

Missionary

HERALD

The magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society

Baptist Theological Seminary Library
8803 Rüschlikon, Switzerland



MAY 1979
Price 10p



School children parading in Kisangani

Message from the Chairman

Greetings to you all in the name of Jesus. That I should be writing as Chairman of the BMS amazes me for I am conscious of many inadequacies. I find comfort in the fact that you will keep faith and support with prayer all those who have been called to serve with the Society.

We are members one of another, part of the body of Christ in the world. Each has a gift to be used and all are called to tread that 'still more excellent way' — the way of love that cares. Of this gift Paul wrote, 'Love bears all things and believes all things' which means that because we love we are to trust, and it is this word that I want to share with you. We are to trust God and to trust each other. Trust is a commodity in short supply in these days. Employers and workers find it hard to trust each other, many people are suspicious of the establishment, nations continue to build fences against each other, while in the Church from time to time are heard whispers of distrust.

A network of trust

Certainly in our task of mission overseas we must learn a deeper measure of trust. There are difficulties on every hand, and doubts and fears often assail us. We must therefore remain firmly entrenched in our certainty of God and in our trust in each other, if we are not to falter. Those who serve overseas must trust those who administer affairs at home. Communications are sometimes difficult and lack of news leads to misunderstanding, but each must trust the other because we have a common aim. The churches, too, must trust those who have been called to leadership, while we who meet in London will trust our



Stanley Thomas

fellow Christians overseas and the national churches that we serve. Ours is truly a faith mission. Many are the eager and well equipped men and women offering for service and the Lord has never failed to supply our needs. We will take the advice of the Psalmist and trust in the Lord, committing all our way to Him.

The year that lies ahead will be a difficult one but let us go forward with an unshakeable trust in God and in each other, for we are many members with 'varieties of service but the same Lord'. That He may grant us a sense of His abiding peace will be my prayer for us all.

THE
MAGAZINE
OF

THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY
93/97 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA
Tel: 01-935 1482

Secretaries
Rev A S Clement
Rev H F Drake, OBE

Editor
Rev A E Easter

Enquiries about service to:
Rev (Mrs) A W Thomas

Films, slide sets, posters, maps, literature
are available depicting our work

Departments concerned with
Young People's, Women's, and Medical
support work are always available
to offer help and advice

We share in the work of the Church in:

Angola
Bangladesh
Brazil
Hong Kong
India
Jamaica
Nepal
Sri Lanka
Tanzania
Trinidad
Zaire

Printed by
Stanley L Hunt (Printers) Ltd
Rushden, Northamptonshire

COMMENT

It is unlikely that there are many who have failed, at one time or another, to indulge in grumbling about our postal services and to bemoan the fact that a letter, posted with a first class stamp, had taken two days instead of one to reach its destination.

We were relieved when inflation in this country fell to single figures and we view with considerable apprehension the possibility of it starting to climb again.

Shortages, when they are occasioned by strikes or abnormal weather annoy and frustrate us and we tend to feel very sorry for ourselves. Then it is, that we should be not a little surprised to hear that there are hundreds of thousands in Zaire who would regard us as being fortunate beyond their wildest dream if they could know of our circumstances.

It may never arrive

They cannot be sure the letter they post will ever arrive. It will certainly take weeks, even months to be delivered. If there is any suggestion it includes something of worth, it is more than likely it will be opened and the contents removed.

Inflation has been variously estimated as being between 65% and 100%. Last year there was a devaluation of the zaire, the unit of currency, and a further 50% devaluation is threatened. These moves in currency values have meant astronomic rises in prices. Petrol, in the Upper River Region, if it can be obtained is costing the equivalent of £9 per gallon.

Nothing seems sure

Air Zaire seems to be grounded for more time than it flies and ferries may or may not operate across the river due to an acute shortage of fuel.

Drugs — even the simplest like aspirin — are unobtainable in the country and if consignments are brought in from Europe they are subject to excessive pilfering, even from bonded warehouses. A consignment valued at £3,000 when shipped from England can be reduced to one of £1,000 by the time it reaches a hospital, due to the stealing which takes place. But even with such loss it is cheaper to ship drugs from Europe than to buy them in Zaire.

This shortage occurs at a time when there is an urgent need for more, not less, medical care as so many are suffering the effects of malnutrition and children are dying from curable diseases because their emaciated bodies lack resistance to germs and viruses.

All are affected

It is not only the people of Zaire who are affected by this extremely difficult situation. It affects our missionary personnel as well. Many, working in the Middle and Upper River regions, are experiencing problems in getting their allowances transferred by the banks from Kinshasa, the capital, to their local branch.

With fuel difficult to obtain and so costly when it is located great care has to be exercised in the use of vehicles and frustration occurs when it is not possible, for this reason, to proceed with pastoral and health



Andrew and Anne North shipping drugs to Pimu

visitation to the villages.

Together with the Zairian people the missionaries suffer the high prices of food and are not immune to its scarcity. Corruption is on the increase and it requires a tremendous effort to obtain public services, such as certification and registration, without resorting to bribes. There is also the temptation to exchange money on the blackmarket where more favourable rates pertain.

