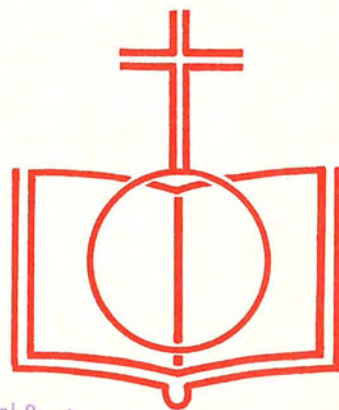


Missionary

# HERALD

The magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society



Theological Seminary Library  
1003 Rüschli  
**NOVEMBER 1979**  
**Price 10p**



# NEW WORKERS FOR BANGLADESH

# NEWS IN BRIEF



**Colin and Helen Laver** have been members of Stockton Baptist Tabernacle for some years. Helen committed her life to the Lord there in 1969, while Colin made his commitment during a crusade at the church in 1972.

They were married in 1975 and the following year Colin completed his teacher training course at Bede College, Durham. Their intentions were to find a secure job, make a home of their own and perhaps start a family. However, due to the scarcity of jobs their ambitions were stifled.

Colin took several jobs, including working as a postman, before getting into teaching, and even then the post was only temporary. It was during this time that Colin and Helen felt that the Lord wanted them to take a different road. Although secure work in teaching eventually came their way, they believed that God had called them to work with the BMS in Bangladesh.

Their enthusiasm was fired at the Keswick Convention in 1978 where they both made a

deeper commitment to the Lord. This, together with much discussion with Jackie Whitelock, already serving with the BMS in Bangladesh, encouraged them to make enquiries about teaching and working as hostel parents with the BMS. They then asked to be considered as candidates and were accepted later that year, their church having agreed to support them in their call to missionary service.

Both Colin and Helen have been involved in Sunday school work and belonged to the church youth choir. Colin was involved in youth work for a while and was also a member of a singing group called 'Neginoth'. They are able to appreciate, especially during this past year, the way the Lord has brought them to this point of commitment. At the time of going to press, they were awaiting visas for Bangladesh. After language study in Barisal, they will go, with their daughter, Vicky, to serve in Dacca. They testify that they are learning more and more that God is in complete control, and that 'Jesus doeth all things well'.

## NEW BAPTIST MISSION

Until recently mission work in the Canary Islands was undertaken by the Baptist Mission to Spain, as the seven islands of the Canary chain make up two provinces of Spain. However, due to the difficulty of promoting work from the peninsula, the islands being located 1,500 miles to the south, the new Baptist Mission to the Canary Islands has been formed. This will work with the national organization, the Spanish Baptist Union.

The seven islands have one and a half million inhabitants and there is only one small Baptist church in each of the two capital cities of Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. The island of La Palma has missions meeting in four places, with no pastor or missionary. Some have said that in regard to Christian work, La Palma is a 'Baptist Island'. The other islands have no Baptist work.

## NEW READERS' SCRIPTURES

There are possibly 1,000 million functionally illiterate people in the world who are cut off from the riches of the written word of God because they cannot read. The Bible Society has produced specially designed Scriptures with such people in mind. The Good News for New Readers outreach programme is now in operation in 68 countries and has been wonderfully received. The Bible Society in India, who reckoned to reach about 10% of the population with traditional Scriptures, estimates that with New Readers materials they have access to 50% of the people.

The Bangladesh Bible Society also plans to provide cassettes for the hand-operated players available, together with printed booklets. Listeners can then follow the booklet as they hear the words read in their own language.

## Secretaries

Rev A S Clement  
Rev H F Drake, OBE

## Editor

Rev A E Easter

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

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

There are two important facts about mission overseas today. The first is that, without a doubt, it is still very much in the mind and plan of God, because He is still calling men and women to that service and employing in the work of the gospel overseas every conceivable talent.

As a Society we have been richly blessed in the numbers and the quality of those answering God's call and offering for service through the Baptist Missionary Society.

The second fact is that the churches overseas are anxious to retain the co-operation of the British churches in the enterprise of the gospel in India, Zaire, South America and every other country in which we serve.

## The need for unity

At the first Asian Baptist Congress held earlier this year in India, Rev Edwin Lopez, Secretary of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, said 'In the light of the vastness of the unreached people for Christ in Asia, the issue of togetherness, the need for unity, is an urgent reality. Asians must grapple seriously with issues of relationships, specially and specifically with missionary bodies.

'Even if the time will come when our giving will be three times that of the mission aid, or even if we shall have trained several people to handle our different areas of work, we guarantee our continuing appreciation of the missionary presence. For, when missionaries come to share their life and witness side by side with the nationals, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men becomes manifest.

## The need for the missionary presence

'When missionaries and nationals work together as brothers, sharing what they can do to contribute to God's work, the spread of His kingdom is hastened. . . . Their presence need not end with our attainment of self-government and self support.

'Jesus did not withhold anything to enhance the development of His disciples and the people as a whole. The whole missionary enterprise was started, promoted and continued with this as their mandate. For as long as this method is not amended or repealed by the Holy Spirit, the need for the missionary presence in any part of the world, especially in the third world countries, will continue to be valid.'

