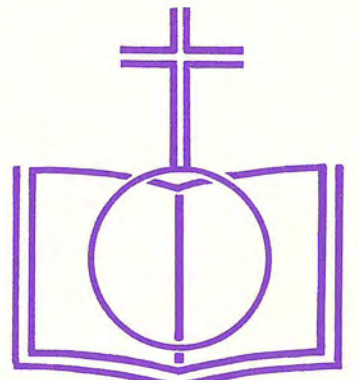


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The magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society



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(1) *Buddhist monk 'saying' his prayers by turning the prayer cylinders at a Buddhist shrine in Kathmandu, Nepal*

(2) *Edna Staple doing some laboratory investigation in connection with her treatment of leprosy in Zaire*

(3) *Indian boy suffering from scabies*

(4) *Jackie Whitelock teaching in the Centre for Christian Education, the school for missionaries' children in Dacca, Bangladesh*

(5) *'Let us praise the Lord'*

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For much of its history the Baptist Missionary Society had one Secretary who was responsible for directing all the work. His task was to stimulate interest and support from the churches at home and to correspond with the missionaries on service overseas to learn of their progress and their needs, and to integrate the work of the Society as a whole.

The work grew

As time progressed and the work expanded beyond the original fields of India and the West Indies, and the number of missionaries serving abroad reached into hundreds, it was felt necessary to appoint another secretary. One was responsible for the overseas side of the Society's interests, supported by Field Secretaries who liaised with him with regards to the needs and expectations of their own particular field.

At another time there were other divisions in the overseas side of the work. Associate secretaries were appointed with particular areas as their main responsibility – one for Africa and another for Asia, while the medical work and the health of the missionaries were overseen by a Medical Secretary.

This does not mean that the Society was fragmented into watertight compartments. It remained one as indeed it still does. These divisions, in name only, were the means to a more efficient carrying out of the work.

The work, in part, is handed over

Although today there are more missionaries overseas and more in training than for a few years, the total is less than it was in the 30's and 40's. Further, much of our former responsibilities overseas, such as property and land, has been handed over to the national Church and our missionaries are stationed where the Church in a country, in consultation with the BMS, feels they can best be employed.

Therefore, the position of Field Secretary no longer exists and the overseas side of our work is handled by Rev Fred Drake as Secretary, and Mr Stanley Mudd as Assistant Secretary. Mr Drake, as well as having the overall responsibility for the overseas department, assumes special responsibility for Africa, the Caribbean and Brazil, but is assisted by a Regional Representative (Rev Brunton Scott) in Brazil and the West Indies. Mr Mudd assumes responsibility for Asia.

God is still calling his workers

Mrs Nancy Thomas, who is the third colleague in the Overseas Department, is responsible as Personnel Secretary for interviewing those who feel called to service overseas and guiding them in their studies and preparation for that work.

This month we focus our attention on the overseas department at Mission House and introduce you to our colleagues who are engaged in that aspect of the work.



INTO THE EIGHTIES

WITH THE

Fred Drake was born at Walton-on-Thames, Surrey and educated at Surbiton County School. He grew up in the church there where he was baptized and received into membership. He read theology at Spurgeon's College and London University, obtaining his Bachelor degree. In 1943 he was accepted by the Baptist Missionary Society and after training was appointed to the Zaire (Congo) Mission in 1944. Also in 1944 he married Marjorie Buckwell, a trained nurse, who had received her training at King's College Hospital. They sailed for Zaire (Congo) on 10 February 1945, and for ten years served at Yakusu in the Upper River District. In 1950 Mr Drake obtained his Teachers Diploma of London University. In 1955 he and his wife were transferred to Kinshasa (Leopoldville) where among many other activities, he served as Youth Secretary to the Congo Protestant Council.

In 1959 he was awarded an Ecumenical Fellowship by the Programme of Advanced Religious Studies in New York and he studied at the Union Theological Seminary in that city, being awarded the STM (Master of Sacred Theology) degree in 1960. He returned to Congo and in 1962 was appointed by the Society to the post of Congo Field Secretary. The Queen, in 1965, appointed him an Officer of the British Empire for his services in Zaire.