Badly hurt, but not destroyed

Yet, in face of such adverse and frightening difficulties the Church of Jesus Christ maintains good heart and is encouraged by the real hunger for truth shown by the people of that country. There are many reports of conversion and baptisms and of courageous witness by Christians making a stand against corruptive practices.

In the March prayer tape of the Society Winnie Hadden recounted the thrilling story of work among a primitive tribe across the river from Yakusu. These people had resisted the gospel until quite recently. It was even considered dangerous to go among them. But students from the Yakusu Bible College persisted in an effort to evangelize them and they report a tremendous breakthrough. Hundreds of this tribe have been brought to the Lord and baptized into His Church.

In the face of such unhelpful conditions let us praise God for what the Christians in Zaire are attempting and achieving by His grace and let them be constantly in our prayers.

What a lot to learn!

by Pat Walton

I had heard so much about Zaire one way and another that now, as I sat fastening my safety belt in the jumbo jet, I wondered what sights would greet us as we landed at Kinshasa and stepped from the plane.

We had stopped off in Lagos, Nigeria, for a few hours to refuel and I was wondering whether Zaire would look the same, whether in fact the African scene changed much from country to country. So, as we flew into Ndjili airport I scanned the horizon with excited curiosity. The land around was very flat with palm trees dotted about here and there. The grass was brown and dry, which was not surprising because it was the dry season in this part of Zaire and there was lots of dust to prove it. I was surprised to

discover that the airport was so far out of Kinshasa, the capital. It took us about 40 minutes to drive into the city. A second source of amazement to me was the smallness of the airport compared with Heathrow, London, which I had left but a few hours earlier. A still more pointed difference, which afforded a bit of a shock, was to see armed soldiers here and there.

Not so hot after all

I had expected, as I stepped from the plane, to be overwhelmed by the tropical heat, but in fact it did not seem too hot at all, rather pleasantly comfortable. I was not alone in experiencing this confounding of my imagination. There were several other 'brand new' BMS missionaries with me. Mr and Mrs

Ian Coster and their two sons, Wilma Aitchison and Olive Satterly, together with a colleague from the Regions Beyond Missionary Union, Cathy Ingram. Each of us had got our own preconceived ideas as to what it would be like, few of which turned out to be correct. Fortunately, we had Pete Riches with us, an old hand, who has been in Zaire for eleven years. He explained to us the routine of passport and immigration control and with this help we were soon through these formalities without any bother.

A lesson in pushing

As we left the arrival building it was great to be greeted by Phyl Gilbert, Owen Clark and Steve Mantle, some of our BMS staff in Kinshasa. We had to wait a little while for our suitcases to arrive and soon learnt that queuing must be a British institution. It would appear to be completely unknown to Zairians, because there was such a mad scramble of people looking for cases, and I got my first lesson in pushing and shoving so as not to miss my turn. Unfortunately this is an exercise we have to carry out in shops and banks as well, where a queue would make things so much easier and more pleasant. But to go back to the airport. We eventually gathered all our cases, loaded them and ourselves into the vehicles and set off for Kinshasa.

During my stay in Belgium I had come to the conclusion that the people of that country were not the best drivers in the world, but Zaire has modified my views. Many of the drivers here appear to believe that they are the only ones on the road, or the only ones entitled to be there.

What a crush

The road from the airport into the city is a busy one and at midday as we traversed it, it is at its busiest. There were traffic police everywhere trying to bring order out of chaos. The sides of the road were as congested as the vehicle lanes. They were thronged with people all looking very busy. The long skirts and sleeveless tops worn by most of





'My first lesson in pushing and shoving'

the women were vividly colourful. There were patterned materials as well as plain ones but every colour of the rainbow could be observed. Very few women were without what appeared to be quite a heavy load on their heads and a baby strapped on their backs. I am sure I shall never appreciate how they manage to do this.

The mission compound in Kinshasa is large and quite close to the southern bank of the river Zaire and it was refreshing to arrive there having survived the hazards of the road. We took lunch and then had a good sleep. In the evening we were invited to a welcome tea prepared for us newcomers. How strange it seemed to sit with the lights on so early — every day in Zaire darkness comes about six o'clock — and yet to be wearing summer dresses.

Persistent insects

During this, our first stay in Kinshasa, I shared a room with Wilma Aitchison. We stayed in the children's hostel and were just settling down for the night when there was a loud buzzing in my ear — mosquitoes. We had applied insect repellent cream to our arms and face and thought we would be all right. But how persistent are these insects in their search for someone to bite! So there was nothing for it but to cover up our heads with our sheets and try to sleep that way.

Mosquitoes, of course, are not the only problem. Ants and cockroaches also have their designs on human living. These latter

two appear everywhere there is food, especially in the kitchen. The favourite-gathering place of the ants is undoubtedly the sink and, no matter how many are washed away with boiling water, twice as many seem to take their place. If food is prepared in the kitchen for a meal, and the cleaning of the work surface delayed until after the meal, it will by that time appear as a black mass of seething ants. That mass may even seem to be moving across the table because larger pieces of food are transported

by several ants beneath, carrying it away to some store.