## Urgent needs in Nepal

Thinking especially of Asia, the Society has received an urgent plea for help from the United Mission to Nepal. An office secretary is required for the Executive Director of the Mission — someone with the heart of a servant and a willingness to do the menial and the sophisticated, it says. An office manager is also needed to train and co-ordinate the work of Nepali assistants, while the Treasurer's Office seeks a secretary able to deal precisely with technical communications.

Every field in which we are concerned is asking not just for continuing co-operation but increased help in the work of the gospel — for more personnel to share with them the opportunities to spread the kingdom of Christ.

# SUMMER ALL THE YEAR ROUND

*Fishing boats on the beach at Colombo*

by **Alistair Swanson**

On 3 July this year the Swiss Air jet liner took off from the Katanayake International Airport at 10.30 pm. Our BMS, Salvation Army and Trans-World Radio friends came to the airport to bid us farewell, for we were leaving Sri Lanka, not expecting to return. The previous Sunday, gathered round the communion table, we had proclaimed as we sang at the close of the service 'Jesus is Lord', and so ended four and a half years of ministry at the Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church, Colombo.

## **Same but different**

They were years of strangeness, frustration, disappointments, discouragements. I do not think that I ever became used to the situation, whether that was driving in Colombo, serving on committees, being part of the Sri Lanka Baptist Sangamaya (Union) or whatever. Everything in Sri Lanka was different. It was not a language barrier, because many, many people speak, and prefer to speak, English and they speak it fluently. The rules of the road are the same as in the UK – or so I was told! But within the Church things that were done in other parts of the world, and in other parts of Asia, could not or would not work in Sri Lanka. Church and para-church organizations with the same western names had little resemblance to what one would expect. Christian Endeavour, for example, had no Bible study, no chain prayer and no members at the church prayer meeting.

Yes, things are different in Sri Lanka and men are different. Oh, the basic need for man to be loved and to love, to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, to be redeemed through His blood, yes, these are the same. When men and women of whatever race, culture or creed are indeed born again by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, then they are brothers, then they are sisters, and in Sri Lanka they are there, and very precious have many of them become to me. But men

are different, because of the culture in which they have lived and been brought up. Attitudes are different, standards are different, the way of doing things and approaching a given task is different.

## **Beautiful country**

Sri Lanka is an island of 14 million people. Within her 25,332 square miles there is a fascinating variety of climate, vegetation and scenery. The sun shines down throughout the year – it is summer all the year round. Just once or twice did I feel that I wanted a fire! The beautiful handiwork of God is seen on every side. Going down south from

Colombo towards Galle, one passes beach after beach of beautiful golden sands, with the blue, green or grey sea breaking its gentle waves on the shore. Close to the shore are the fishermen's houses, with their fishing boats pulled well up on to the beach. The fishing boats consist of a dug out tree trunk, lashed to another smaller tree trunk, about a yard apart, and with a great square sail. The model is very old, and they are very picturesque as they make their way to the fishing grounds. There are fish of many kinds – shark, seir, sole, mackerel, to mention only a few. Moving from the coast inland one passes rubber plantations and



*Cinnamon Gardens Church*



waving coconut palms, and then as one moves into the hill country, there are the tea bushes with the pickers hard at work and the silver factory over on the hillside. Up in the hills are beautiful streams and waterfalls and every shade of green – everything to gladden the heart and cause one to cry ‘Yes, God is good!’

Indeed, God is good, and I was greatly blessed by being and working in Sri Lanka. I was able to learn things there which I could not have learned in any other situation. I met brothers and sisters, many from different countries, who have become very dear to me through the fellowship we have enjoyed in that land. How true the hymn is, ‘In Christ there is no east or west, in Him no south or north, but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth.’

#### **Coming and going in the capital**

Sri Lanka has an interesting export trade, not just with Ceylon tea, but also coconut, coia, charcoal, batiks, even prawns. The port of Colombo is a very busy place exporting and importing. Large grain ships arrive with flour and rice, others bring cars and machinery. Some of the cruising passenger liners call in at Colombo. The airport is also very busy for there is a flourishing tourist trade and thousands pass through the

airport every month, many of them tourists from European countries.

Well, all that is no doubt interesting but what about the Church in Sri Lanka? After all, this is what we are really interested in, the work of the kingdom. There is no doubt that distance does lend enchantment to the view, but I want to draw a fair picture. Although I do not have a ‘success’ story, it was not all disappointment, discouragement and frustration, and what I write I do so in no condemnatory way, rather out of a concern that you who read this will read it carefully and prayerfully.

Small places and small countries have their own problems. It began to dawn on me, as I got to know people, that everyone was related to everyone else! Sometimes that relationship was pretty distant, but the relationship was there. This not only has problems for a new missionary – I sometimes found my foot in my mouth! – but it also presents problems within the church. In a close-knit community, earlier mistakes are not easily forgotten or forgiven, rather they are remembered and sometimes the offenders’ future prospects are put in jeopardy. The caste system which is officially abolished by the government still hangs on, and is still very much a consideration when

it comes to marriage. Sometimes it happens that the couple’s caste is more important than the faith they proclaim to profess.