Recognizing his qualities still further the BMS invited him to the Mission House to become Associate Overseas Secretary in October 1966 with responsibility for Zaire, South America and the West Indies. On the retirement of Rev E G T Madge as Secretary, the Society asked Mr Drake to assume full responsibility for the Overseas office, and so he was appointed Secretary in 1976. When Angola received its independence Mr Drake was among the first to visit the northern part of that country where our work had been, to assess what would be required to

Concern for 200 serving and 150 retired missionaries, consultations with overseas church leaders in three continents, telephone calls and cables from halfway round the world, correspondence in half a dozen languages, calculations in fifteen currencies . . . if variety is the spice of life then the Overseas Department ought to be a very lively place indeed. Those who work in it would claim that it is. There is rarely a dull moment. Mere busyness, however, is not enough. A dog can spend all its time and energy chasing its tail and get nowhere. Activity must be purposeful if it is to end in achievement. The overriding purpose of the work of the Overseas Department, as of all departments of the Society, is to glorify God and to help Baptists in the British Isles to be obedient to the command of Jesus that repentance and forgiveness be preached in His name to all nations.

Keeping up with the times

The message itself cannot change, but it has to be proclaimed in an ever more rapidly changing world. The world situation today is far different from that of 185 years ago, when John Thomas and William Carey set out to take the gospel to India. The sun has set on the British Empire, the winds of change have blown fiercely over Africa and many other parts of the world. Hot lines have been installed in an effort to prevent cold wars from erupting into atomic fiery furnaces. Ancient non-Christian faiths have experienced renewal. New Christian churches have been born. From some of these churches the cry has gone up 'missionaries go home!' Some church leaders in Africa and elsewhere

settle the Angolans back into their own country and to re-establish the Church there. He has also added extensive tours in Asia to his itinerary. Mr and Mrs Drake have one married daughter who lives in Australia.

have called for a moratorium on the sending of missionaries, and less loudly for the cutting off of foreign financial aid.

New responses have been required to meet the changed situation. Aid agencies, both religious and secular, have been set up to help meet the physical needs of deprived or stricken people. Missionary societies, or the churches into which they have been integrated, have become partners with the overseas churches which, under God, they were instrumental in planting. Mission has superseded missions. This mission, we are told, must be to six continents. It must no longer be in one direction only. The traditional sending churches must now be ready to receive as well as to give. All this makes obedience to the Great Commission much more complex. A Missionary Society like the BMS must respect the selfhood of the overseas churches with which it co-operates, but, at the same time, it has a responsibility to the churches that support its work by prayers, people and money. If the understanding of mission in the churches does not keep pace with the rapidly changing world, then there can be serious misunderstanding of what the Society is attempting to do. Missionary education must be concerned, therefore, not merely with presenting a true picture of things as they are, but also preparing the churches for developments in the future.

Seeing into the future

The question immediately arises, how does one forecast the future? Prophesying is rarely profitable, particularly for the prophet. The past and present, however, can offer at least some pointers for the future. If progress in mass communication continues, knowledge of what is happening in other parts of the world will become more and more speedily and freely available. Growing awareness of our neighbours' needs may not be matched by growing resources to meet those needs.

OVERSEAS DEPARTMENT

by Fred Drake

In fact the indications are the reverse. The deteriorating economic situation in many developing countries, coupled with the inability or unwillingness of developed nations, both in the East and in the West, to change the present economic order, can only lead to an increase in the number of the world's poor. Population increase, the spread of atheistic ideologies, the proliferation of sub-Christian cults and the resurgence of some ancient faiths will lead to an increased number of those who are poor in spirit.

Although the number of those in physical and spiritual need will grow, the Society in the future may well find itself dealing with fewer, rather than more, people. Apart from Brazil, the BMS and its missionaries will become increasingly involved with persons rather than with peoples. Missionaries, in many areas of activity, will be one step

removed from the masses. Their main task will be to train, motivate and encourage nationals as workers in church, educational, health, agricultural or other spheres. The training that a missionary may be expected to provide, however, may be of a very different kind from that which he himself received. The circumstances under which the ministry is to be exercised or the service rendered may be far removed from the technologically advanced environment in which, and for which, the missionary was trained.

Economic and political factors may cause some Third World countries to develop health and educational systems radically different from those in the West. If this happens, recruitment may become more difficult and training of a different kind will need to be provided for those accepted for service. Apart from further and different

professional training, missionaries will also need to know something of the theology of violence, Marxism, one-party states and military dictatorships as well as the customs, culture and religious background of the people to whom they go.

Looking after the missionaries

Because of the heavy demands made on missionaries, their pastoral care, both while overseas and at home, will need to be given high priority. Secretaries visiting the fields may not be able to give sufficient time to meeting and counselling missionaries as more and more of their time is likely to be taken up with meeting church leaders and attending church councils and the committees. As the partnership between the Society and the overseas churches matures, there will be need for more frequent consultation, a greater meeting of minds and a fuller sharing of information. Christian and secular literature prepared in the West but bearing on the situation in which the overseas churches work and witness could usefully be made available to leaders in those churches. The Missionaries' Literature Association is rendering a valuable service to missionaries in this respect. Something similar needs to be done for national church workers.