More objectionable are cockroaches. It is true that these creatures are usually associated with the kitchen, but they can and do turn up in the most unlikely places. They quite frequently invade the wardrobes in the bedrooms. Then every night there is an orchestra of insects which sing, buzz or whistle through all the hours of darkness.

In spite of such invasions and noises we all had a good night's sleep that first night in Kinshasa and awoke ready to explore the town. The streets were dry and dusty, with the result that our feet got really dirty. This, we found, happened every time we went out.

The products of poverty

There are a lot of beggars in the town and whenever they see white people they approach and ask for money. A favourite spot for them to sit is outside the banks where they hope those drawing money will spare them some. Many of the beggars are cripples with serious handicaps and one, a young man, drags himself around on hands and knees obviously having suffered from poliomyelitis at some time.

The shops in the city are all very expensive and even the market is little cheaper, especially with imported goods. After our

continued overleaf



'How persistent are these insects'

WHAT A LOT TO LEARN!

continued from previous page



'The business of form filling'

sightseeing and shopping expedition we had to get down to the business of form filling. It is unbelievable the number of which have to be completed. Forms for long term visas; forms for temporary identity cards; forms to obtain government permission to practise nursing. Many, of course, had to be done in triplicate and by the time we had ended most of us were suffering from writer's cramp.

A certain heavy headiness

After a fortnight in Kinshasa we new missionaries, together with the Clark family, flew up to Lisala, en route for Upoto where we were to start learning Lingala in the language school. Upoto is in the equatorial rain forest area of Zaire and presented a great contrast from the very dry conditions of Kinshasa. At Upoto the grass was lush and long and everywhere there were many beautiful and colourful flowers and shrubs. The palm trees are taller and there are, in these parts, the most gorgeous butterflies. The climate, too, is different. It is much warmer and very humid and this tends to make one feel heavy headed.

Upoto is situated on the north bank of the river Zaire and the view across the river here is magnificent. But what Upoto gains in

beauty over Kinshasa it lacks in mod-cons. Electricity is only available for three hours each evening between 6 and 9 pm. After nine o'clock we had either to go to bed or try to continue reading or writing by candle light because we did not have our Tilley lamps with us. The running water was quite temperamental. Sometimes it spurted out but at other times there was just a trickle.

A public alarm clock

Each day began when we were roused from sleep by the pounding of the village drum at 6 am. It was beaten again to signal midday and also at 2 pm — a kind of public clock. Even from early morning the river would be crowded, often with many canoes bearing fishermen engaged in their ancient skills.

The people here were much more friendly than those we had met in the town, where most seemed to be very indifferent to others. It was at Upoto that I had my first experience of a Sunday worship service, African style. There was not one choir, there were several and each was given a spot in the service to sing, accompanied by drums. The Zairians are great singers and while in Kinshasa it had been our privilege to hear the celebrated Kitega choir singing in their own church.

This was a pleasure none of us will easily forget. The choirs which sang in the service at Upoto were not far behind them in the energy and joy they put into their singing. With so many taking part it is no uncommon thing for the service to last anything between two and four hours so, as I could not understand much of the language, it will be appreciated that, after struggling manfully to concentrate and pick out words I could recognize, I found my mind drifting off in all directions.

The language school proved to be most interesting, but in the three weeks we were there it was only possible to learn the mere rudiments of Lingala and it will be a long time before any of us new folk will become anywhere near fluent in the language.

At the end of language school those present went their several ways back to their respective stations. One thing will always stand out for me at Upoto. It is the magnificent sunsets over the river. Wilma and I were the last to leave. We flew back to Kinshasa and then went on to Kimpese in the Lower River Region. It was at the Kimpese hospital that we did our 'stage' — a period of orientation in African hospital work. We spent a day or two in each of the wards and departments.

A hospital, but so different

This was not only an interesting experience but it gave us an insight into the life and routine of an African hospital which is so different from a British one. When a patient is admitted to a hospital in Zaire quite a few of the relatives come also. They are responsible for preparing the patient's food and for providing much of the general nursing care. The nurses tend only to do the more technical procedures like giving injections and doing dressings.

This, as can be imagined, seemed so very strange to one like myself, used to attending to every need of the patient in the way of care. The hospital also seemed exceptionally noisy with its constant stream of relatives tramping backwards and forwards from their camp just outside the ward to the bedside. One of them would expect to sleep under the patient's bed at night.

Lingala is not the language spoken by the people of the Lower River Region. Their native language is Kikongo so at the church services, which at Kimpese tend to last two hours, half the service is conducted in Kikongo and the other half in French. The French half enabled me to understand much

more of what was going on. Here again the choirs sang really well and made a true contribution to worship.

Kimpese nestles at the foot of the Bangu hills and is pretty. Whilst we were there the dry season was near its end and so everywhere was drier and dustier even than Kinshasa. The dust thrown up by the traffic on the roads could be smelt in the air.

