

Missionary

# HERALD

The magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society



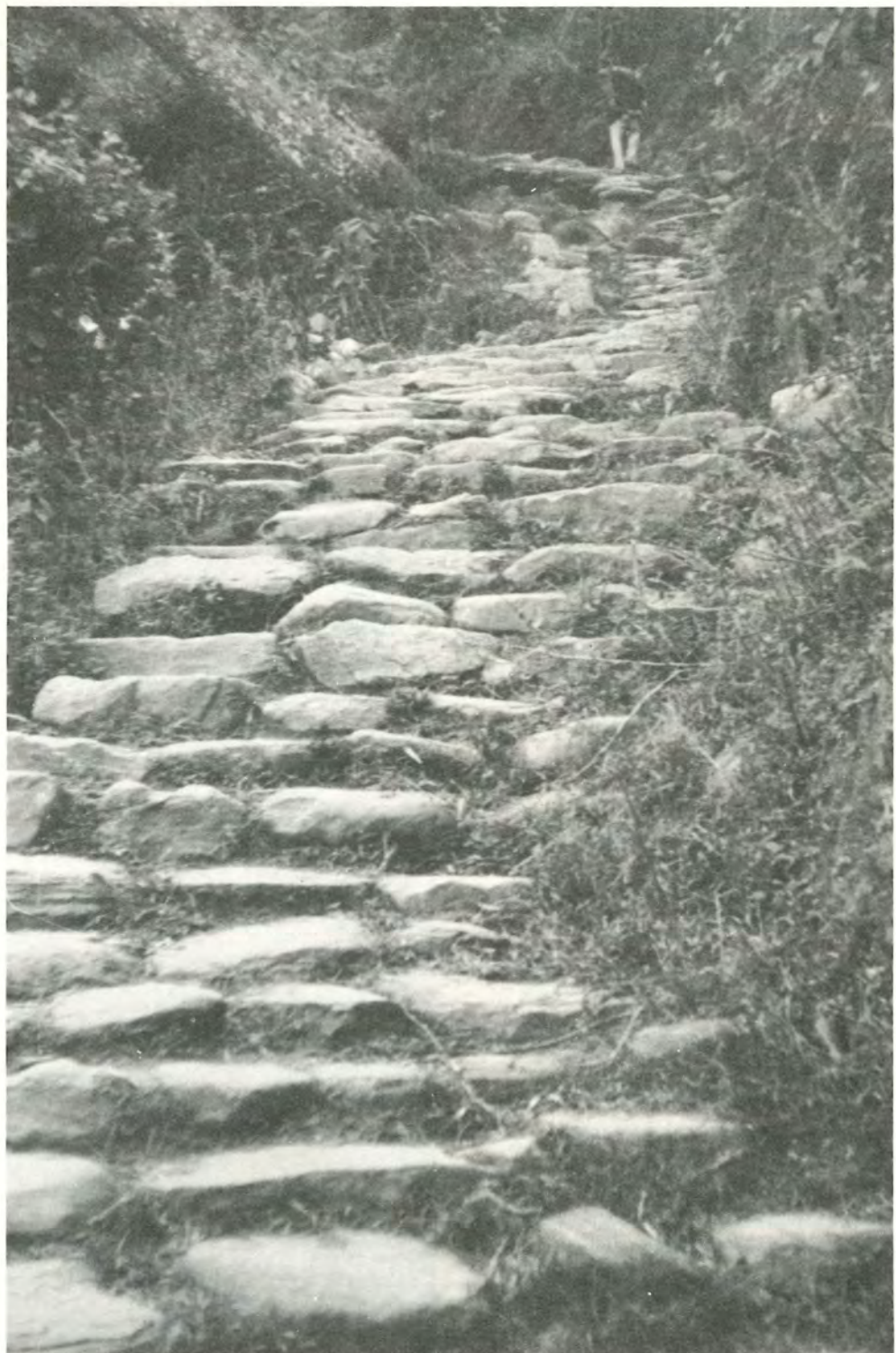
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**'FORGETTING  
WHAT LIES  
BEHIND  
AND  
STRAINING  
FORWARD TO  
WHAT LIES  
AHEAD,  
I PRESS ON  
TOWARD  
THE GOAL'**

*(Philippians 3:13, 14)*

*The way to Amp Pipal, Nepal*





# STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

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by Roger Case in Bangladesh

As I sit here, perched high in the back of a rickshaw, watching the world go slowly by, there is an ache inside me. It is the ache of a stranger in a strange land.

I am cut off from those around me by the barrier of language; I do not understand them, and they do not understand me. I am further cut off by the colour of my skin — it is different. In fact I find myself totally lost in a culture which is different from my own in so many ways. The people here have different ideas, different attitudes, different aspirations. All is strange to me.

## Cries of 'Red Monkey'

To be the object of much humour and ribald comments is hard to take but, mercifully, there are few comments which I fully comprehend. I try to understand the feelings of those who spit upon my clothes and throw stones in my path. Then there are the insulting cries of 'Red Monkey' which come from children and adults alike. I struggle desperately to understand the hands which claw at my children, hands which pinch, pull and push, seeking to pull the children from their rickshaw, to see them cry out in fear. My own cry is silent, 'Why, Lord, why?' I can put up with the misunderstanding which asks 'What is he getting out of it?' or 'What's his angle?' but I feel the hurt inside.

The overwhelming reaction to all this is to seek the company of those who share my own culture and language. The 'ghetto mentality' creeps insidiously upon me. To hide behind walls, gates, doors, to get away from it all, is the instinctive response. Feelings of hostility well up inside me. As I try to suppress them, my mind turns to those strangers in my homeland. I compare myself with the Bengalis in London and Bradford, undergoing the same sort of treatment as I am experiencing here in Barisal. They, too, know the rejection, the misunderstanding,

the hostile humour and the overwhelming need to seek their own people for support and protection. They, too, have been forced to erect barriers of self-defence which become self-defeating, turning one inwards where there lies only despair.

## Barriers broken down

I have a friend who became a stranger, not in a strange land but in his own land. He suffered misunderstanding, He underwent

persecution, and finally He was put to death. But death could not hold him. Along with the threat of the grave, He broke the barriers of hatred and fear, bringing love and peace for all who will accept him. Who is going to tell those strangers in my homeland of the one who offers them release from their fears? Who is going to show them the self-giving love of my friend?

Remember the strangers in a strange land.



*The rickshaw ride*



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The Christian Church throughout the world is watching with keen interest the developments which are taking place in mainland China these days. For years now, ever since the communist party gained control, the doors have been fast shut against any sort of contact either by persons or letter, with Christians in that land.

The pessimists declared that the Church in China had been crushed to death, but the hopeful insisted that it must have gone underground, one day to re-emerge.

### **Slackening of the reins**

With the death of Mao Tse Tung changes began to take place. Nothing spectacular happened, but here and there an apparent slackening of the reins occurred. In particular the facility for tourists to visit China once again has encouraged those who knew that country to try and make the journey and maybe to make contact with some Christians somewhere.