#### **Lack of Bible teaching**

There are other problems for the young Baptists in Sri Lanka wanting to get married, and one of them would appear to be an insufficiency of eligible young people within the Baptist circle. What happens is that marriages are arranged between Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims or Roman Catholics, and so, eventually, these young people are to all intents and purposes lost to the denomination. The Church in Sri Lanka is a very nominal Church, and therefore a weak one. There are a great many ‘grandchildren’ in the Church, third generation people who have made no real commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. When a young person reaches the age of 16 or 17, then a parent or an aunt approaches the minister for the young person to be baptized. They have reached the age when ‘this is what you do!’ To break through this idea and get down to Bible teaching is very difficult indeed, but it must be done if the Baptist Church in Sri Lanka is going to grow.

*continued overleaf*

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Another aspect of the Church which is weak is its giving. There has not been a great number who tithe, nor is there a very generous offering, indeed that is not the word which is used at all. The giving in the Baptist Church in Sri Lanka is by subscription, and if one pays a subscription, then all the facilities must be made available!

The weakness of the Baptist Church in Sri Lanka, as I see it, stems from two things. First of all there is a lack of fundamental Scriptural teaching. There is the 20th century liberalism and there is the idea of universalism. The God of the Old Testament is not the same as the God of the New. 'I believe in the God of the New Testament' someone once said to me. In another discussion the comment was made, speaking about a passage in Corinthians, 'Oh, yes, but that was Paul!' 'In my Father's house are many rooms . . .' has been interpreted as meaning that there is a second chance on the other side! The Church in Sri Lanka needs to get back to the Bible.

### **Lack of prayer fellowship**

The other lack is that of meeting together for prayer. There is no doubt that the people of Sri Lanka pray. I was stopped on the pavement of the city on one occasion by a man who asked me to pray for him! Never in the UK have I had that experience. The Buddhists and the Hindus pray; they go to their temples and they pray alone. The Christians also pray, but it is difficult to gather them together for prayer. One of my most faithful attenders and participants at the prayer meeting at Cinnamon Gardens was a Methodist, and he came because there was no prayer meeting in his own church. I was so glad of his fellowship, love and concern. There are, as in other places, all the reasons for not coming together for prayer but the fact remains that there is little prayer life in the Church of Sri Lanka.

These two situations, lack of Bible teaching and lack of prayer fellowship, are contributing factors to the weakness of the Church, and to the internal strife and jealousies that are apparent in the community. Where there is strife and lack of love then there is the devouring of one another, as Paul reminds and warns the Church in Galatia.

So what is the future of the Church in Sri Lanka? A lot I believe will depend on us. Are we willing to pray for the Church in this land where so many of God's good material gifts are in evidence, and where certainly there are His faithful followers and servants. There are those who have grown in the faith; there are those who gather together with others for prayer; there are churches which have prayer meetings and outreach; there are ministers who proclaim faithfully the whole Word of God. Pray for them, for it is their country, and they know only too well the difficulties they are up against. They too know disappointment. They need to be encouraged in the Lord and the things of the Lord. Unlike missionaries, they cannot come away on furlough. They have no easy task.

### **Labourers needed**

The ground in most parts of Sri Lanka is fertile; it seems that there is growth everywhere, everything is green. I believe that in spiritual terms also the ground is good and ready to bring forth much fruit for a large harvest. We must pray to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers. The Sri Lankan government has a slogan in these days which says 'Let us build a free and righteous society'. The Church in Sri Lanka has the foundation for a just and righteous society, the foundation that no man can lay, the foundation which is the Lord Jesus Christ. May the people of Sri Lanka know, as we knew in Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church as we sang the hymn, that 'Jesus is Lord'.

# BOOK REVIEW



### **ALL TRUTH IS GOD'S TRUTH**

by Arthur F Holmes

Published by Inter-Varsity Press. £2.50.

The author is Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at Wheaton College, Illinois. He describes his book as 'a summons to rest our intellectual hopes on the God who revealed himself in Jesus Christ'. His main thesis, often stated is that 'all the truth and knowledge we can ever gain comes from God'. In the first part of the book he discusses the idea of truth, and in the second considers human reason and our means of getting at truth. A final chapter is on 'Christ the Truth' and ends with a plea for continuing pursuit of truth 'under the judgment of God's word which is our only final rule of faith and conduct'.

To follow the argument of the first part an elementary knowledge of the history of modern philosophy is helpful. The book is written by a committed Christian for young committed Christians. For the most part it is a plea for the pursuit of sound learning and an understanding of the inter-relatedness of all truth. But certain basic assumptions are never examined as, for example, that of the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures in the original languages as first written down. There is therefore a certain lack of integrity in the whole. But it should help its readers, being convinced Christians, both to understand the reasonableness of their own faith and to be adventurous in their pursuit of knowledge of God's creation.

ASC

# THE THREE IN THE MIDDLE

by Rev D E Weerasinghe

Almost right in the centre of the island of Sri Lanka and 88 miles from the capital, Colombo, is Matale. Sixteen miles south of Matale is Kandy and 42 miles north of Matale is Kekirawa. These three – Matale, Kandy and Kekirawa – form the group of Baptist churches for which I am pastor. I am based at Matale and since October 1978 have been assisted by Rev Mike Stroope, an American missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention who lives with his wife in the Kandy Mission House. A third worker is stationed at Kekirawa.