Thoughts may change

Zaire is a large country and is one of contrasts in climate and in languages. I am now at Yakusu in the Upper River Region where I have been appointed to work in the hospital. Talking with Ivy Riches, one of the senior missionaries, I discovered that in the area served by the hospital, an area nearly the size of England, there are at least eight different languages spoken. So Lingala which is used in this immediate vicinity will not take me very far. Sue Evans, with whom I share a room, knows Lingala very well and is now learning Swahili in order to communicate with more people. What a lot there seems for me to do and learn. Reflecting on what I have written about my first impressions of this fascinating country of Zaire I cannot help wondering, should I re-read my article in a few years time, which first impressions will I judge to be lasting?



The Annual Report of the BMS

'FULL GROWN IN THE LORD'

is now available, price 10p, from

Baptist Missionary Society,
93 Gloucester Place,
London W1H 4AA.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously or without address.
(20 January-12 February 1979)

General Work: Anon (FAE - Aberdeen): £10.00;
Anon (MLO): £5.00; Anon (February): £10.00;
Anon (Cymro): £10.00; Anon: £25.00.

India Relief: Anon: £5.00.

Medical Work: Anon: £2.00.

Legacies

Mr J E Blackwell	£	p
Lily Bryant	100.00	
Miss J Doak	1,000.00	
Mrs I M Holburn	1,000.00	
Mrs L Pavitt	50.00	

Miss A Rumbles	50.00
Mr F J B Smith	200.00
Mrs J A Trewin	17,429.70
Mrs M Tristram	371.16
Mr J Watson	8,000.00
W J White	3,333.57
Mrs A Wood	500.00

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrival

Miss E A Talbot on 10 February from Tansen, Nepal.

Departures

Rev R and Mrs Young and family on 26 January for Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

Miss M Lacey on 26 January for Chandraghona, Bangladesh.

Baptist Times

Your denominational newspaper
keeps you in touch with the
news of the churches in
Great Britain and overseas.
Be informed to CARE and PRAY.

Published weekly

by the Baptist Times, 4 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AB

Price 10p

'Knocked down but not knocked out!' J B Philips' vivid translation of St Paul's words to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 4:9) spring to mind whenever we think of the beginnings of the Protestant University at Kisangani in the Upper Zaire.

'Hot spot' to be 'third pole'

Before the close of the first academic session in August 1964, 'Simba' rebels had overrun the whole eastern half of the Congo Republic and had taken control of the city. Though none lost their lives during the rebel occupation, university personnel were among the group of hostages facing machine-gun fire in the city centre on the day when missionary doctor Paul Carson was killed. Two more rebellions, by Katangese soldiers in 1966 and by white mercenaries a year later, fostered thoughts in the minds of many that the capital city of the Upper Zaire was too much of a 'hot spot' for an institution of higher education. Plans were prepared to open up an alternative site for the young *Université Libre du Congo* and let the work at Kisangani die.

President Mobutu came to our rescue. His government insisted that Kisangani should become the 'third pole' of the Republic, making a triangle of universities with Kinshasa and Lubumbashi (then called Elizabethville) at the two other apices. They saw the Protestant University, with its medical faculty and teacher-training facilities, as an important factor in helping to repair the damage of the rebellion years.

To many of us overseas missionaries, such an educational venture as opening a university seemed premature and foolhardy. Very few of our mission stations had schools of secondary standard. Our Upper River *Ecole Grenfell* at Yalamba only reached secondary level in 1960 and by 1963 no one was ready for university entrance. But African colleagues in the Congo Protestant Council, where the university project was mooted, knew better than we did that Christian leaders were a vital need if the young Democratic Republic of Congo was to grow up. The chaotic conditions for which Congo became notorious in the early years of independence were a direct result of the lack of trained men and women in every sphere of public and private life. So if the beginnings of university teaching at ULC meant working at secondary level for some time, it was right so to do in order to prepare men and women for this important service.

Fusion into one

Our life as an Independent Christian



University did not last long. By 1970, students in all three university centres as well as at other institutions of higher education throughout the country were joining in the worldwide student revolts about which they heard on the radio and into which they were persuaded to enter by some staff members from overseas whose political allegiances inspired them to foment trouble of this kind. Government reaction was swift and severe. All higher educational institutions – the universities including ULC, the teacher-training colleges and the technical institutes – were fused into one *Université Nationale du Zaïre* (UNAZA). Expatriate missionaries were welcomed to remain as teachers but almost all administrative posts, including membership of boards of management, had to be filled by Zairian personnel.

Some folk felt that this loss of independence as a Christian centre for learning and leadership preparation would be detrimental to missionary witness. In the reallocation of faculties to the three campuses of the new University, we did indeed lose our medical faculty from Kisangani where a much loved missionary doctor had worked hard to help the city population as well as to start young Zairian students on their way to a medical career. And we lost our Faculty of Theology

which had already prepared dozens of men for Christian service as ministers, church administrators and RK teachers in the Church of Christ in Zaire. But few Baptists will expect government funds to train the ministry and some of us were perhaps a little relieved when this important school opened in Kinshasa as an independent centre for ministerial preparation.