Then one or two letters came out of China addressed to former missionaries from people who knew them, and now news has been received of three churches in Shanghai being used for public worship once more with thousands attending the services. Ever since tourists were permitted to return to China, of course, it was known that there were one or two 'show' fellowships which they could visit, but a circumscribed service had to be followed in which no preaching was allowed. Now it is learned that a Protestant church has established the right, by a test case, to include a sermon in its act of worship.

We can rejoice that through these years of extreme difficulty and pressure in which the Cultural Revolution burned Bibles and sought to stamp out the Church of Jesus Christ, there were men and women who kept the faith and lived by their experience of the living Lord present with them.

### **We must tread carefully – and prayerfully**

Certainly, whenever the opportunity is given for us to renew fellowship with these people of God along, what are regarded as, normal lines, we should be ready and eager to do so. But we would be wise to venture slowly, for over-eager or rash action in this respect now could surely embarrass our Christian brethren and sisters in China – even put them in danger, for the government is still a communist regime which believes that religion is an opiate, bemusing the people and reactionary to the advancement of the state.

There is, however, an immediate action available to us which bridges distances, surmounts barriers and nullifies opposition – prayer! Let us meet with and support our Chinese brethren at the throne of grace.



# 'ALL IS SAFELY GATHERED IN'

by Joyce Stockley

Last year in Bangladesh Mr Ali and his sons rejoiced that they were able to gather in their rice harvest. For four years they had had no rice crop. Each year in April they had gone out into their field, ploughed the ground and planted the precious seed, but each time after a good beginning the little rice plants had shrivelled and died.

Last year Farmer Ali again took a basket in his arms and from it he broadcast the rice seeds onto the prepared land. Then standing on his *moi* or ladder he rode behind the bullocks, covering up most of the seeds with earth as the Padder was drawn over the newly ploughed soil to level it. Whilst the rice was left to grow he and his two sons went around the district searching for casual labouring jobs to earn money to cover the daily expenses of the family.

## Hopes were dashed

In the sunshine and showers of April and May the rice seeds germinated and began to grow. The field was covered with little green grasslike shoots and hope began to rise in the farmer's heart — maybe this year they would get a rice harvest. But after a week or two, the plants ceased to grow and gradually the field began to look brown as the plants grew weaker and started to die.

'Oh, Allah! Why does this happen year after year? What shall we do?' farmer Ali cried. Once again the promise of harvest is lost and Mr Ali and all his neighbours are in despair.

As he stands and looks at the dying plants, a motorbike stops and a foreigner with reddish hair is soon standing beside him and asking in his own Bengali language, 'What's wrong?' 'How have you prepared the soil?' David Stockley asks. 'Have you given the right plant foods? What type of rice did you sow? When did you plant the seed and when did it begin to die?' After a little more talk he collects small amounts of soil from

different parts of the field and takes them back to his office in Gournadi (Barisal District) for testing.

## Help was offered

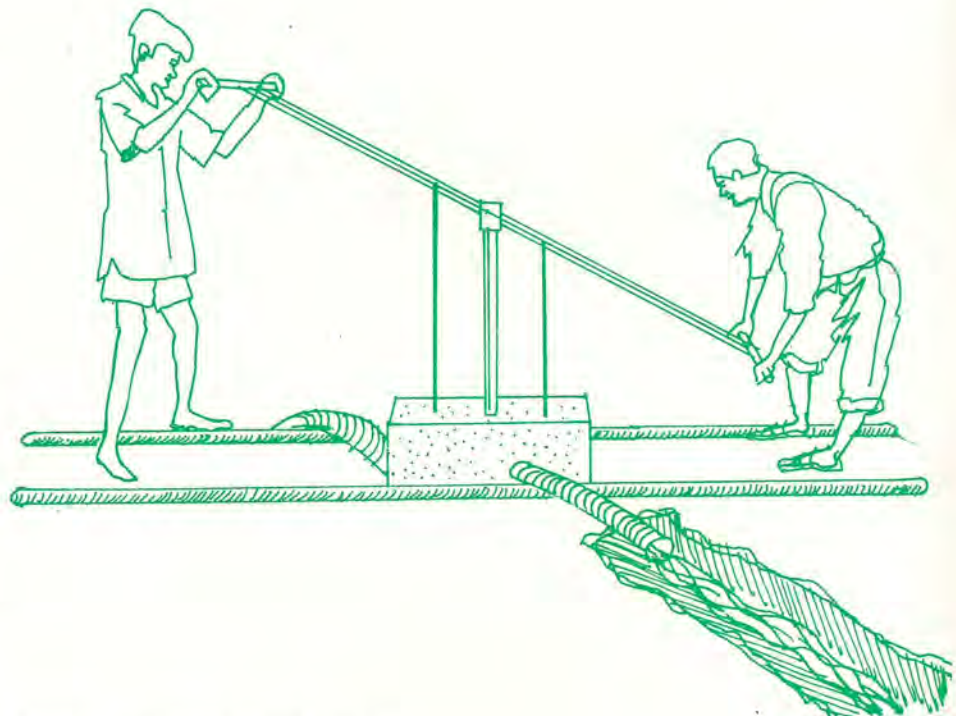
Next day Mr Ali has a visit from two young Bengali men sent by Mr Stockley from the Christian Agricultural Centre in Gournadi. They ask if farmer Ali would like help in replanting his fields. They offer the use of the power tiller from the centre, complete with driver, to enable the fields to be ploughed quickly. The loan of the power tiller is conditional upon the farmer and his sons pulling up all the surviving rice plants, storing them carefully at the edge of the water-pond, then replanting them after the centre staff have ploughed and fertilized the field. Mr Ali is told that the power tiller, the fertilizer and all the advice will be free, but that he will be required to pay back the costs if he does get a good harvest. The

Bengali workers leave word that if Mr Ali would like the help of the Agricultural Centre he must come to the office and request it.

After much talking with his sons and neighbouring farmers Mr Ali decided it was worth a try and he walked the mile or so into Gournadi to request the help of Mr Stockley and his Bengali workers.

## Work began on the ground

That very afternoon, Bidham, the centre mechanic checked the power tiller engine and filled the tank with petrol. Then another young lad started up the engine and walked slowly down the main road behind the tiller until he reached the area of the fields to be ploughed. Carefully he crossed the wooden bridge over the canal and guided the tiller down the steep slope into the fields. For two days he walked up and down behind the power tiller ploughing the fields. Meanwhile



*The manually operated water pump*





Other of the centre staff measured the fields and worked out the correct amount of nitrogen, phosphate and potash fertilizers that would be needed. It was decided to experiment and put extra lime on one part of the field and extra nitrogen on another part and not to subtract anything for the fertilizer that the farmer had already put into the soil.