If the Secretaries on their overseas tours will not have sufficient time for the pastoral care of missionaries, then their help will need to be supplemented in other ways. Visits by others from this country to give personal counselling and to conduct retreats, both for missionaries and local church workers, will need to be increased. The churches in Britain, to which missionaries go while on deputation, should also be made more aware of the opportunity that such visits offer to provide spiritual fellowship and encouragement to the missionaries.



Fred Drake being welcomed at Point Fortin, Trinidad, by the church secretary

continued overleaf

INTO THE EIGHTIES
WITH THE
OVERSEAS
DEPARTMENT

continued from previous page

Space is insufficient to pursue the many other developments that may occur in the overseas work of the Society during the next decade — greater use of Christian broadcasting, more emphasis on the production and distribution of Christian literature, a more comprehensive scholarship programme, more older men and women accepted for short-term service as more and more people retire early. . . . The only thing certain about the future is that it will be different from both the past and the present. But we can be equally sure that God who sends us forth on his mission is the same yesterday, today and for ever.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously or without address.
(28 September-17 October 1979)

General Work: Anon: £120.00; Anon (GW): £2.00; Anon: £30.00; Anon (Cymro): £5.00; Anon: £1.50; Anon: £15.00; Anon: £3.00; Anon: £30.00; Anon (One who likes to help): £1.00; Anon (FAE — Aberdeen): £10.00; Anon: £7.60; Anon: £5,000.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon (FDM): £20.00; Anon (RB): £2.00; Anon (Cymro): £8.00.

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SELECTED TO SERVE

A visitor from Zaire in the summer was Pastor Enguta Bokwamanza, minister of the large Kitega Baptist Church in Kinshasa, whose male-voice choir visited Britain in 1978. Local churches and house groups he visited here were quick to use his considerable preaching talents, both at weekends and at mid-week meetings. While visiting Manchester he was interviewed about his life and work at an interdenominational house group, supported mainly by the Winton Baptist Church, Eccles. Here is part of the interview:

Q Pastor Enguta, how did you become a Christian?

A Well, my grandmother and mother were both committed Christians, and my father was converted soon after his marriage, partly through the prayers of these two godly women. I was, therefore, well instructed in Christian things, and cannot really put a time and place to my conversion, although I was certainly converted while a teenager.

Q How did you become a minister of the gospel?

A Some missionaries from Bolobo were visiting my village and since I was the first one to answer most of their questions in church, they wanted me to go to school at Bolobo. My parents agreed, and I was soon happily employed helping the missionaries and being educated at the primary school. Later on I accompanied the missionaries on their long evangelistic treks into the 'interior', when they would be away from Bolobo for some five or six months at a time, covering hundreds of miles by bike or on foot, and preaching the gospel wherever they went. I was happy as a rank and file Christian, but had no desire at all to be a minister; in fact, whenever such a possibility presented itself to me I put it out of my mind at once. However, on one of these treks something happened

to make me change my mind. One of our woman missionaries had a nasty accident while in the 'interior', sustaining bad bruising and a deep gash along one arm. We were many days' journey from Bolobo, and we didn't have any antiseptic for her arm, so we had to resort to rubbing hot peppers into the wound. The pain must have been intense and it took her a long time to recover. That night I lay awake with questions buzzing through my head and in the morning I asked the missionary, 'Mama, why do you put up with all these difficulties, instead of staying at Bolobo or even back in Europe?' She replied, 'Well, if there were African pastors to preach the gospel I wouldn't have to do it.' Since she was really ill I had to take the service that day — the first time I had ever preached. From that day onwards I knew that God had put his hand on me, and chosen me to train to serve Him, and so eventually I became a minister of the gospel.

Q Where have you worked as a pastor?

A Until four years ago I had always worked in my own rural area of Bolobo and I really felt that my life's work would be there. But a Church Assembly decided, out of the blue, that I should work in Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire. I must confess that I was both thunderstruck and even bitter about the decision. No one at Bolobo, neither Africans nor missionaries, wanted me to leave and I felt there was so much I could do at Bolobo. I was also terrified of working in a sophisticated city church when nearly all my life had been spent in a country area. How would I cope? How would my wife and children manage to settle in the big city? My wife and I even asked God to make the Assembly change their decision, but at length we were made to see that we should accept



it. I still went extremely unwillingly, feeling that this just couldn't be God's will and yet trusting him to overrule despite everything. (Those who knew Pastor Enguta at this time were very impressed by his gracious acceptance of this decision.)

Q Do you feel happier now about the move?