Students show greater interest in Christ

Those of us who were able to continue to teach at the government-run campus of Kisangani witnessed a remarkable change in student attitude to evangelistic endeavour after nationalization, a change for the better indeed. While Christian teachers were part of 'management' in the early ULC days, our Sunday services on the campus were only poorly attended and the student-staff ratio in the congregation was very low. I remember trying to defend a Christian point of view in an anthropology lecture when a young man in the class deliberately got up and walked out of the room in protest. But after 1970, when missionary teachers were no longer 'in command', our Sunday services began to fill up with students, small 'cells' of Christians began to meet for Bible study and prayer in city suburbs where students lodged and we missionaries were invited to join student



by John Carrington

groups trying to find the relevance of Bible teaching for modern problems in Zairian life. Nora and I were asked, for instance, to explain the teaching of the book of Ruth about the status of a widowed woman and her remarriage, both important themes in African communities.

Student interest in Christian things has continued to grow since 1970. When we visited the campus in 1977 to help teach in the Faculty of Biological Sciences, we were thrilled to see packed Sunday morning services there and to share in the preaching ministry. A colleague has recently written to say that the large lecture room put at our disposal by the Faculty of Education for the Sunday service is already too small for all who come and so they have now to use a large cement-block, open-sided hangar built to accommodate the large influx of education students some years ago.

Men and women of firm foundations

We thank God for well trained and faithful Zairian men and women at ULC and now serving at UNAZA who were available for this work because of earlier missionary schools like that at Kimpese, where BMS was involved (and still is). Our first chaplain was the son of Jason Sendwe who trained as

a medical assistant at Yakusu before going into politics in his native land of Katanga. The first Zairian principal of our campus was the son of the present General Secretary of the Baptist Community of the River Zaire (Rev Koli Mandole). We went back last year to work under (note the preposition!) a young Zairian professor and faculty dean who got his earliest schooling at BMS Bolobo before going on to secondary work at Kimpese. From there, after serving as a teacher for two years at *Ecole Grenfell*, Yalamba, he went to Princeton University in the United States and then to the University of Paris where he received a doctorate in biochemistry. We found on arrival that he has done a remarkable job in coordinating work in repairing a derelict cigarette factory on the outskirts of Kisangani so that the Faculty of Biological Sciences now has an excellent library, three spacious, white-tiled laboratories (for chemistry, physics and biology), lecture rooms, staff offices, a refectory . . . the lot!

The present principal who welcomed us back last year, Dr Diawaku, was a scholar of the American Baptist Mission in the Lower River. He had been principal of the Kimpese Institute before he came to Kisangani a few years ago. When I had the privilege of touring Britain with the Kitega Male-Voice Choir last spring, I was delighted to learn from them that Dr Diawaku had composed one of the items of their much appreciated repertoire: 'If you love Jesus, come follow Him'. It seems he used to sing with them when he lived down river.

Where are the staff?

UNAZA is facing serious problems today, although she is only a teenager. The low economic level of the Zaire Republic and its high rate of inflation mean that little money is available for buildings, for equipment, for student scholarships and accommodation, or for the salaries of staff, especially of expatriate professors where air fares have to be provided as well as regular emoluments

in overseas, 'hard' currency. Ideally most teaching should be in the capable hands of Zairian personnel and not of foreigners. But as yet UNAZA does not have enough qualified national teachers, especially in science subjects. No maths were taught to the important first year classes at the Science Faculty last session because the expatriate teacher (Rumanian) was not able to return and there was no one to replace him. I was sad to have to give one of the last courses of lectures and practical work to forestry students at Yangambi taking their final degrees in July 1977 because that department was closing down after the exams — they could not get sufficient staff to continue any longer. There are logistic problems to be overcome by anyone going to Kisangani from abroad: living accommodation, food, essential personal supplies, transport . . . all these are far more difficult to deal with than in Great Britain.

But teaching and other forms of service at UNAZA continue to provide opportunities for missionaries from overseas who can work there as invited associates of the Baptist Community of the River Zaire. Could this be a challenge to young folk (and more mature teachers) in our Baptist Church of Britain today? In accepting such an invitation you would be meeting a need that no one else is coming forward to fill, by providing a service that African students are eager to receive from you, by training leaders for tomorrow's Zaire as well as fulfilling our Lord's command to all who follow Him: 'Be my witnesses . . . to the end of the earth.'

During our stay at Yangambi last year, a European teaching colleague, sent by the German government as part of a team to help Zairian agriculture, had to complain to the administrator about delays running to many months in salary payments through international banks. 'If that's the way you intend to remunerate your teachers' he said, 'the only folk you ought to call on to help you are missionaries!' Well, why not?



John Carrington teaching in biology laboratory

THERE'S MORE TO BUILDING THAN MEETS THE EYE

by Pete Riches

Being involved in the building and maintenance work of a mission in Zaire is a many sided job, where the term 'restrictive practices' means nothing. An African in the construction department or on the maintenance staff of one of the mission institutions may be employed as a bricklayer. His work, however, would involve not just bricklaying but also loading sand, mixing concrete, plastering and flooring. For the missionary the variety is far greater, and the scope of activities covered is far more demanding than one at first realizes.