The sun shone brightly and the fields were too dry to replant the weak rice plants, so the Agricultural Centre staff balanced a manually operated water pump across a cycle rickshaw and took it to the fields. Farmer Ali and his sons were asked to pump the handle up and down, and water flooded onto the fields from the canal nearby. The sons were not too pleased – it was hard work and the sun was hot. Why bother anyway? For it was unlikely that this foreign man could make rice grow when they could not. But their father insisted and so they had to work on until the fields were muddy enough to plant the seedlings again.

### Replanting underway

When half of the area was ready Mr Stockley and some of his helpers arrived on their motorcycles. They had brought some long string lengths with them and they tied each end of each length to a twig. Then they all got into the muddy field and using the string markers to make straight lines they helped farmer Ali replant his rice seedlings in straight rows at a measured distance apart. All afternoon they worked with Mr Ali and his sons in the heat and the mud, replanting the rice seedlings in the newly prepared soil. The power tiller was still working, finishing off the rest of the field and the children of the village were standing around watching the machine and the men at work. For another two or three days the farmer and his sons worked hard replanting all the little rice seedlings in straight lines and the centre staff visited and encouraged them.

For a week or two it seemed as though all the labour would be rewarded – the brownish rice plants grew new leaves and the field began to look green again. But gradually it became obvious that all was not well. The plants were not so healthy as they should have been, especially in the part of the field where the extra lime was put; here, they looked weak and sick.

### More testing plus a diagnosis

At that time two experts came to visit the Agricultural Centre, from the Rice Research Institute in the capital city of Dacca. These Doctors of Agriculture, one English and one a Bengali, were taken to visit Mr Ali's fields. They, too, took soil samples to test in their laboratories at the Research Institute and they suggested that the problems might be due to a lack of a trace element, probably zinc. They told the centre staff to try and buy some zinc oxide powder and experiment with it. Immediately a search was made in the local market shops and one pound of zinc oxide powder was found and purchased for the equivalent of about £2. (It was learnt that this powder is used by actors to whiten their faces when they are performing in plays.)

The Bengali agricultural workers, James Malaker and Sujit Baroi, went to Mr Ali's field and in some places they scattered small amounts of the zinc oxide powder between the rows of plants and worked it into the soil with their hands. In another small area they pulled up all the seedlings once again and put the roots into a small bucket containing a solution of zinc oxide powder and water. After letting them soak for a while, they replanted the seedlings and

marked the area as treated.

### Success at last

In a few days it was obvious that zinc was the missing factor. The plants in the treated areas were green and growing vigorously, whilst the plants in the rest of the field were dead or dying. Mr Ali consulted Mr Stockley once again and was encouraged to buy new rice seedlings from the local market and to soak them in zinc oxide in water solution before planting them in the place of his dead plants. He had no money to do this, but Mr Stockley was able to supply him the zinc oxide powder and a small sum of money to buy the new seedlings. Under the supervision of James and Sujit the field was replanted once again and this time everyone rejoiced to see the plants grow green and strong.

The months passed and in late October a very happy Mr Ali went along to the Agricultural Centre and asked permission to harvest his rice crop, the first in four years from that field. Some of Mr Ali's neighbours also added zinc to their rice and had a crop to harvest, but large areas of the district are not being used by the farmers because continual crop failure has made them abandon their fields.

The story of success in farmer Ali's field shows that modern scientific knowledge, taken by dedicated workers and applied in very simple ways, can make all the difference to needy farmers if they are willing to co-operate. Thus are Christians stretching out hands in love to help the hungry and distressed find real solutions to their problems.



# JONATHAN LINDELL



by Marian Hostetler,  
a member of the United Mission to Nepal

## Years of preparation

Jonathan Lindell grew up in China where his parents were missionaries. By the age of 18, when he left China to study in the USA, he was a committed Christian. Because of his conviction that he also would be willing to serve God as a missionary, he took time during his college years to read and study world missions and to pray for God's leading.

He says of this time 40 years ago, 'I received a strong guidance from God that I was to live and work with God's people for the opening of Nepal and to spend my life 100% for this.'

After finishing college and a year of Bible school he became the first missionary of the World Mission Prayer League (a Lutheran missionary fellowship) to be appointed to Asia, and in 1941 he left to work along the

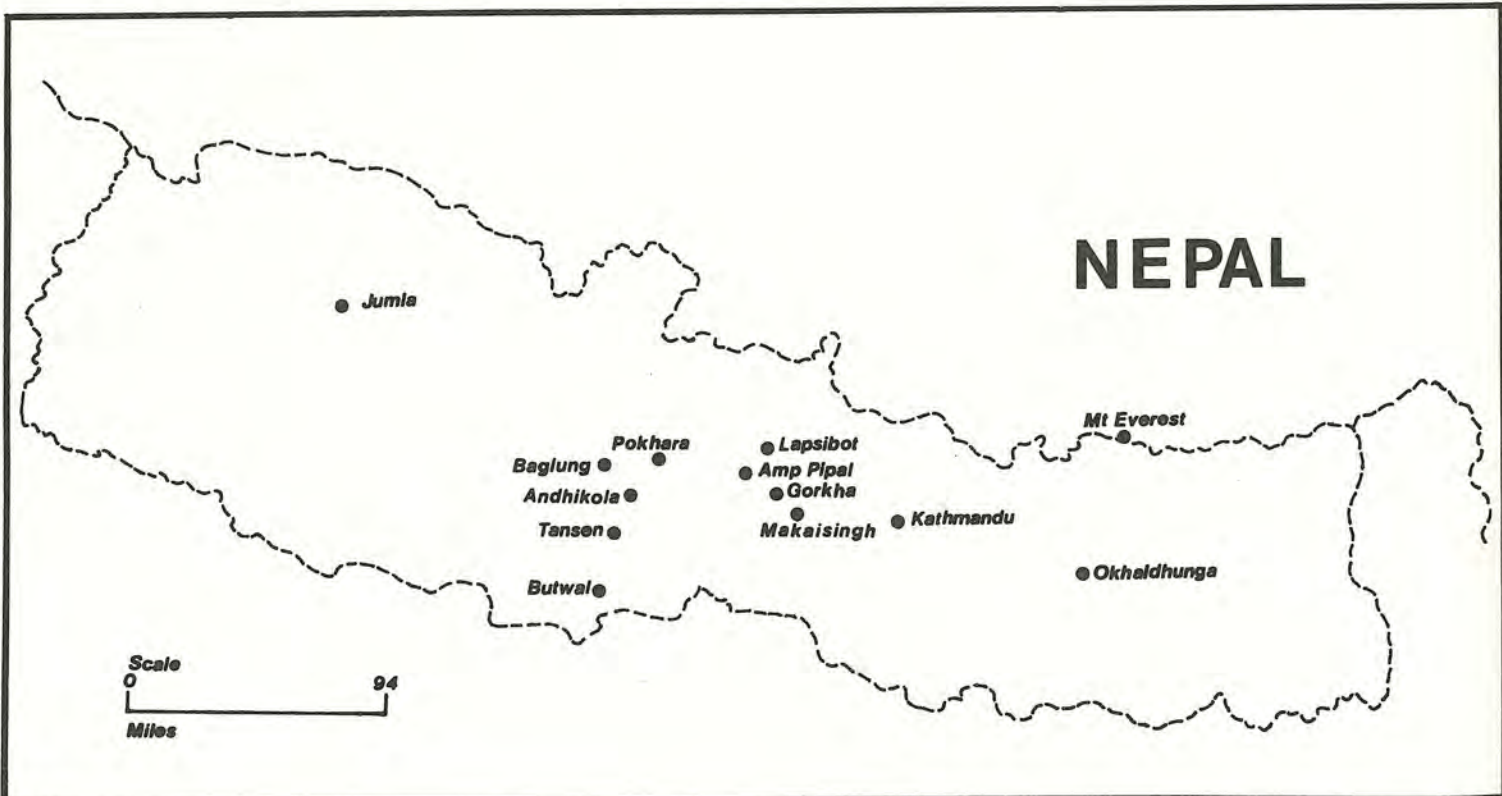
borders of Nepal, a country completely closed to foreigners. A number of individuals and mission groups had the same goals as Lindell: to surround Nepal, to find useful contacts with Nepalis living or travelling outside their country, to pray, to learn the Nepali language. He testifies now, 'We believed that when we were ready, God would open Nepal. And He did.'