A Yes! It quickly became obvious, despite my own deep sense of inadequacy and all my fears about city life, that God wanted me in Kinshasa after all. Many things were strange and difficult, but the Lord gave us grace and has blessed

us in so many ways in Kinshasa.

Q What work are you now engaged in?
A Well, my main work is as minister of the huge Kitega Church in Central Kinshasa, and there have been many encouragements so far. But a lot of my time is also taken up with the work of the ECZ's Social Work Department.

Q Is there a great need for this work in Kinshasa today?

A More than ever before.

Q Why is this?

A There are many reasons. First, the

terrible inflation which has hit Zaire; secondly there has been a drought in parts of Lower Zaire which have in the past provided most of Kinshasa's food; and thirdly, up-river from Kinshasa there has been a series of cholera outbreaks so food cannot be brought from there.* We need short-term financial help and more agricultural missionaries to help us provide our own food in the long term, but most of all we need the prayers of Christ's people in Britain, that both the physical and spiritual needs of men may be met at the present time. 'Brethren pray for us.'

*Communications have since been restored.



Kitega Male Voice Choir

CONTRAST IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

by Stanley Mudd

Buddhist dancers in procession in Sri Lanka



Almost any traveller returning from the East, if asked about his impressions of the Indian subcontinent, can feel on safe ground if he replies that the continent is one of contrasts – rich and poor, plains and hills, delta and desert, many peoples, many languages, everything is there and variety and contrast is something we need to take note of in missionary work, but I should like to write here about one kind of contrast as seen from the Asia desk in London – the contrast of the Society's differing relationships with differing church bodies in the countries which go to make up the Indian subcontinent.

The policy of the Society over the years in first encouraging indigenous church bodies and organizations, secondly in working with such bodies and thirdly seconding missionaries to work in subordination to such bodies – where has such a policy led us? How does it look from our end today?

Sri Lanka

The Baptist churches in Sri Lanka are independent – completely. They receive no kind of financial help from us now. The churches are not rich, but neither are they poor as Asian churches go. The BMS

maintains its link, however, by sending missionaries to Sri Lanka and at present we have one couple only. That the Sri Lanka Baptist Sangamaya (Union) values the BMS link is certain. One can sense the warmth of greeting and hospitality, and there are many who knew former BMS missionaries well. The problem is to keep this valued relationship alive while encouraging the small Sri Lankan Baptist community to strengthen its links with other Asian church bodies such as the Asia Baptist Federation.

India

The Sri Lankan Baptist Church has achieved its independent status partly by Government action in restricting visas. India has also placed restrictions on the entry of missionaries. It is difficult, but not impossible, to get missionary visas. But the independence of the Indian churches is to a great extent the fruit of the maturity of the Church, the fact that it has an educated leadership and that the community is on the whole literate. Even if the Government had encouraged the entry of missionaries into India, it would have been impossible to have withheld positions of leadership from Indian nationals even if we had so wished. Those who are leaders of the churches today are the fruit

Stanley Mudd was born of missionary parents in Sanyun, Shensi, China. He was educated at Eltham College, obtained his Teachers' Certificate and after army service matriculated to Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he read English and obtained his Bachelor degree in Arts. He also studied at St Andrews College, Selly Oak. In 1948, while at Cambridge, he was baptized in the St Andrews Street Baptist Church.

In 1950 Mr Mudd married Joyce Saunders who had graduated in French at St Hilda's College, Oxford. They were accepted for service with the Baptist Missionary Society

in July 1953 and sailed for India on 12 September of that year. They were designated for Lungleh in the South Lushai Hills (now Mizoram) but it proved impossible to obtain a permit to enter that area and so they went instead to the Union Christian College at Barapani near Shillong, Assam. They served there until 1955 when they were posted to Serampore College where Mr Mudd taught in the Arts and Science Department of the Serampore College. Then in 1957 they moved to what is now Bangladesh and Mr Mudd taught at the Barisal Boys' High School until they had to return home in 1972. There were occasions when he was asked to

act as Principal of the High School. When Rev E G T Madge retired from his position as Secretary of the Society and the Asia portfolio was vacant, the Society invited Mr Mudd to become the Assistant Overseas Secretary with responsibility for Asia. This position he assumed in 1975, since when he has often travelled this region, bringing help and encouragement to our missionaries and meeting with the church leaders in Asia.

Mr and Mrs Mudd have two sons and three daughters.



of mission investment in education and evangelism at all levels in the past.