The unqualified expert

Often the missionary is considered an expert in subjects about which he has only slightly more knowledge than have those who are seeking the advice. How can one who has been trained in the building industry also be an expert in generating sets? Or one who has been trained in engineering be an expert,

too, in building techniques? So often, those who are called to share practical skills with the Church overseas find themselves facing such wide demands. Do It Yourself has become a popular necessity in Britain in these days of rising prices — both of materials and labour — but DIY has been part of the life of the missionary since missions came into being in the late 18th century.

The first missionary to arrive at Yakusu towards the end of the last century had to build his own house, with the help of just the local people who had probably never before seen a house of that type. By 1901 the first brick house had been built at Yakusu, clay having been used from the local ant hills to make bricks, wood from the forest for burning the bricks and mud for mortar. The tiles for the roof were made in the same way. Not one of the missionary staff was a builder, nor had any of the local people ever seen a brick building. From the station store and the first house followed

more ambitious constructions as first the school and later the church, hospital and printing press were built. In almost every case these were put up by the missionary pastors, teachers or doctors with never a builder in sight.

This DIY system was not without its problems, of course, and most buildings at Yakusu have some cracks in their walls. However, this is not surprising since cement was not used in the structures until recent times. The house built in 1901 is still occupied by a missionary family who have no fear of it falling down around them. One building, completed some 40 years ago, had to have metal tie bars built into it to prevent the gable wall from falling down. Today the wall is still there, still moving, but held by its two steel rods. Then, again, one missionary pastor with many years of experience fell some 25 feet from a construction, yet got up unscathed. This incident resulted in the sharing out of a sack of rice for the workmen on the mission and the rest of the day being declared a holiday for all.

Different materials but much the same means
Building today has changed very little for the missionary. Apart from the fact that we now use cement blocks in place of bricks, and metal or asbestos sheets in place of tiles, much of the process remains the same. The missionary responsible for a construction generally prepares the plans to his own design, in consultation with those who will use the building. If it is a project funded from London, he will also prepare for BMS committees an estimate (often a calculated guess) of the costs involved. As soon as money is made available he can begin ordering supplies. Some of these will come from Europe, some will be bought from the shops in town. Sand and gravel will be bought by the lorry load from the village people who dig it from the river or forest stream.



Digging clay for bricks from white ant hill

Local supplies of building materials are often difficult to find and each time there is a shortage the price shoots up, never to come down again. To take just one example, less than six months ago cement cost the equivalent of £5 a sack. After a shortage it came back on the market at £10 a sack. A recent devaluation of the zaire reduced this in effect to £5 for work funded from London but, of course, this is no help if the work has to be done with local funds. Since devaluation cement has gone off the market again. Although some shops still have it in stock, yet it is not for sale. We assume the shopkeepers are holding on to it, pending a new uprated price tag.

Shirts, trousers and a spirit level

As well as materials, tools have to be provided out of funds available for the construction. Usually tools are passed from one project to another, but replacements for those which are either worn out or stolen must come from project funds. Such tools are very costly to buy locally; for example, we recently paid £17 to replace an oil can which had disappeared. Tools can be bought much more cheaply during furlough in Britain, but they are rather heavy to transport back. With only a 20 kilo baggage allowance and two years' supply of clothing to cater for, only a few light tools can be included in the suitcase. Most of our tools are hand ones, the only exceptions being a cement mixer, an electric drill, a portable circular saw and a portable electric planer, all of which are recent acquisitions.

In addition to the tools necessary for a major building project, any missionary involved in maintenance work must also have a large supply of personal tools. With these he takes on anything from camera repairs to building a school. The tools meet not only his own needs but also those of would-be borrowers. Included in such tools are an endless supply of welding rods, solder, glues for every occasion and oil for anything from watches to heavy lorries.

Employer, father and minister

Once supplies have been obtained then a workforce has to be employed for the completion of the work. This means that the missionary becomes not only an employer of a good number of unskilled and semi-skilled labourers, but also a father, and often a pastor, to all of their families too. Wages are low and at today's inflated prices, a day's wage will not buy half a tin of pilchards even. For this reason the missionary will have to take on the responsibility of the

family's medical care, paying a kind of medical insurance to the hospital on behalf of the head of the family. At the beginning of the school year the missionary can also expect to pay advances on wages to cover school fees, uniforms and books. Each time there is a crisis in the family for which funds are required, a workman will appear at the missionary's door with a note telling of the need and stressing that the missionary, as his father, is the only one to whom he can turn for help. The missionary builder or maintenance worker is thus in a position to minister in a very special way to this group of people for whom others have little time.

Constant contact with the workmen soon brings fluency in the language generally used and this, in turn, opens up more and more avenues of service. The fact that the missionary builder is not tied to a rigid timetable enables him to be involved in many other activities of the church in which his medical or teaching colleagues are not free to be involved. The building and maintenance man serves every department of the church and his job allows him to have contact with a wide cross-section of the community. This affords many opportunities to be a builder, not just in material things but in the spiritual realm too.