## Still learning the language

At Kandy I take the services on the first Sunday and conduct the Lord's Supper and the church meeting. I also spend the whole of Tuesday visiting homes, holding cottage meetings and, when necessary, taking deacons' meetings and doing hospital visitation. Rev Stroope is responsible for the services on the last two Sundays of the month. Since he is still occupied with Sinhala language study, he is only able to give part of his time for services in the

group. Every second Sunday is fellowship Sunday when the service is arranged by one of the deacons who is himself a good lay preacher. Recently this church has begun adult Bible study classes, held prior to the morning worship, and many people, including parents who bring their children to Sunday school, attend these classes.

One of the special projects of this church is the work at the open prison camp at Pallekelle, six miles away from Kandy. This work was begun by the late Eric Sutton Smith, whose initiative and zeal made it possible for the church to meet the spiritual needs of the inmates. Plans are now being made to build a chapel at the camp and other Christian churches have pledged their support.

Switching to Matale, we have Sunday school and a Sinhala service in the morning, an English service in the evening, prayer meeting on Wednesday and cottage meeting on Thursday. The first Sunday services are conducted by Rev Stroope while I am

responsible for the following two Sundays. The services on the fourth Sunday are conducted by the Methodist minister from Kandy and a Methodist lay preacher. Six miles away at a village called Ambagastenne, we have ten Baptist families and services are held there three times a month, on Saturday afternoons.

## Caring for the elderly

At Matale we have a home for elderly ladies called the Baptist Jayanthi Nivasa, which was started in 1962 to commemorate 150 years of Baptist work in our land. The opening of this home has met a great need and at present there are 14 residents. Although the home began with only cubicle accommodation, through the grant from the World Council of Churches a first floor was added and opened for use in June 1970. With a further grant from the WCC it is planned to demolish the old buildings and put up further accommodation, to meet the increasing demand for admission. The home is situated in pleasant surroundings and adjoins the Baptist church.

At Kekirawa the congregation is made up of Sinhala and Tamil members, so both languages are used at the services on Sundays and at the Wednesday prayer meetings. Rev Stroope and I spend a weekend each here and, as it is the only Protestant church in the area, we enjoy fellowship with many regular worshippers who do not belong to the Baptist denomination. The church is also in a fast developing area and many Christians are coming to live here because of the Mahaveli River Development Scheme of the Government. So new doors of opportunity are opening up around us and it is my prayer that we will discern how the Lord wants us to go ahead in the work of establishing His kingdom in this place. May He direct you, too, in your different situations, many miles from this group of churches in central Sri Lanka.



Matale chapel

# EDUCATION BY FAIR MEANS OR FOUL

by Margaret Hughes

Once, on a medical trip with one of our missionary nurses and another friend we were given caterpillars for lunch. The friend had only recently arrived in Zaire and I remember telling her, some time later, how impressed I was that she, such a new missionary, had eaten up her caterpillars. Sheila then admitted that she had not, in fact, eaten them but had deftly pushed them under a salad leaf which she left on her plate! Chatting to a couple of our sixth year students nine years later and asking them about their family background, I discovered that Yenga's father is the nurse in charge of our Baptist dispensary at Yaokombo and I think it must have been in his house that we were offered those delicacies.

## Uncle and nephew in class together

Yenga was not at home at that time. Though only in primary school, he was up in Kisangani for his education. He came to us four years ago and has just taken his final school exams; in a couple of weeks he will be taking his State Certificate. So, too, will his uncle, Litete, who in spite of the relationship is the same age, 21, and in the same class. Litete's father is an agriculturist but both he and Yenga's father would like their sons to go on to do a medical course. Yenga would rather become an agriculturist though Litete would be quite happy to do medicine. There is just one problem. The only medical faculty at present is at Kinshasa, but there has been a proposal to open a medical faculty here in Kisangani for the next academic year, though it remains to be seen if this will happen.

There is still, however, the hurdle of the State Finals to get over before either can go on to something else. One third of the certificate is based on the final year's schoolwork and two thirds on the State exams. If there is more than 10% difference between the school marks and the State exam marks, the school results are

discounted to discourage teachers from giving over-generous marks in order to get their pupils through. To obtain a university place and grant, a pupil must have an average of 60% or more for all the subjects. The course is less specialized than in Britain so Yenga and Litete, although in the science section, have to take exams, not just in physics and maths but also in French, English, history, geography and philosophy. The last three subjects together with a civics paper have to be done on the last morning of the State exam.

## Slipping in through the back door

Since the system was changed to allow anyone, with 60% or more, to go into any faculty regardless of what course they followed in secondary school, the first year of university is spent mostly doing what science students have already done at school. Those coming from education or language section schools however have quite a hard time. Then there are usually a number of students who have not got a certificate at all. They have got in through bribery. Indeed last year on the three campuses there were over 2,000 irregular registrations. It was January before the first year at the science faculty here could begin because of the time taken to sort out those not entitled to be there. Even then the students only got teaching in half their courses because of lack of staff, particularly in physics and maths. Sometimes visiting professors have come to do three week stints, but this year it was necessary to suspend the third year classes as the students had not covered enough science in their previous years to be able to follow courses such as physical chemistry. So even if Litete and Yenga manage to get the coveted 60% they will still be somewhat uncertain as to future progress.