This is illustrated in the Baptist Church of Mizoram. Seventy five years ago the Mizos were a largely illiterate, head-hunting pagan society. Today, missionaries have come and gone and foreign visitors are not allowed into this sensitive border area, but the Mizo State is the second most literate state in India. The Church has spread so that all Mizos are at least nominally Christian. It is entirely self-supporting. Our relationship with the Mizo Church consists of some help from us with capital projects such as the hospital, school and press, and some scholarships for students studying theology at Serampore and elsewhere. We have the privilege of contact with a church whose members give a higher proportion of their income to the church than do ours, and who support proportionally a higher number of missionaries than we do. Though we are not allowed to visit Mizoram we occasionally receive fraternal visits from church leaders.

Some churches, however, chose in 1970 to join the new united Church of North India. Logically, the united church should maintain and encourage links with a group of churches

of varying denominations in this country. Already the problems of a united church wishing to relate as one body to overseas churches has forced missionary societies and church bodies to come together in relating to a united church. Perhaps the day will come when churches in this country will welcome visitors from the CNI without curiosity about their denominational background. That day is a long way off yet. What concerns us now is to find new ways of maintaining and expressing the very precious links forged in the past between church members and church leaders in India and the

churches in this country. Missionary service will have to take new forms and we may find it possible to have more fraternal visits from the Indian churches, both from those within and those outside the CNI.

Bangladesh

When independence came to the Indian subcontinent in 1947 the churches of what was then East Pakistan were cut off from their old centre of administration and leadership in Calcutta. New leaders were needed in a new country though it was some time before the Baptist churches of Bengal saw the necessity for a division of the Old Bengal Baptist Union. Bangladesh, as everyone knows, is a very poor country. The assumption of responsibility in the Church was matched by the country's slow growth to nationhood. The churches suffered, as did all Bangladeshis, in the various disasters which struck the country — cyclone, flood and civil war. The Bangladesh Baptist Sanga (Union) has asked for missionaries for nation building — in building and agriculture especially — to help tackle some of the medical problems and to make what is still almost the only sustained attack on leprosy



Stanley Mudd at the Asia desk, Mission House

continued overleaf

CONTRAST IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

continued from previous page

in the country, but above all the Church needs pastors, teachers of pastors and pastors of pastors more than anything else. We are still able to help with money but, more important, with people, as missionaries — who are replacements — are still able to enter the country.

The relationships between Mission and Church body are of utmost importance. It is vital to keep the present degree of trust and friendship in a country where there are church bodies realizing increasingly their own possibilities of growth and strength, and where the presence of so many wealthy

Westerners (as missionaries indeed are by Bangladesh standards) may be a source of embarrassment. Missionaries on the other hand have to learn to live with the frustrations of not always being able to do all at once the work they see needs doing. The relationships between Church and Mission in Bangladesh are very different from those obtaining in India or Sri Lanka.

Nepal

Nepal is unique among BMS fields in that missionaries have no official relationship with the church at all, though they do of course, when possible, worship with

Christians. The BMS is part of the United Mission to Nepal and is one of some 33 Christian groups associated with the UMN, whose missionaries have to promise before they are allowed to work in the country that they will not proselytize. They cannot, therefore, engage in open evangelism, yet the witness of their living and their work has proved most effective.

This state of affairs makes it both easier and harder for missionaries in Nepal. It is easier in that the missionaries are not part of a church searching for its own identity, nor are they part of the churches' struggles for unity or the theological questionings — made more difficult when trained leadership is so scarce — but the task is harder in that missionaries cannot learn the valuable lessons learned only in partnership with a young, growing church of a different cultural background. It is even easier for an Asia Secretary in London who does not have to establish contact with church leaders, forge links or arrange meetings with them, write letters to them or discuss problems, but if experience in other fields is anything to go by, this lack of contact is a loss, not only to him and to the BMS but to all churches who have a great deal to learn from Christian experience in Nepal.



Greg Smith reading a bedtime story to the hostel children in Dacca

EMMANUEL, GOD WITH US

by Rev Koli Mandole Molima,
General Secretary of the Baptist Community
of the River Zaire*

In the beginning God was with us, but we turned away. 'Where are you?' God called to Adam in the garden in the cool of the evening, for the man and his wife had hidden themselves among the trees. Thus began Man's separation from God, attributed in the Genesis account to Adam's disobedience and resulting in his banishment from the earthly paradise. From then on, as he learnt to gain his bread by the sweat of his brow, Man's back was turned towards God. He forgot his Creator.

Far from forgetting Man, however, God's eyes were turned towards him, and He never ceased to call to him 'Where are you?' Through the patriarchs and prophets, judges, priests and kings, the divine summons echoed across the years, but Man was preoccupied with gaining his bread. Deaf to the question, 'Why spend your labour for that which does not satisfy?' he continued his lonely struggle to survive, 'having no hope and without God in the world'. He earned the only salary that he merited, for 'the wages of sin is death'.