Jonathan worked mainly in Darjeeling, India, on Nepal's eastern border. He had left his fiancée, Evey, behind, and because of the outbreak of World War II, it was four years before she could join him there and they could be married. They went to the States in 1946 for a furlough, but were refused permission by India to return.

## Dream fulfilled

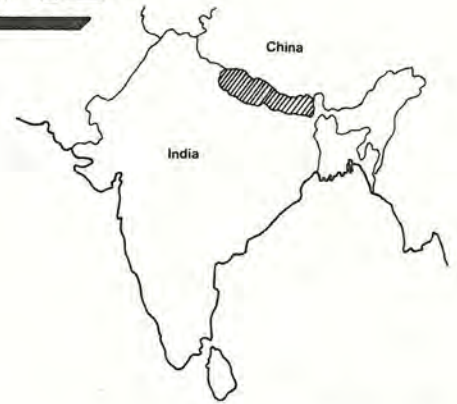
So the next nine years Lindell served on the

*Nepal and the Gospel of God* is an attractive book, an informative one, well-written and interesting. It was written by Jonathan Lindell at the request of the United Mission to Nepal on the occasion of its 25th anniversary in 1979. But you can search the cover and back pages in vain to find a picture of the author or to read a biographical sketch of him. Who is Jonathan Lindell? Why was he asked to write this book?





# A LIFE FOCUSED ON NEPAL



staff of his mission headquarters. In 1952 during a visit to India, he was excited to meet Mr and Mrs Bob Fleming who had actually been into Nepal, by the Government's permission, to make ornithological studies. Mrs Fleming, a medical doctor, had also been able to practise a little medicine. Says Jonathan, 'I knew then something was cooking and I would need an occupation to get into Nepal when the time came, so I went back to the States and took teachers' training and got my Master's degree in elementary education. In 1956, two years after the beginning of the United Mission to Nepal (eight mission agencies and societies who decided to work together in Nepal — now there are 32 such members of the UMN), we went to Nepal.' What he had dreamed of, and worked for, for 18 years was coming to pass.

Jonathan had in mind the idea of village work which would include a school, a dispensary, agricultural work and the Bible. He proposed this 'Community Service Project' to his mission, and the mission proposed it to the UMN with the offer of the Lindells to carry it out. The UMN accepted the idea.

However it took Jonathan nine months and 70 visits to government offices before the project could get underway in the area chosen some 50 miles west of Kathmandu, near Gorkha. To reach this area involved five to six days of walking as there were at that time no motorable roads.

'Our four and a half years at Amp Pipal village were our richest and happiest in Nepal,' says Jonathan now.

## Back to the office

However, in 1960 the UMN was without an Executive Secretary, and Jonathan was called to fill that post, a job he did for 11 years. At the beginning of his term, the

headquarters staff consisted of only three people who were responsible for 80 people in six different projects. He feels his main task during those years was to solidify the UMN and to define its character and nature. He also dealt with the government on 33 project issues, obtaining permission either for new projects or for the expansion of existing ones.

When a new Executive Secretary was found Jonathan was able to return to what he prefers, working on a smaller scale, out on a project. For six years he was Headmaster of the Boys' Boarding School at Pokhara.

His work has been somewhat curtailed since a severe heart attack during a 1974 furlough. During their last four-year term, now ended, Evey was assigned to manage a new UMN guesthouse in Kathmandu, and Jonathan worked in jobs related to education, especially working on writing a course on ethics and behaviour (teaching about such things as stealing, cheating, taking turns, sportsmanship) to be used in the schools.

## From both points of view

Another major assignment, of course, was the book. It took a year and a half to write, but going into it were 40 years of study and experience in and about Nepal and of gathering materials. It is perhaps unique in its being told from two points of view — that of the Nepali, and that of the outsider coming in. The title has been carefully chosen: it is about Nepal and it is about the gospel of God. It is hoped that the book will be of interest to Nepalis as well as to us 'outsiders', and gift copies have been presented to the King and to other high officials.

Another unusual aspect of the book is that it is not a history of the UMN alone, but of all contacts of Nepal with the gospel, from the Capuchin Fathers in 1707 up to the present.

Jonathan Lindell's hobbies, too, reflect his constant interest in Nepal: collecting Nepali stamps and preparing a slide lecture on what can be learned of Nepal through its stamps; writing magazine articles on the culture and history of Nepal; and still a dream, to develop a historical museum in the Pokhara region and to preserve its historical sites.

His parting words, to himself and us: 'We should see ourselves as people who are taking our turn in our place and in our time in the long history of God's mission toward Nepal. It has gone on for decades before us and will go on after us. We have been given the privilege to be a part of that larger whole.'



*Nepal and the Gospel of God* is not available in bookstores but can be ordered by mail through Mr R C Rollinson, 12 Main Street, Fulford, York YO1 4PQ. Please enclose the price — airmail £5, seairmail £3 — with your order, which will be forwarded to New Delhi and the book mailed from there.





*Robert Ahearn*

## IN ZAIRE

**Robert Ahearn** was born at Seven Kings, Essex, and educated in Godalming, Surrey, at grammar school and sixth form college. He then went on to Sheffield University and graduated with a BA degree in economics. While in Sheffield he worshipped at Wycliffe Chapel but was baptized in September 1978 at Guildford Baptist Church.

Robert first became interested in working for God overseas through reading *Jungle Pilot* by Nat Saint. His own call to missionary service was confirmed through talking to various people. While at university he was active in the Christian Union and much involved in student politics. He was treasurer and publicity secretary for the Community Action Group. Although very interested in political affairs he cannot see politics, as some people do, as the means of achieving Utopia; rather, Christ has shown us the Way.

