also teachers and responsible for discipline in the boarding community.

School becomes more and more like home
For several reasons over which a school has no control, fewer boys have reached us from the mission fields in recent years, and almost none under the age of eleven. The latter fact may not be a matter of concern, since there are now more primary schools within reach of missionary homes. But these trends have led us at Eltham College to a new concept of our boarding responsibility, which we believe will be attractive and assuring to missionary parents from this year onwards. We are setting aside a separate part of the school, and modernizing it to provide much more home-like accommodation. Boys will no longer sleep in dormitories, but in bedrooms; each boy will have his own place for his possessions, clothes and work; he will be a member of an extended family of about 20 or 25 people, living together and sharing his out-of-school life, in pleasant surroundings, with the family in charge (a senior master and his wife); a mini-bus will provide the equivalent of a family car for outings and excursions; the whole family will be linked with a local church community, as well as having its own family services.



Exploring school magazines. L to R The headmaster, Mr C Porteous; standing next to him, John Doonan; seated centre, Mark Pitkethly; sitting next to him, Gareth Davies; standing right, Stephen Pitkethly and the Rev Frank Wells

Meals will be prepared, as a family undertaking, by the master's wife and her helpers; and the boys will be expected to share in the normal household tasks. Into this group, a boy may come from a missionary home normally at the age of 11, or 13, or 16, depending on his need and previous school experience; and if at any time a family is accepted for missionary service and needs the assurance of continuing education and care for the children, places at Eltham College or Walthamstow Hall can usually be made available.

Delighting in the boys' achievements

As I look back on nearly 20 years' service as Headmaster, the personal achievements of so many sons of missionaries stand out among many delights and rewards. It is a personal achievement, for example, when a boy has come first to the school as a painfully shy and diffident youngster, for him to learn that despite his absence from home he

can gradually stand up confident, alert and competent among his fellows; when he later goes beyond the set work and takes the initiative in planning expeditions and useful additional projects; when he accepts a measure of responsibility for others, or for some aspect of school duty; when, though not necessarily a first-flight intellect at school, he wins his university place; and when after that he takes his place in one of the great professions of service to mankind. Time and again, these have been the achievements of sons of missionaries at Eltham College. Then there have been for a schoolmaster the delights that have surprised — the boy who could never have qualified for a 'grammar school place', who manfully pulled himself up through the school and was not deterred because at 18 he still had not quite qualified for a university, but who five years later met me as a postgraduate-research student at a Cambridge College, working for his PhD.

For missionary parents, a decision about their children's education can never be altogether easy; but Eltham College is one school ready to help when needed. The pattern of education in England is such that almost always an opportunity of higher education depends on a settled, successful period of some years in a good secondary school offering a wide range of academic courses up to Advanced level. At Eltham College (until recently a Direct Grant School with all the guarantees which that status implied), independence from state or local authority control has enabled us to go on providing a high level of academic opportunity for all pupils, combined with the necessary personal commitment of the staff to the special needs of those for whom we were founded; and our financial arrangements are such that no missionary parent need ever be deterred on grounds of cost from placing his son in this school, or his daughter at Walthamstow Hall.

ANNUAL BAPTIST ASSEMBLY 1979

PROGRAMME OF BMS MEETINGS

Monday, 23 April

11.00 a.m. INTRODUCTORY PRAYER MEETING
Bloomsbury Chapel
Conducted by:
Dr Barbara Boal

Tuesday, 24 April

1.30 p.m. WOMEN'S ANNUAL MEETING
Westminster Chapel
Speaker: Mrs Doris Doonan, Brazil
(Luncheon at 12.30 p.m. in the Junior Hall
Tickets 80p)

2.45 p.m. ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING
Westminster Chapel

4.15 p.m. MEDICAL TEA AND MEETING
Westminster Chapel
(Tickets 35p)
Speakers: Dr Adrian Hopkins, Zaire
Miss Jean Westlake, Bangladesh

Wednesday, 25 April

11.00 a.m. ANNUAL MISSIONARY SERVICE
Westminster Chapel
Preacher: Rev Canon S Barrington-Ward

4.30 p.m. MEETING OF ELECTED MEMBERS
OF THE COMMITTEE
Westminster Chapel
(Preceded by tea at 4.00 p.m.)

6.30 p.m. ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING
Westminster Chapel
Chairman: Rev S F Thomas, MBE
Speakers: Miss Vivienne Green, Zaire
Rev David Doonan, Brazil

Valediction of missionaries for overseas

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