The Truth brought home

It was not until the Word of God was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, that we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. It is as though the coming of Jesus into the world put that ancient call of God to Man, 'Where are you?' in a new and startling way. His presence among us made it evident that we had been separated from God, but that God Himself had come to be with us again.

As Matthew in retrospect wrote the story of the birth of the Saviour he was moved to add this commentary: 'All this happened in order to fulfil what the Lord declared through the prophet, "The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and he shall be called Emmanuel" a name which means, God is with us'.

Each year the Advent season faces us with a



Pastor and Mama Koli Mandole Molima

choice and a challenge, for through Jesus, God asks us, 'Where are you?' in a personal way. 'Where are you in relation to me? I have come to be with you, but it is for you to choose whether to enjoy fellowship with me, or whether to hide and turn your back upon me.' Joseph was told by the angel, '... you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' Jesus has come as our Saviour, to bring us back into fellowship with God.

The choice is ours

What tragedy is expressed by the words of John, '... He came unto his own, but his own received him not.' Surely we would rather be counted amongst those who received him, to whom He has given the power, and the right, to become children of God. For when reconciled to our Heavenly Father, we also find ourselves in a right relationship with our earthly brothers and sisters. 'Glory to God in the highest,' sang the heavenly host, 'and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.' At the same

time that God's glory was revealed the way was opened up for men to be at peace with each other.

During my recent visit with my wife to Britain we were made aware in many churches and in people's homes that in Christ we are truly brothers and sisters. Differences of race, culture and colour cannot separate us when we are opening our hearts to the One who is called Emmanuel, God with us. This is a truth which is also experienced by missionaries who come and work with us in Zaire and to whom we give a very warm welcome.

All of your brothers and sisters in Christ in Zaire join me in the prayer that we may all learn these truths afresh during this Christmas season and may you experience the richest blessings of Emmanuel, God with us.

*We are sorry that this article, intended for the December issue, did not reach us in time to meet the deadline.

THE GO~BETWEEN ROOM

by Nancy Thomas



Nancy Hodgson was born at Thornaby-on-Tees, Yorkshire, and was educated at Middlesbrough and then Kirby Grammar School. She was baptized at Thorntree Road Baptist Church, Thornaby, in 1937. After school she went to Darlington Training College, and obtained her Teaching Diploma from the University of Durham.

The Baptist Missionary Society accepted her offer of service in 1948 and arranged a period of training at Carey Hall. In July 1950 she married Rev Ben Thomas BA, himself an accepted candidate of the Society, and together they did their language study in Brussels. They sailed for Zaire in October 1951 and from then until mid 1953 they were teaching at Yakusu in the Upper River region. From there they went to Yalikina until 1955 and were engaged in church and school work. Then, from 1955 to 1961 they taught at the school at Yalamba, *Ecole Grenfell*. Suddenly in August 1961 Ben Thomas died on missionary service and Mrs Thomas came back to England for a short period, but then returned to Yalamba where she continued to teach until 1964 when Yalamba was closed to missionary work.

At that point Mrs Thomas returned to England and entered the Northern Baptist College to train for the ministry and graduated BA at Manchester University. On the completion of her training she was invited to the pastorate of Trinity Baptist Church, Bacup, Lancashire, where she served for six years before joining the staff at Mission House in 1975 as Personnel Secretary. In this post she seeks to help those who feel called to service overseas with the BMS, and assists them in their preparation for that work.

A rather high, narrow room houses the Personnel Secretary. It is obviously a third of a much bigger room, the other two thirds being occupied by the Asia secretary. It could be described as a sort of 'go-between room', a place to which would-be missionaries find their way in 95 Gloucester Place. They come from Christian communities in Britain, and hope to offer their services to churches overseas. This 'in between' room is rather noisy with traffic careering down Gloucester Place, fire engines, ambulances, and police cars wailing frequently outside. Here people talk about the way they came to Christ, how they feel called to serve Him overseas, and here we try to direct their possible future abroad with the Baptist Missionary Society.

The candle's halo

A year or two ago I introduced you to the bright pink board which occupied one wall of this room. Since then the decorating has changed the colour scheme, and a deep blue board occupies the space. A large cut-out candle with 'BMS' down its length dominates the central place, and the flame's circle of light has been made up during 1979 by the photos of missionaries and short-term volunteers, folk who have come through this room on their way to join in the overseas work of the Baptist Church. I expect most of them would chuckle at being seen on my board as part of a candle's 'halo', but each one of them has equally taken seriously the fact that, God having called them to do a job for Him, they are trying to be obedient.