Yet in our school they have at least had a reasonable background as we do have a laboratory, even if it has only got one sink,



Yenga and Litete



Over the top!



## The Missionary Herald

*Though there have been a number of increases in paper costs and also wage awards in the printing trade over the last three years we have not raised the price of The Herald. Unfortunately we cannot absorb these increases any longer and are forced to raise the price to 12p per month in 1980.*



and the water pressure is so low that if someone drinks from the tap in the playground, no water reaches the lab! Alas, too, for the last few years we have not been able to do certain chemical demonstrations, such as the cracking of liquid paraffin or distillation of coal, because there has been no gas available. The lack of methylated spirits for the small burner prevented us from carrying out some group experiments towards the end of term. This week however we managed to buy five litres locally, made in Kinshasa, but it cost us £10. It was therefore interesting to hear on the radio that South Africa is setting up new plants to produce ethanol at 13c a litre.

### Teaching on both sides of the river

In spite of the problems, however, Litete and Yenga have had regular practical chemistry classes. We have not been able to maintain the biology classes because our ten microscopes were stolen a couple of years ago. Then, too, the sixth form biology teacher is also headmaster of the new Baptist secondary school, on the other side of the river in the Lubunga parish. This creates something of a problem in giving really regular teaching to our pupils. When we held our staff meeting early in November, it was a shock to learn that seven teachers had left since term began.

Some had been appointed by the Baptist church to be headmasters or deputies at the six new secondary schools which had been opened. One had got a better paid job at the brewery! Another left because he is polygamous and said he would never get promotion in the Protestant system. As we have only 17 full-time and two part-time teachers, this was a considerable percentage of the staff to change. There is always a gap before new teachers are appointed and then they may not have the right qualification. To replace a maths teacher recently the authorities engaged a biology teacher. Every year the same sort of thing happens and one

wonders why educational appointments cannot be made in vacations, and some rule about length of notice made. As it is, if a person is not leaving the employ of the Church the length of notice for moving to another Baptist school is zero, and if a teacher is leaving the Church schools he does not care about notice anyway.

Even when there is a complete staff many lessons are not given. Annie Horsfall checked on Yenga's class one week in the middle of the year, and out of 33 lessons on the time-table the teachers had only turned up for 21 of them. So widespread is this practice that the National Education Authority made a decision to retain 5 zaires from a teacher's salary for every unjustified absence. There was a noticeable improvement after that came into effect! But in some cases new teachers may go for months before their salary begins to come though from Kinshasa because of all the red tape.

### Headmaster on a shopping spree

Even when the administrative machine is working, teachers in the town are better off than their colleagues in the bush, because when the money has come through for salaries, they do receive it straightaway. But for schools in the interior where there is no banking system, the headmasters have to make their way to town each month. This can mean possibly hitching a lift or coming by river boat if there happens to be one that week. From Irema and Lungungu to Kisangani may well take two days with maybe, a day or two waiting for the money to come through (though the last two times they have had to wait a week). Then there are the couple of days to get back after doing some shopping in town. Too often a headmaster succumbs to the temptation of spending much of the teachers' money as well as his own, and it is a real headache for



*continued overleaf*

# EDUCATION BY FAIR MEANS OR FOUL

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Pastor Mokili, CBFZ Superintendent for Upper Zaire, to try and get justice done in all the problems that arise. The inspectors, not having transport of their own, cannot control the district schools as they would wish, and there has been more than one case of a fictitious teacher on the pay list obtaining a real salary. To remedy this the Education Department of the CBFZ has recently bought the old land-rover mobile dispensary from Yakusu Hospital. If this can be made roadworthy it will help to give some sort of coverage to our 53 primary schools and 28 secondary schools in Upper Zaire.

Those figures are helpful for putting into perspective the contribution of missionary teachers in our education system. People in Britain may not realize just how small this really is. Out of 205 secondary school teachers in our Baptist churches in Upper Zaire only two are missionaries. There is one part-time British teacher who is a Christian though not a missionary. All the rest are nationals.

Another hindrance to effective learning for Litete and Yenga and their schoolmates is lack of text books. There was a time when we had a text book for each pupil for most subjects, but over the years these have gradually dwindled through theft. But it is not only the pupils who steal. Teachers sometimes go off with books when they leave. There is not one teachers' handbook left for the four volumes of the English text book, and it is impossible to replace these for they are out of print. In some cases the textbooks are Belgian and somewhat complicated for our pupils. Half the lesson then has to be spent copying notes.