In September Robert left for Zaire to teach mathematics at Ngombe Lutete.



*Nigel Courtman*

## IN ZAIRE

**Nigel Courtman** was born and brought up in Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire. He attended Northgate School and Bishops Stortford Boys' College before going to Sheffield University where he read Biblical Studies. In May 1974 Nigel was baptized at Bishops Stortford Baptist Church and became a member there shortly afterwards.

After feeling for some time the need to employ his abilities and learning in some positive service for the Lord, he read of the need for missionary teachers in Zaire and offered himself for service. Since September he has been teaching mathematics at Bolobo.

Nigel has held various positions of leadership including Sunday school teaching, leading a youth choir, leading his school Christian Union and being President of the Baptist Society at his university.

*Trevor and Stella King*



## IN NEPAL

**Trevor and Stella King** grew up in the same church. In the early 1950's they were both baptized at Northumberland Heath Baptist Church, Erith. They have three children, all of whom are now adults, and have fostered many others.

Trevor worked as a 'computer man' in various capacities for over 20 years and was recently trained part-time as a teacher. He has also undertaken various tasks in the church. Latterly Stella worked locally to their church in Teddington at the Tear Fund office as correspondence supervisor. She too, has played her part in the church, as Sunday school secretary and teacher.

In recent years Trevor and Stella felt that God was leading them to do something different. Their decision to offer to the BMS was encouraged by their minister and greatly supported by the church. After a term at Spurgeon's College, the couple left for Nepal to begin language study this month at Kathmandu. On completion of the course, Trevor will work as a business manager for the United Mission to Nepal.

## IN ZAIRE

**Janet Wilson** grew up in Bury, Lancashire. She came to faith in Christ while studying for Scripture O' level, having been profoundly impressed by the life of her Christian teacher. On moving to Worsley she joined the Methodist Church. At Sheffield College of Education she had opportunities of responsibility and at St Thomas Church, Crookes, experienced loving spiritual leadership and close fellowship. When in 1975 Janet moved to Barnsley, she transferred her membership to Sheffield





*Ian Wilson*



*Janet Wilson*

Road Baptist Church and taught in a junior school there.

**Ian Wilson** was brought up in Keswick where his parents were active members of the Methodist Church, which he joined later, having been greatly influenced by the youth work in a nearby Anglican Church. He studied biochemistry at Bristol and gained much through the fellowship of Christian Union friends. He then taught in Kenya as a short-term CMS volunteer, and travelled a few months in Africa before returning to Bristol to do a postgraduate teaching course.

For five years Ian taught in a Huddersfield comprehensive school. During this time, through visiting friends in Barnsley, he was drawn into the warmth of the house fellowship at Sheffield Road Baptist Church where he met Janet. They were married there in August 1977.

Ian occasionally pondered the possibility of working overseas again. Last March, when Alan Easter visited their church on deputation, they heard about the great need for teachers in Zaire and decided to offer their services. After a time of improving their French in Brussels, they went last month to Upoto, Zaire, where Ian is teaching science and mathematics while Janet helps with English and RI.

## AT HOME

**Rev Carey Garnon**, the new BMS Representative for Wales, was born in the village of St Dogmaels on the estuary of the River Tivy in north Pembrokeshire. He was educated first in the village school and then at Cardigan Grammar School, and was baptized at Blaenywaun Baptist Church by Rev John Thomas. Later he felt called to the ministry and started preaching, entering

Bangor Baptist College and University College of Bangor to read arts and theology.

On completion of his course he graduated in Welsh and philosophy and was ordained at Bridgend in March 1948 at which church he ministered for thirteen and a half years. He then accepted a call to be the first minister of the new Capel Gomer Welsh Baptist Church in the centre of Swansea. He continued at this church until September 1979 when he terminated his ministry prior to taking up his present duties. At one time, on the death of its minister, he undertook the oversight of Bethesda – the mother church of the Baptists of Wales, which was founded in 1649.

During the 40's and early 50's he was an active member of BMS and BU Summer Schools at Aberystwyth, Cardigan and Cilgwyn. Indeed he met his wife Marian at the BMS Cilgwyn Summer School. She was a Miss Howells before their marriage in 1951 and they have one son, Tudor.

## Links with missionaries

His interest in the BMS was further heightened in his first pastorate at Bridgend where three BMS missionaries were in membership with the church. They were the Rev William Davies of Puri, India, and the Rev and Mrs Ievan Maurice of Kimpese, Zaire.

Carey Garnon is very well known in the Baptist denomination in Wales. He has been a member of the Baptist Union Council for a long while, a past President of the West Glamorgan Association and the present Superintendent of the Association Ministerial Fund, but he is even more widely known in the Principality as a broadcaster both on radio and television. For the past 20 years he has broadcast as a reporter and interviewer in news and current affairs programmes,

especially on industrial, local and central government matters. He has also taught religious knowledge in the Boys' Grammar School where he took the O' and A' level classes.

One of his many interests is Welsh hymnology and church music. He has conducted a number of singing festivals and served on the editorial committee of *Mawl yr Ifawc* – the Welsh Youth Hymn Book. Further, he has compered the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales and many national inter-college eisteddfods.

## Fine preacher

But above all else he is regarded as a preacher and invited to exercise this gift not only at the Welsh Baptist Union but at other interdenominational preaching services. He has been the preacher, too, at the London Welsh St David's Festival held at All Souls, Langham Place, London.

These many gifts he now puts at the service of the Baptist Missionary Society as he keeps his countrymen informed about Christ's mission overseas through the Society.



*Carey Garnon*





*Carl Johansson talking with a Nepali official*

# MAN WITH A MISSION

An interview with **Carl Johansson**, the new Executive Director of the United Mission to Nepal, conducted by Juhani Kivela (Information Officer) and Marian Hostetler.

**Q. What have been some of the formative experiences of your life which you feel have prepared you for this job?**

A. First of all, the 11 years I spent in Africa. I was in Tanzania for 10 years, serving as Principal of a training school for laity and was elected by the national church (the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which now has 800,000 members) to be its first Executive Secretary. In this administrative work I dealt with 17 different Lutheran boards, a good preparation for working with our 32 sending agencies. Both of these jobs were turned over to national leaders. In my one year in Ethiopia, I was Assistant General Director of 'Radio Voice of the Gospel' in Addis Ababa.

Secondly, I have been aware of Nepal since 1940 because of my relationship with the World Mission Prayer League and its first Director, Paul Lindell. The past 10 years I've been pastor of the Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls, Minnesota, which is a sort of home church of World Mission Prayer League, and which has sent at least eight missionaries to Nepal, including Jonathan Lindell, former Executive Director of UMN. This congregation presently has about 67 missionaries serving in different countries, as well as having a deep commitment for evangelism and social action in its immediate area.

Having worked as a denominational pastor, and also having worked in an independent Lutheran mission (the World Mission Prayer League) as its Chairman, will be helpful to me in working with the UMN sponsoring churches and societies.