Pete Riches repairing a vehicle

BAPTISTS SHOULD BE

... informed about what Baptists believe.

The 'Baptist View' series includes books on

AUTHORITY
BAPTISM
THE MINISTRY
THE CHURCH
FREEDOM
CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH

60p each, plus postage, from

BAPTIST PUBLICATIONS
 4 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AB
 (Tel: 01-405 9803)



The Divided State

by Ben Hope

On 1 January 1979 the huge state of Mato Grosso in Brazil, stretching almost 1,200 miles from North to South and 700 miles from East to West, was divided into two. This was done because it was too large and unwieldy a political unit to administer. The division was first announced almost two years ago to become effective this year, but even though the state has been divided into two, each part is over five times the size of England.

Baptists have long felt the difficulties of fellowship and administration created by the vastness of Mato Grosso. It was no surprise

then, that on the heels of the announcement of the political division, Baptists in the north of the state should begin to plan the formation of a state convention to coincide with the new part.

Not the best of beginnings

This new convention was launched at an Assembly of the old Mato Grosso convention. Now this assembly was nicknamed the *Convenção de Sofrimento* – the convention of suffering – from the very moment the Time, Place and Preacher committee reported to the previous convention and their report was adopted.

The place the committee selected for the Assembly was Cáceres, thought by many to be 'the absolute end of the world'. The time they chose was the first week in January, always a most difficult time to travel because of Christmas programmes, watchnight services, bank holidays and tropical rains. The Preacher they nominated was Pastor Sandoval de Oliveira Quintanilha who is a man noted for the length of his sermons. The last time he preached the official sermon at the convention it lasted for over two hours!!

Yet in spite of all these unpropitious factors

the 33rd assembly of the Mato Grosso Convention was a notable and historic occasion. The concluding meeting formally inaugurated a new state convention to be known as *Convenção Batista Centro América* – The Baptist Convention of the Centre of (South) America.

There are great opportunities

This new convention, composed of 16 churches and 31 missions will serve the northern state of Mato Grosso while the parent convention serves South Mato Grosso through 46 churches and numerous missions or congregations.

One of the principle motives for forming the new convention was to call attention to the needs and missionary opportunities in Mato Grosso which is receiving large numbers of immigrants from other areas of Brazil.

Some things assisted this division. The 'north' was one association of churches that correspond exactly with the area that would be designated the northern state. There already existed a strong sense of belonging and fellowship as well as a certain sense of isolation from the 'south'.

A new name

Finding a name for the new convention was more difficult. The state names chosen were Mato Grosso for the northern part and South Mato Grosso for the other. The majority of the churches of the Baptist Convention, however were in the southern part together with the existing convention headquarters. If then a second convention was created which would have to co-operate with the national Brazilian Baptist Convention, but only have a slight variation in name from the first, only confusion would arise.

Then someone suggested that since Cuiabá is the geodesic centre of South America as well as being the capital city and home of the new convention headquarters, and further since the name *Centro América* is used by hotels, restaurants and book stores in the area, it would be most appropriate to use that name in connection with the new convention since it serves the *centro* section of South America. This idea quickly caught on and from the very first draft of the constitution the new convention was referred to as *Convenção Batista Centro América*.

The cry for help

Pastor Samuel Martins, the brilliant young executive secretary of the new convention expressed the motivation of organizing this

way: 'The new convention will call attention to the differences between the two regions. The South is an older, more developed area with many churches, several of them quite strong. By contrast, the churches in the North are newer, smaller and more scattered. New roads are being opened and new cities are being formed. The North is really a mission field. Now we can appeal to new seminary graduates and the mission overseas, "come over and help us". And I believe they will. We will see fantastic growth in just a short time.'

Officers of the newly formed *Convenção Batista Centro América* are Jair Soares, President; Geraldo Ventura da Silva, 1st Vice President; Ari Anibal Silva, 2nd Vice President; Maria Stella Castilho, 1st Secretary; and Sebastião de Oliveira Neto, 2nd Secretary.

Singing in the rain

During the meetings of the convention torrential rains beating on the tin roof of the church occasionally stopped the services because it was impossible to hear. The churchyard frequently resembled a lake, but the 130 or so messengers laughed as they skipped through the water. When the noise of rain brought the discussion or preaching to a halt they filled the time by singing with great gusto. Throughout the convention love reigned as everyone shared in the sadness of parting but the joy of something new being born.



Pastor Samuel Martins, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the new Centre of America Convention. First Arthur Elder and later David Doonan had a great influence on Samuel

British Baptists have three couples serving in the area of the new convention. David and Irene McClenaghan, Peter and Susan Cousins and Stuart and Georgina Christine.



Officers of the new Convention. Left to Right: Jair Soares, President; Geraldo Ventura da Silva, 2nd Vice-President; Ari Anibal Silva, 2nd Vice-President; Maria Stela Castilho, 1st Secretary; Sebastião de Oliveira Neto, 2nd Secretary; and Pastor Samuel Martins



Members of the Federation of Protestant Women

CHRISTIAN WOMEN ARE LIGHTS IN CITY LIFE

An interview with Nora Carrington, recently living in Kisangani.