### Helping the machine along

It was after a chemistry inspector had made remark on this to me some years ago that I began to stencil out worksheets, and have

gradually been able to complete the sets for all the subjects I teach. I had to do a few new stencils this year as I got further in the syllabus, but most of the others could be re-used—just as well, as the price has escalated to over 5 zaires a stencil (250z for a box of 48) i.e., £1.80 each. The pupils buy the worksheets at cost price, five or ten at a time if I can get them duplicated. This is no mean task—150 worksheets in all for the classes I teach, done on a duplicating machine which lives with its side permanently removed so that we can see the workings and press the right levers! Paper has shot up in price and we have tried to lay in stocks. In the last few weeks it has more than doubled in price to 45 zaires a ream, but I think we have enough in reserve for next year's worksheets.

Now that the schools are back in Church hands this has become again a 'Christian' school. For some reason assembly is only held on Mondays and Saturdays though the flag raising is compulsory for every day. Pastor Lituamela is now teaching religion in the *Institut*, one hour a week in each of the 12 classes, and Pastor Tobotela, in charge of the Makiso 'parish', teaches in the 12 classes of first and second year which have school in the afternoons. Neither, I imagine, has an easy job for RE is not an exam subject and many pupils will skip off if they

possibly can.

One of the problems of being in a town school is that of finding a suitable time for a Christian group to meet. Our group meets after school on Saturday in the laboratory as all the classrooms are occupied by the *Cours d'Orientation* as soon as school finishes. I must confess that after leaving home at 6.45 am and teaching through to 12.20 with only ten minutes break I tend to doze off till someone makes a provocative statement like 'baptism makes you a Christian', then I come alive with a start! It is mostly third and fourth year pupils who come to the group. None of the sixth form seems to have a lesson last period so they prefer to go off home. Litete and Yenga are professing Christians but only came back for the group when we had a visit from Citoyen Kabi from Kinshasa whom I had specially recommended to them. He was staying with his friend, the university chaplain, and kindly missed his lunch hour in order to visit us at *Institut Lisanga*. He spoke on the first few verses of John 3, and it was an encouragement to listen to such a committed, joyous Christian. The Church in Zaire could do with many more like him, and we pray that God may bless his testimony as he visits many school groups and runs SU camps.

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# A MIRACLE IN ITSELF

At the beginning of this year some 6,000 people from 35 nations converged on the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad in the Andhra Pradesh State of India. They had come for the very first Congress of Asian Baptists.

From Monday to Sunday this great company of Asian people mingled in fellowship under the gaily coloured *shamyana* (marquee) and along the streets of the host city.

The theme of the Congress was 'One Faith, One Fellowship, One Focus' and this was considered in group discussions each morning and afternoon, while the evenings were used for praise meetings at which Asian choirs led the singing and speakers from many countries spoke to the theme.

The President of the Asian Baptist Fellowship, Dr W G Wickramasinghe of Sri Lanka, declared that the fellowship among the Asian Baptists was 'spiritually conditioned'. It was not something they had accomplished by their own good works but it was what God had accomplished through His people.

## A work of the Spirit

'This fellowship should be seen as the creation of God through his Spirit for though under this *shamyana* there are different races, groups and cultures, who speak different languages, yet are the barriers of communication surmounted by a language of the Spirit', said Dr Wickramasinghe as he spoke for 1.6 million members of 13,292 Baptist churches scattered throughout Asia and the south west Pacific.

According to Baptist World Alliance statistics, Asia now has the second largest number of Baptists in the world, with India ranking second of the countries with the most Baptists. It has 810,000 members and is followed closely by Burma with 318,000.

Dr Ronald Gouling, one time minister of



*Welcome to delegates as they arrived*

Haven Green Baptist Church, Ealing, London, and now Baptist World Alliance Secretary of Evangelism and Education, reminded those present that the Congress was 'a demonstration of the work which God has done in Asia, beginning with William Carey who first carried the Baptist message to India in 1793. Despite the dominance of Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism and other religions – despite the handicaps of frequently unfriendly governments, Baptists have continued to grow in numbers and in outreach. The Congress, overcoming the vast problems of geographical distances,

language differences and financial poverty in many areas, is a miracle in itself.'

## Back to the origins

The Congress was welcomed to India by Dr Channa Reddy, the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh. He is a Hindu and in his welcoming address he stressed the need for creating godliness all over the world for the welfare of humanity. 'As humans who are the creation of God it is necessary for everyone to do something good for humanity' he said.

*continued on page 175*

# NOWHERE TO WALK

by Peter and Margaret Goodall, who wrote this article three months after their arrival in Sri Lanka.

When you know that in a comparatively short time you are going to live in an altogether new environment, you become preoccupied in your thinking, trying to put yourself into the imagined place to which you will be going. Before we came to Sri Lanka we read as much as we could about the country. Now the time has come when we are beginning to reconcile what we expected with what we are actually discovering. Our first impressions are not likely to stay with us into the distant future. I remember saying quite distinctively, 'All the romance has gone already', so it is perhaps best to say nothing at all about a new country until the culture shock waves subside.

## Roads are chock-a-block

However, after some weeks, the excitement of the new challenge returns and the possibilities of service begin to take shape. Initially, as you drive through the towns, you wonder why the whole of the country's population is on the particular road that you are trying to follow. Then you notice



*International Year of the Child drama competition*

there are no footpaths for the pedestrians and so they also have to use the road along with the dense traffic. Has no one read the highway code? What on earth are the animal owners thinking? Cannot the animals stay in their fields? Another thing, I thought there was a fuel shortage, but the majority of the diesel fuel is not being used efficiently — it pours in sickening smoke from the buses and elderly, worn vehicles. Every vehicle that moves carries numerous people all hanging on for dear life, and somewhere in the buses are the bus conductors with their arms pinned to their sides quite unable to collect anything.