**Q. With all you had read and studied about Nepal and the work before you came, has anything surprised you or been different from your expectations?**

A. I had been to Nepal twice before becoming Executive Director, once visiting fields for the Prayer League and once to attend a UMN Board meeting. However, I've been happily surprised by the genuine freedom there is to share personal faith, and to see the vitality and growth of the Church here.

I'm deeply appreciative of the commitment of workers from the variety of boards and how they creatively accept one another.

Another happy surprise is the good dialogue with government agencies in the work we seek to do together. There is not an adversary relationship, but rather a mutual working relationship with honest and open questioning.

**Q. What do you see as your main tasks, now, and in the long range?**

A. 1) Working at relationships with government; 2) Working at relationships with sending agencies and donor agencies; 3) Assigning personnel and freeing them to be what they can be in their setting; 4) Doing over-all planning. I see administration as a servant or enabling role.

More specifically I see a need creatively to communicate with fellow-workers and to reduce the emotional distance between headquarters and where the work is being done. I see a need to understand deeply what rural integrated development really means, and to discover what are the felt needs of Nepalis regarding development.

**Q. What are the main tasks of the Mission, in your view?**

A. 1) To live in creative tension between a continuity with institutions and the thrust on people-intensive village-centred projects. Ninety-four per cent of Nepal's people are rural. 2) We also need to live in the urban setting, to understand rural/urban tensions



*Entrance to The Butwal Technical Institute*





*A Nepali home at Tansen*

and to challenge the materialism of the urban affluent. 3) We need to be students of Nepali culture and of the social currents which move the people of Nepal. 4) We need to be in supportive relationship to Nepali leadership wherever possible (in schools, hospitals, industry). 5) We need to avoid being elitist in our relationships to Nepalis (i.e. not only to be a friend of the school headmaster but of the poor person living next door).

**Q. What are some of the future plans of the Mission?**

A. The Mission has grown, not always through planning and strategy sessions, but by doing what there was to do. Our 'plan' is to live with sensitivity and flexibility in one of the poorest nations in the world.

A new thrust is to 'plant' a couple of teachers in a local high school for a few years to raise the standards and level of teaching, then pull them out and put them in another location. We are doing this now at three different places. We are also emphasizing community health and have 20-25 persons working exclusively in this area.

There are three possible new projects. One comes at the request of the national government to start a school and many other

integrative components at Jumla in western Nepal. Another request, on the district level, is to work on rural electrification with other components at Andhikhola; and a third request comes from a local community, Bojha, to work with community development there.

**Q. The Mission now has about 260 new workers. Should this number increase?**

A. We have a number of positions open, but it appears we should not go beyond 300. We would want to expand without growth in administration. We can grow by seconding to other organizations and agencies and projects. Specific UMN projects are not expanding as far as UMN personnel go, but are phasing down (Butwal, Mahendra Bhawan, Pokhara etc.).

**Q. Does the UMN have urgent personnel or financial needs?**

A. If our work has integrity and quality, the people and money will come.

**Q. How do you and your wife, Alice, feel personally about your work?**

A. My wife is a nurse, a mother, a wife and a homemaker. She loves and enjoys people and wants our home to be an open one where people are free to come without being

asked. Together we have already visited most of the UMN projects. We enjoy travel, people and reading.

I cherish what I'm doing and don't feel a need to get away from it. The variety is great. To me this calling is a privilege and a pleasure.



*A Nepali hill woman*



# AN ASSESSMENT OF BANGLADESH

by David King, who served at Barisal,  
October 1975-April 1979.



'Tell me about the revival in Bangladesh,' a missionary colleague from Brazil recently asked me. I had to tell him with a real sense of disappointment that there had been no revival in Bangladesh. I have found that a common myth in our churches is the belief that although in the West we live in a state of religious decline, in the East the Church is everywhere growing apace. The generalization is, of course, too sweeping. There are areas of rapid growth, it is true. In Shillong, the capital city of Meghalaya State of NE India which we have visited, there are churches everywhere and huge Sunday congregations. But that is not the picture in Bangladesh.

'What happened then to the thousands and thousands of enquirers we heard of in 1972, 73 and 74?' I get asked. A good question. Let's recap a little.

## In times of trouble

In 1970 a massive tidal wave hit the coast of East Pakistan – as it was then – sweeping away up to 200,000 lives. Then in 1971-72 came war, a war of liberation for the people of East Pakistan. It was a devastatingly cruel war in which it is thought that about a million people lost their lives. The Pakistan Army sought out Bangladeshi national, intellectual, and community leaders and went through one area of the country after another destroying lives and homes. Up to five million Hindus fled the country – I have been to the empty homes of some who never returned. And it was through this war that the nation of Bangladesh was born.

Then in 1974 came floods up in the north as the Bhramaputra River overflowed its banks, destroying crops over thousands of acres. Bangladesh became a symbol of poverty on our television screens as the nation cried out for economic aid. At that time there were groups of people in Bangladesh who began to look to the Church for help. Thousands came seeking. Nor were they only seeking material help. Writing from Dacca, in the November 1973 *Missionary Herald*, Sue Le Quesne says, 'Amid all the uncertainty and unsettledness of the present situation there are more new and exciting openings for the Church than there have been for many years. In some areas whole new groups are clamouring for Christian teaching. . . . In the north, in Dinajpur area, there are vast opportunities for outreach. . . . In the Faridpur area there is a group of about 4,000 asking for instruction.' Not long ago I travelled with Rev Subash Sangma, secretary of the Garo Baptist Union (for there are three Baptist Unions in Bangladesh as in Britain), through the Barisal/Faridpur area. He said, 'I came on tour through this area in 1973. There were literally thousands who came to hear the preaching.' There were undoubtedly many, many enquirers at that time.

## Convert or revert?

What of today? Let's go round the districts. All BMS missionaries work within the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha (BBS), the largest of the three Baptist Unions. There are eight associations in the Union comprising about 180 churches. It is a community of about 25,000 people with approximately 9,000 church members. I have been working as the Superintendent Minister of the Barisal Association. It has the largest number of churches, 37. Together with the Faridpur Association it forms the heartland of the Bengali Protestant Community in Bangladesh. Its origins go back 150 years. In Barisal only one new church was formed during the early 1970's. Tragically that church has now reverted to Hinduism. That is, all 22 families baptized there have taken the rites of initiation back into the Hindu community from which they came. Only the school teacher and his wife sent there to act as pastor to the church, and the church secretary and church cleaner attend church. All are on the pay roll of the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha.

In the Faridpur Association six new churches were formed. Last February I was at the big annual meeting of the Faridpur Association and while I was there I tried to find out what was happening in these six churches. I could get no straight replies until someone said, 'Look, stop asking, very few people are attending church there now.' In Khulna Association, Jessore Association, and Dacca Association no new churches were formed. In the Chittagong area the BBS has both lost and gained churches (gains outweighing losses). A group of Independent Churches have joined the Union, and some in the Union have become Independent. This is nothing at all to do with the movement of enquirers from the 1972-74 period.