Where do they come from originally? The 1979 people came from places as wide apart as Aberdeen and Bishops Stortford, Bromley and Stockton-on-Tees, Bristol and Dereham in Norfolk, Rickmansworth and Wolverhampton, Clwyd and Harrow, to say nothing of many postal districts in London.

What were the influences that brought them

here? Some had grown up in Christian families; some appreciated that fact and some did not, but it gave them deep-rooted faith when they came personally to recognize Christ as their Saviour. Some came from homes with little or no Christian influence, but in school or at college had met with Christian students and were confronted with the need to make a decision for or against Christ at that point. An American mission visited a north-eastern town, a young man was converted; he married a girl from a Christian home and so there are houseparents for the Dacca children's hostel in Bangladesh. In such ways the influences came together under the hand of God. A non-Christian couple chose to go to Bermuda because a teaching post was to be had there and it sounded interesting. There happened to be a Southern Baptist mission there, through which they found Christ in Bermuda. Gradually they were drawn to work with the BMS in Nepal, under the umbrella of the United Mission to Nepal. Missions working in India trained two young people some years ago. One was Anglo-Indian, the other



Lorraine Carr, teaching in Zaire



Anglo-Nepali. They met and married. Not finding suitable openings as a pastor in this country the husband decided to re-train as a full-time social worker. That was another category of person needed for Nepal.

God uses all channels

A Jamaican Christian family moved to Britain in the big exodus of the fifties. A child who came then with her parents grew up in Pentecostal Sunday Schools. As she matured she found in a Baptist church her spiritual home. Her education took her to London University for biology and ecology. When she began to wonder whether her Christian obedience meant a move across the world again, her minister sent her to the 'go-between room'. Her direction took her back to the continent of her ancestors; Africa intrigued her, and in Zaire at Upoto she found the school in which her teaching skills would be much appreciated. An advertisement for a missionary builder caught the eye of a man who had just been wondering whether God intended him and his family to leave a comfortable home in

England for 'parts unknown'. A young Anglican, brought up with Christian influences around him and wanting to train for ministry in the Church of England, needed an opportunity to gain experience of work in another country. With an Oxford degree, would he be able to teach? With a reasonable amount of French, could it be in Zaire?

An experienced minister and his wife came to the room at intervals, over two or three years, seeking God's will for their next possible move. No hurry . . . but yet? Then Rev Eric Sutton Smith died, and urgency came into the situation as it seemed that here was the place they ought to fill in Sri Lanka.

A mature lady, a teacher and a widow, came to enquire whether she could help in Brazil. She had not been a committed Christian very long and regretted rather that she had not known Christ for a longer time. Young vigorous 'handy' men came. Were their electrical, mechanical, practical skills useful anywhere? Summer schools had played their part making some of them aware of Christ's calling to commitment and then to the wider church's service.

One step leads to another

For all of these the 'go-between room' became the place which led to the BMS Candidate Board. Many people who read this magazine will be familiar with that phrase, but just in case there is someone who is not aware of it, I had better explain that the selection group of this Society is composed of the Officers plus ten other people (ministers, doctors, teachers and housewives amongst others) — plus some of the Home staff of the Society. I am assured that all candidates are nervous. That is not really surprising when both the candidate and the selection board are all trying to find out what the will of God is for this person

as well as for the BMS. We would be very foolhardy people if we tried to do that lightly, so tension is probably a fairly normal state to be in. The members of the Board have quite a lot of information already, for the candidate has filled in his own questionnaire with most of the usual facts about his life and education, his family circumstances, his faith and church, the reason why he thinks he is being called to be a missionary abroad, his past Christian experience and service. References have been sent in to tell us what this person is like at work, and what he is like as a character. His minister and church will have given their testimony about him, and told us whether they will be glad to support him with prayer and concern (which probably means finance too). There will have been a medical arranged by Miss Humphreys with our medical officer, Dr Rathbone, so that we know (as far as it is possible to be sure), that this person ought to be able to cope with life in a tropical country and many adaptations in his life-style. All this having been collected together, we join in prayer with each candidate before the interview begins, praying for guidance.

Planning in faith

A little while ago, someone pointed out to me that every year, as an act of faith, the BMS sets aside four days in the year for the Candidate Board's meetings. When that diary is drawn up, no-one knows whether there will be prospective missionaries to interview in January, February, May and September of the next year, or not. Yet every time that I have been aware of, there



Adam Romanis, teaching in Zaire

continued overleaf

THE GO-BETWEEN ROOM

continued from previous page

have always been some people who have recognized the calling of God to them specifically, to a piece of work not in this country. The faith, then, of those who draw up the diary is justified, and so often the person offering service matches up with a need which has just become evident in one of our fields of work. The young teachers came forward this year to fill in so many gaps in our secondary school staffing in Zaire. As many of the original staff came on furlough, or finished the short-term they had promised to do, we wondered how the schools would be staffed. Apparently God knew what we did not; the teachers came; the four days of faith were vindicated yet again. As I write, letters are coming in from those who feel the calling of Christ and who will pass through the 'go-between room' in 1980 from Britain to Bangladesh, India, Brazil, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Trinidad or Zaire, according to their talents, skills, professions or trades.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Rev D and Mrs McClenaghan and family on 8 October from Alta Floresta, Brazil.