Do women have a share in the work of the Church in Kisangani?

In the days of our pioneer missionaries, women church members were few in number compared with the men. But now, some 70 years after the first baptisms here, they easily outnumber men and boys.

Are they organized in special groups within the Church?

Yes. Each local congregation (we have 11 such in the city and surrounding villages now) has a women's group which meets usually once a week, with its own woman

leader, often the pastor's wife. The different groups come together for monthly meetings under their president. There is a committee to organize the work of the whole city and they have their own secretary and treasurer, with a separate bank account at which the men often cast envious eyes! This committee keeps contact with women's groups all over our Church area in Zaire and funds are made available for sending delegates to the annual women's conferences at places as far away as Upoto, Tondo and Kinshasa.

What do they do for a living?

Most of the older women are married and have families to bring up, often very large

by western standards. Rebekah, who used to lead one of the Chopo church's choirs, has 13 children and many more grandchildren already. To make ends meet, the women need to engage in gardening or fishing and many of them take their produce to the market for sale. Most of the vegetable, fruit, fish and meat stalls on the central as well as in the suburban markets are owned by these ladies. I find it embarrassing to go to market myself because each time they want to make me a present of some of the things they sell! Younger women who have had an opportunity to attend training schools are teachers in government or church owned classes, or they work as trained nurses and midwives in the city hospitals and clinics.

Inflation is higher in Zaire than it is in Britain but because so many of our Christian women are busy selling consumer goods, their income goes up with the prices and so they have more money to give to the Church. This explains the record giving at our Harvest Festival service last autumn.

How did these women come to know about Jesus Christ?

Many of them, especially the older ones, were girls in the boarding and day schools of our BMS stations at Yakusu, Yalamba, Yalikina and Lingungu, where they came under the influence of our missionary ladies and the African colleagues trained by them. Others have come to hear about our Lord for the first time in Kisangani through the evangelistic efforts of our pastors and teachers there.

Is there any special church work which the ladies engage in?

Indeed yes! In each congregation there are women's choirs which enhance and inspire worship at local meetings and on special occasions such as Easter, Whitsun, Harvest,

Bible Sunday and Christmas, when we all try to gather together in the central church building. They usually wear a special uniform then – yellow or pink dresses with large printed pictures of a hurricane lantern and an open Bible and the words, in big letters, 'A CHRISTIAN WOMAN IS LIKE A LIGHT.'

Small groups of these women folk put aside a little of their hard-earned money to buy food which they cook and take to hungry patients in the city's hospitals, where folk know that they come in the name of Christ. The Kisangani women's committee has been sending regular subscriptions to our Church at Yakusu for the upkeep of the church building there and the site around it. And many of the older women gladly accept responsibility as 'mothers and sisters in Christ' for young girls and older women who come forward for baptism.

How can we remember these Kisangani women in our prayers?

As you give thanks for the enthusiasm and devotion of these Christian women, please remember especially those who find it hard to get enough for their families to live

on, especially where husbands have deserted them or where their refusal to live in a polygamous household has meant that they have preferred to live alone. One of the hardest things a married woman has to bear in Africa is not having children of her own who will carry on the name of her husband's clan. Some of our finest Christian witnesses in Kisangani are in that position. Pray for them.

Education for women and girls in Zaire is still far behind that available to men and boys. Pray for our church leaders (so many of them men) that they may realize the importance of providing schooling for the bigger part of the Church in Zaire today. And please pray that the ladies may remain faithful to their calling. I remember how one of our Kisangani women used to live with her male-nurse husband on a company plantation during the days before Independence came to Zaire. The white man in charge of the place said about her, 'She's like a light in a dark place!' Since I have had the privilege of knowing them, many others have been that too. May God help them to continue to witness for him in the future.



Women returning from Kisangani market

**BOOK
R
E
V
I
E
W**

The apostles in the New Testament church were able to show this kind of love, resulting in true fellowship each to the other, and the author points out that in the church today the truth of the message we proclaim is

Readers will find this a very helpful book which continually takes them back to Scripture. Church study groups could well find it a profitable subject for discussion with a resultant deepening of the fellowship of the local church.

MF



THE WORLD CALLS CHRISTIANS TO PRAYER

Published: Cargate Press, 90p

WE BELONG TOGETHER by Bruce Milne
Published: Inter Varsity Press 95p

Dr Milne seeks to show the Biblical meaning of fellowship. He reminds us that Jesus coupled the greatest commandment of loving God with all our being to that of loving our neighbour as ourselves.

evidenced by the quality of the relationships between our members. We are reminded that the Holy Spirit has given a gift to every Christian which he or she is able to exercise for the mutual good of the fellowship.

This is a collection of prayers and meditations gathered together by our friends of the Overseas Division of the Methodist Church (MMS) from material prepared for different occasions and groups by members of their staff. It is offered for wider and more general use. The themes are many; and the style and approach vary widely.

ASC



Centenary celebrations in Upper River area