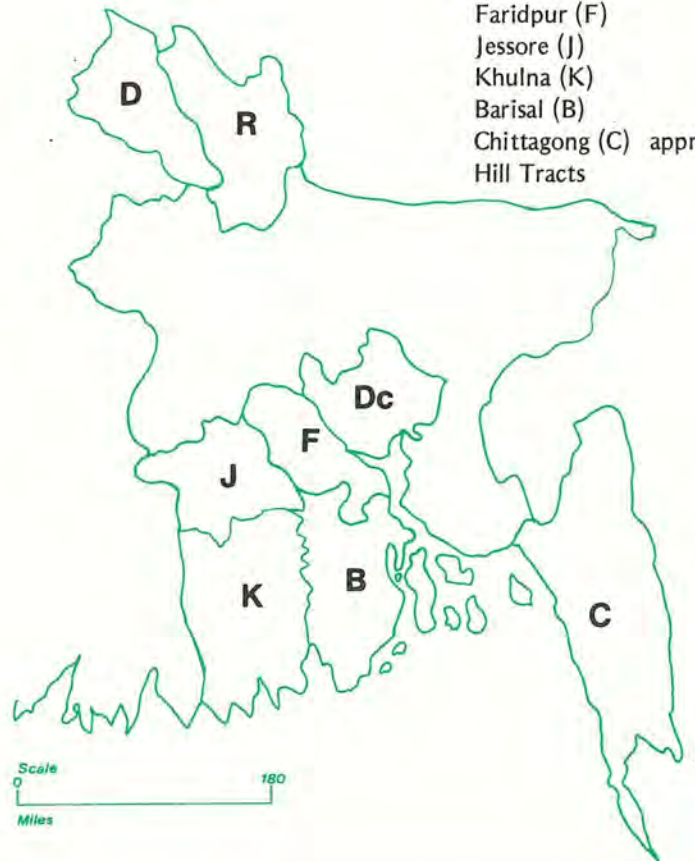
## New churches in the north

In the Dinajpur and Rangpur Associations in the north the situation is different. In



## ASSOCIATIONS OF THE BANGLADESH BAPTIST SANGHA

	No. of churches
Dinajpur (D)	34
Rangpur (R)	18
Dacca (Dc)	15
Faridpur (F)	34
Jessore (J)	3
Khulna (K)	18
Barisal (B)	37
Chittagong (C) approx Hill Tracts	25



Dinajpur 25 new churches have been formed and half a dozen in Rangpur. These are groups of people numbering from six to 40. They are mostly illiterate. Both the Associations in the north are under pressure from other church groups, the Roman Catholics in Dinajpur and the heretical New Apostolic Church in Rangpur. Five out of a total of 18 churches in the Rangpur Association have nominally gone over to the New Apostolic Church, and in the Dinajpur Association the RCs from time to time put pressure on the new churches to join them by offers of free schooling and other financial inducements. One of our pastors who lives and works in the area said, at the BBS biannual pastors' conference, that if a missionary was not placed immediately in the new area, i.e. Ruhea, then the whole group would go over to the Catholics. Praise God that we now have a BMS couple, John and Nan Passmore, living in the area, and that there is in addition a long term teaching programme in progress. However, there is still a great deal to be done to secure these churches in Christ.

What assessment, then, can we make of the present situation? The tale in the south is one of failure and lost opportunity. Two points stand out for our notice. First of all it is probably true to say that most of the enquirers were not genuine. They were seeking bread not the Living Bread. I think there is real confusion here. There is a world of difference between the enquirers as we understand the term, i.e. a man from a general Christian background who has come forward for counselling at a crusade meeting, and the enquirer in Bangladesh — a man from a non-Christian background who knows little or nothing of the Christian faith and who approaches the Church asking for teaching and baptism. The movement to the Church in 1972-74 was largely due to the socio-economic conditions prevailing at the time. People saw the Christian Church

with its contact with the West and came seeking help. They were hungry. A lot of relief was given out. Many, when they realized they would get no more, went away. (It is interesting to read John 6 for a biblical precedent.)

Others, a few, were dissatisfied with their traditional faith and were seeking something more. Their problem became that the Church was not ready to receive them. This is the second point. The Church in Bangladesh, inward looking for years, could not suddenly turn itself inside out and welcome new members. Tragically most have gone away not finding Christ and disillusioned by what they saw in the Church. The net result of thousands and thousands of enquirers has proved to be virtually nothing, an evangelistic opportunity lost.

### The door is still open

But not quite. Not quite because there has been an excellent Bible Correspondence Course work done by the International

Christian Fellowship and other agencies, and judging by the numbers who complete these courses there must be a good number of secret disciples, an opinion widely held by missionaries in Bangladesh, and also because there are still enquirers today. Enquirers must be more actively sought out these days. When I left Barisal in April there were four areas in the district where there were enquirers, all of which need thorough investigation. The fact is that missionaries are still very much needed. In the north the relative success has one simple explanation. The missionaries are still in charge. They have not only spearheaded the evangelism, they have gone on with the tedious, dogged work of follow up. The fruit is new churches in a Muslim land. We, the Baptist Missionary Society, have a profound responsibility to the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha. We brought it into being. It still needs a great deal of moral and spiritual help. The door is still open. The situation is very complex, perhaps one of the biggest pastoral challenges of our day. Who will go for us?



# A WORTHWHILE JOURNEY

by David Wheeler

I am on a ship travelling across the Bay of Bengal. This is the second time I have done this trip. The ship is quite large and on the way we call in at two or three small islands to bring supplies to the people there and to take travellers into the big city which is our final destination — Chittagong. The journey takes 24 hours and so I am able to catch up with some writing.

## Close supervision

As I write, about ten Bangladeshis are crowding into my cabin and staring through the window. I have not yet found out what interests them so much about me, but I have been in the country long enough not to be put off by this intense curiosity. They watch you write, eat, wash, sleep, relax — in fact, everything! How would you stand up to that kind of scrutiny? It only needs one instant of inattention and your witness to Christ may be spoilt. Not that missionaries continually live under that kind of tension, for they must learn to be relaxed, not easily ruffled, at peace with their Lord and with those they have come to serve.

Last night I slept from 10 pm until I was awakened at 7.30 am by the noise of animals. I discovered I had contracted prickly heat during the night, so to ease the infernal itching I got up and washed — or, at least, I attempted to wash. Have you tried washing in a hand basin which has no stopper? On Bangladeshi ships hand basins do not have stoppers. It is just one of those things which singles out this country from our own.

Then I made my way round the deck to the side where the noise was coming from. It was a wonderful sight. We had stopped at the island of Sandwip and the ship was moored about a quarter of a mile from the shore. Many boats of all sizes were coming out to the ship to receive supplies and bring their produce to be taken to Chittagong for selling in the market.