Rev A and Mrs Robertson and family on 13 October from Princes Town, Trinidad.

Departures

Rev R W Lewis on 2 October for visit to Orissa, India.

Miss B M Bond on 8 October for Jessore, Bangladesh.

Mr L R and Mrs Alexander on 15 October for Pimu, Zaire.

Death

In Lismore, Australia, on 29 August, 1979, Miss Elsie Winifred Evans, aged 95 (Sri Lanka Mission, 1910-44).

JANUARY COMMUNION OFFERING

At the beginning of each year the Baptist churches of Great Britain are invited to share in an act of love and caring for those who have lost husbands in the service of Christ overseas, for children who have been orphaned and for retired missionaries.

There is no better place where such an expression of concern could be demonstrated than at the Lord's table, where we are reminded that God's loving care for us should be the pattern for our setting up a memorial to Christ. So the fellowship of Baptists is invited to donate the love gifts offered at the January communion services, to the Widows, Orphans and Retired Missionaries Fund of the Baptist Missionary Society.

There are many ways in which the Society cares for those who have served under the auspices of the BMS. Houses are set aside in which those who have retired from active service, but who have nowhere to live, may

spend their retirement free from the anxieties of finding accommodation. At the present time there are four such houses in use at Bath, Salisbury, Olney and Melbourne. Some of these have been bequeathed to the Society for just such a purpose. The Society also pays a rehabilitation grant to its missionaries when they retire, to assist them to settle back into this country.

South Lodge

Then for those who would welcome a little help in the day-to-day matters of a home, the Society has a very pleasant house called South Lodge, at West Worthing. It is situated a short way from the seafront and has a small but pleasant garden. It can accommodate single or married people to a total of twelve. There, each member of the 'family' has their own room in which they can receive and entertain friends. The main meals are provided in a communal dining room and there is also a communal lounge in which the residents can rest and talk with colleagues



South Lodge, Worthing

BOOK REVIEW



ALONE AGAIN

by Richard Krebs

Published by St Andrew Press £1.45.

This book is written by a Christian psychologist for those who are widowed or divorced. From his experience as a pastor and psychotherapist, the author has found that such people frequently go through an experience of death and resurrection as they come to terms with their new, single life. The reader is introduced to people who have undergone such an experience. First of all there is the difficulty of letting go, and we see that sometimes people hold on to a lost one, not out of love but out of unresolved problems with the person. Then as the divorced or bereaved one moves out of the past, there is a 'valley' of pain, as the writer calls it, which follows letting go and precedes rising again to a new, single life.

Some problems of the new life are discussed, such as relating in the new, single state to friends and family; the question of remarriage or remaining single — and the pros and cons of each; and how to live creatively alone.

The final chapter is a reminder that through it all there is 'Christ the Companion', that the widowed or divorced person can never really be alone again.

JMB



The small but pleasant garden

The BMS seeks in every way to be a caring society and gifts to the Widows, Orphans and Retired Missionaries' Fund helps the Society to show compassion and give help to these colleagues.

or watch the television. Peter and Marjorie Brooks, the wardens, are present to help anyone in need and to see to the running of the house and the providing of the meals.

Pensions for widows and retired missionaries are regularly reviewed by the Salaries and Pensions Committee of the Society, which does try to see that these friends are cared for in the best possible way during their retirement. The pensions of retired missionaries who were accepted prior to 1962 and those who were widowed before 1976 are unfunded and paid by the Society as are pensions to orphans. The Society has also to pay its contributions into the Pension Fund to ensure that those who retire in the future will likewise be cared for. If children are orphaned by the death of one or both parents while on service overseas, the Society can help with their schooling through Eltham College or Walthamstow Hall if that is required. (See the April 1979 *Missionary Herald* for a report on these two schools.)



Peter Brooks (left) the Warden, talking with Frank Raper, retired missionary from India



The overseas support office, Mission House. (l to r) Ellen Evans (Fred Drake's secretary), Pam Hawkins (Stanley Mudd's secretary), and Kay Pickett (Nancy Thomas' secretary).

CALLING PHILATELISTS

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