*Buddhist procession — a common sight nearly every Saturday*

We could go on for a long time talking of the strangeness and the contrasts between Hertfordshire and the Colombo district that is fast becoming our new home. But as yet I have said nothing of the people. The children of Sri Lanka are so very attractive in their all-white school uniform. The girls wear their hair long but tied in plaits. The boys wear high-waisted white trousers and spotless white shirts. Strangely enough they never look dirty even after a long morning in school, working in the high eighties and the



*Peter Goodall (right) with baptismal candidates*

high humidity of Colombo. One of our very early discoveries was that the churches, especially the rural churches, have good numbers of young children and teenagers.

The older ones seem to take their faith very seriously and are quite able to be in church services that last two or three hours. One service in which we shared, a church anniversary, began at 9.45 and ended at 2.00! The lunch that day was given by the church members.

**Welcomed by young and old alike**

During our first months we are spending considerable time visiting the church congregations which radiate out from Colombo as far as the hill country of Kandy and Matale. At Matale we stayed in the guest room of the *Jayanthi Nivasa*, the name given to the Baptist home for the elderly. We were given a fine welcome by the old ladies there and by the student boarders who are from the nearby school which, like so many other schools in the country, was part of the Baptist work. The government took over the schools and so they become the responsibility of the Buddhists, but even

after the changeover the Matale school continued under the headship of Vera Armond. The work of the dedicated Baptist teachers of past years will continue to bear fruit into the future.

One of the delights of coming to Sri Lanka has been to trace one of the great pieces of work that was done during Eric Sutton Smith's ministry in Kandy. While acting as the prison chaplain in the Kandy district, Eric helped to win for Christ some of the prisoners there. We have very recently met one of these Christians who is now out of prison and has taken up some voluntary work with the Red Cross Society of Sri Lanka. George goes out to a village some way from Kandy and looks after the sick and at the same time is beginning to prepare the village for the preaching of the gospel. He believes the time is ripe for the beginning of a church house group.

*continued overleaf*



*One of the many Buddha statues along the roadside*

## NOWHERE TO WALK

*continued from previous page*

### **The privilege of ministry**

We recently took part in a village prayer group right up in the hills beyond Matale. We were greeted by a roomful of people, including a number of children and young people, all eagerly listening and sharing in a simple Bible reading and exposition with prayers and hymns. After the services I was asked to go with the pastor to visit one of the members who was feeling very frightened and anxious. The pastor talked with her and then I prayed that she should be freed from the heavy anxiety. I sensed the enormous privilege of ministry that all ministers so often feel as they work in the name of Christ.

Back in Colombo the challenges are as great as the work in the country as a whole. The Cinnamon Gardens Church is looking for a minister to continue the work that Alistair Swanson has been doing during the last four years. The possibility of development that the church site and centre offers is exciting. The site is in the heart of the busy capital which all the time has about it the feeling of being lifted and becoming a centre of culture, tourism and commerce.

Margaret and I are busy about language study under the tutelage of the wife of the Methodist author, Rev Lynn de Silva. We are worked hard, and at times we wonder how long it will take to master Sinhala. At the moment we are beginning to follow the words of the hymns but the meaning quite escapes us, unless it is 'Blest be the tie that binds'. We sing that particular hymn at least once a weekend.

### **Plans to counter the one-man band**

We hear that in the not too distant future the Sri Lanka Baptist Sangamaya plans to begin a training programme for the lay leadership of the Church here. It is clear that the lay leadership is more potential than actual. The work of the Church is carried



*Buddhist procession*

largely by the dedicated ministry of the denomination, and unless the minister is doing it, the work is not done. I seem to have heard this before somewhere. I do hope that the thinking behind the project does not remain in the files, but does in fact come into being. I am sure that a better equipped lay leadership will have profound effects upon the development of the work.

The para church organizations are extremely busy arranging conferences, in fact we have never met so many branches of evangelistic enterprise before. Another feature is the arm of the charismatics that sweeps in the dissatisfied church members of the denominations. This can have a sad effect upon a small church membership as we know from other contexts. Only time will tell, and provided we continue to be a praying Church, and an alert Church, ready for the guiding of the Holy Spirit, we must not be too depressed by the threat of numerical success — after all Jesus did very well with a handful of fishermen.

One of the facts that we knew on our arrival here was that of the long awaited union of the Christian Church of Sri Lanka which so far has not materialized. For many years the

leaders of the denominations have worked and prayed for union, but the way was blocked. We see two main reactions, a sigh of relief from the unconvinced, and a feeling of despondency from those who had held such high hopes. It would be foolish to make very much comment at this juncture since we have only just arrived in the country. But when opportunities come for practical exploration and prayer together in the mission of Christ we must surely encourage one another and share in service and evangelism. All around are the strong influences of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. In the light of such religions, the Church needs to be seen to be working effectively in harmony even if not in unison.