## Calculated risk

For the small boats this is no easy business. They have to row up tide for about 200 yards because the current is very swift and strong. Then they aim the boat out into the current and drift down at quite a speed towards the big ship. The object of the exercise is to try and get close enough to the ship so that, as the boat whizzes past, its occupant can grab hold of something — anything — and then, if he is strong enough to resist being jerked from his little boat, he will eventually moor up against the ship. Sometimes boats miss and go sailing off into the morning sun, and many crash into each other. These island people must be different from the mainlanders because it is all treated as a time of great rejoicing and fun.

Anyway, the first successful docking was made by a large boat full of produce and animals — goats, sheep and chickens. The goats were crying and walking all over the chickens, which were tied up in large, circular baskets. Then a ladder was lowered down the side of the boat and a line of very skilful

men took up position on the steps of the ladder. Next, the goats and sheep were loaded onto our ship. With one hand the men held the goat's front legs, behind the knees, and with the other hand the goat was held by the scruff of the neck. This seemed to immobilize the animal completely and also succeeded in keeping it quiet for a while. The men then passed the animal from one to the other up to the deck about 25 feet above the boat. About 100 animals were brought up in this way and then came basketfuls of chickens and cockerels. Then there were heavy baskets of rice to hump up.

## We all need supplies

All this took about one and a half hours and while it was going on all the islanders who were bound for Chittagong were brought out on a kind of motorized barge around to the other side of the ship. The driver of this barge was not too clever. Perhaps he was only a learner, but after banging against our ship many times, first head on and then stern first, they eventually managed to get a line fixed. In the end about 100 people



*A busy river scene*



# BOOK REVIEW



## A CHRISTIAN SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE by Alan Storkey Published by Inter-Varsity Press £6.50

In this book is offered a Christian contribution to current debates in the social sciences. Too often is it assumed in sociology and economics that religion can be left out of account. The author, head of economics and politics at Worksoop College, holds that secularization in modern times has not meant a movement from faith to no-faith, but rather a movement from one faith to others. Faith of a kind is still central to social behaviour; and such disciplines as sociology and economics have their roots in religion. After a concise historical review of the development of the social sciences, he proceeds to a consideration of the elements of a Christian perspective based on a Christian epistemology which posits that all meaning is to be found in God, creator of all. From this perspective he then discusses such topics as: free social relationships; community and class; marriage; the family; the mass-media; British politics and parties; the state; economics; the institutional church. The discussion is drawn together at the end in relation to Christ's teaching concerning the Kingdom of God.

The author is obviously widely read and covers a vast amount of ground. He travels

during the trip there will be opportunities to witness to the power of Christ, opportunities for fellowship with other Christian travellers and opportunities for bringing Life to the people of Bangladesh.

Excuse me a moment while I remove the goat from my cabin . . .

boarded the ship and with many a smiling face we set off for our next port of call.

These islands depend for their life on this big ship which brings supplies from the mainland. It would be dreadful if the ship just passed them by. Then I thought of the people on Sandwip. Who brings them supplies, spiritual supplies? I concluded that a missionary is very much like a supply ship. There are great islands and smaller islands of people, communities in this world where darkness reigns. There are such people near you who are waiting for the ship to come and bring them the supplies they need to continue living. So often we pass by. You see, it takes a lot of time and toil to unload all our supplies onto these little boats. It is frustrating to spend so much time and effort when we are on a journey. But this is the whole point of the journey. So when the missionary comes across these needy people who need supplies of spiritual food, he must remember that though it may take much of his precious time and energy, he must not pass by: indeed, to provide the necessary supplies is his very reason for being where he is.

### Not a minute to waste

Maybe this article has given you some more idea of what life is like for a missionary in Bangladesh. We find that we are often travelling, and often over long distances which take many hours. Back in our home country, journeys are bridges between one activity and another and are to be dispensed with in the least possible time and with the least possible effort. Part of the missionary orientation is to get rid of this idea and to realize that journeys are an activity in themselves; in fact, part of the very life we have been called to live. The missionary does not call a halt to his work at the beginning of a journey and resume it again when he reaches his destination. He has been called by his Lord to undertake that journey and

so rapidly that he is not able to examine in great depth any one topic, but that is not his purpose. He makes some shrewd observations on and offers acute criticisms of the institutional church and the Christian 'establishment' which he regards as being too much influenced by the secularism of our age. He refers to the Downgrade Controversy in a way which reveals his sympathy with C H Spurgeon.

But it is not quite clear how he regards the Holy Scriptures in relation to the revelation in our Lord Jesus Christ. The book seems to be more Bibliocentric than Christocentric. It is, however, an interesting, stimulating and challenging book which deserves a wide readership, especially among students for whom presumably it is primarily intended.

ASC

### MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

#### Arrivals

Miss J Wells on 20 October from Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

Rev A Brunton Scott on 1 November from São Paulo, Brazil.

Miss M Bishop on 4 November from Yakusu, Zaire.

Miss F M Morgan on 4 November from Tondo, Zaire.

Miss A McQueen on 13 November from Chandraghona, Bangladesh.

#### Departures

Mrs J W Passmore and son on 19 October for Ruhea, Bangladesh.

Miss J M Westlake on 19 October for Chandraghona, Bangladesh.

Mr and Mrs C Laver and daughter on 2 November for Barisal, Bangladesh.

Mrs R Young and family on 9 November for Dinajpur, Bangladesh.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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(18 October-9 November 1979)

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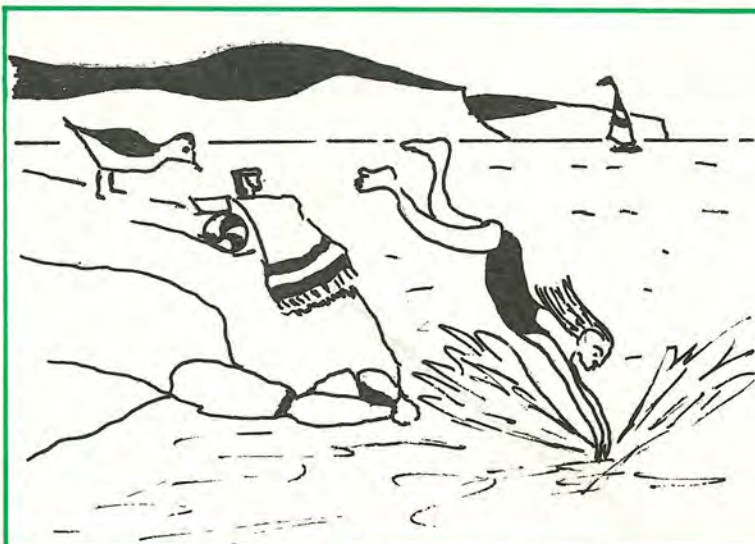
**Medical Work:** Anon: £300.00; Anon: £25.00; Donations in memory of Mrs L C Terrell: £245.00; In loving memory of Margaret and Arthur: £15.00.

**Relief Fund:** Anon: £20.00; Anon (Kampuchea): £10.00.

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