### **'Fulfil your ministry'**

There are so many things we could say about our new circumstances. We could tell you about the difficulties we have already encountered, or we could share with you our hopes and aspirations for the future. But may we simply ask for your continued prayers that we might know and fulfil the will of God for us in this place. May the grace and peace of Christ be with us all, in whatever sphere of service.

## A MIRACLE IN ITSELF

continued from page 171

The president in his welcome message claimed that it was most fitting that they met in the great land of India which was the scene of the unique ministry of the father of the modern missionary movement – William Carey of Serampore. He felt sure that the delegates would be captivated by the ancient civilization of India and the rich diversity of its cultural expression. He believed too, that they would be inspired by the history of the Christian enterprise, the vision and the valour of the heroic pioneers and their invincible faith.

Dr David Wong, the President of the Baptist World Alliance in replying to the welcome address, also referred to the fascination of the host country. He quoted Mark Twain in saying 'India is the cradle of the human race; the birthplace of human speech, the mother of religion; the grandmother of history; and the great-grandmother of tradition.'



Delegates outside the *shamyana*

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He also referred to Krishna Pal, Carey's first convert, and pointed out that he wrote the first Baptist hymn ever written in Asia, *O thou my soul*, which is still sung by many Asian congregations today. Thousands upon thousands of Indian people have come to know Christ as a result of the ministry of William Carey and those who carried on from his beginning.

### Colourful occasion

The Congress was colourful in every way. Delegates for the most part wore their national dress and particularly striking were the Indian ladies in their wonderfully coloured saris. These blended and contrasted with the *shamyana*'s brilliantly coloured canopies, fringed drapes and attractive furnishings. At night the place was alight with festoons of coloured electric light bulbs strung from tree to tree and the welcome sign, written in Telegu and English on the facade of the *shamyana*, was also illuminated.

The diversity of types and nationalities was extreme and yet throughout the whole there was the strongest sense of unity. The Bible study groups helped to foster this and as the Congress progressed it was good to see people mingling and chatting as if they were old friends.

### Together in the Lord

So purposefully the Congress moved toward the final service on the Sunday morning – a solemn, memorable and blessed occasion. The preacher was Dr W A Jones of America who gave his message with telling effect. The whole congregation stood in silent token of rededication, their heads bowed in prayer. Then they linked hands and sang 'Blest be the tie that binds. ...'

'Wonderful,' 'magnificent,' 'thrilling,' 'inspiring,' 'blessed' – these were but some of the adjectives which delegates clutched at in an endeavour to express their genuine appreciation of the Congress and what it had meant to them.

It was an historic week for the Baptists of Asia. In it they experienced what it means to belong to the family of God, to meet with brothers and sisters from other lands, to pray, to talk and laugh together. There is certainly no doubt that the Congress provided Indian Baptists in particular, as well as those from other Asian countries, with very real encouragement and the realization that they are far from alone in their faith.

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks  
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or without address.

(27 July-29 August 1979)

**General Work:** Anon: £10.00; Anon: £4.75; Anon:  
£30.00; Anon (Grateful – Chelmsford): £5.00;  
Anon: £10.00; Anon (CYMRO): £13.00; Anon  
(FAE – Aberdeen): £10.00; Anon: £30.00; Anon  
(SH): £2.00; Anon: £30.00; Anon: £15.00; Anon:  
£1.00; Anon (CYMRO): £15.00; Anon (Stamps):  
£19.99; Anon: £5.48.

**Agriculture:** Anon (MAC): £5.00; Anon (MRC):  
£10.00.

**Bangladesh Relief Fund:** Anon (EMW): £5.00.

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#### MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

##### Arrivals

Dr J D L and Mrs Bulkeley and family on 1 August  
from Yakusu, Zaire.

Rev A Brunton and Mrs Scott and Callum on  
10 August from São Paulo, Brazil.

Miss G S Evans on 15 August from Yakusu, Zaire.

Mrs J W Passmore and son on 15 August from  
Ruhea, Bangladesh.

Rev F J Grenfell on 18 August from Kinshasa,  
Zaire.

Mrs R Young and family on 30 August from  
Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

#### Departures

30.00 Miss D Smith on 31 July for Rennies Mill Village,  
200.00 Hong Kong.

100.00  
3,247.48 Rev H R and Mrs Davies and family on 31 July  
for Curitiba, Brazil.

400.00  
2,500.00 Rev K and Mrs Hodges and family on 2 August for  
Santo Antonio da Platina, Brazil.

200.00  
100.00  
100.00 Mr D Aubrey on 7 August for Pimu, Zaire.

Rev F W J and Mrs Clark and family on 11 August  
for Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Rev D W and Mrs Doonan and daughter on 16  
August for Cuiaba, Brazil.

Rev E J and Mrs Westwood and family on 16  
August for Curitiba, Brazil.

Miss H Vicary on 17 August for Berhampur, India.

Miss B R McLean on 17 August for Lapsibot,  
Nepal.

Rev D E and Mrs Samuels (née Finch) on 22  
August for Delhi, India.

Miss R Montacute on 28 August for Kinshasa,  
Zaire.