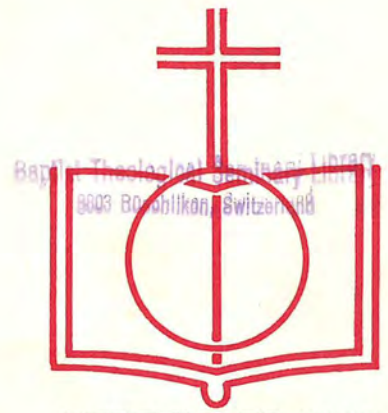


Missionary

HERALD

The magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society



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LOOKING IN ON SERAMPORE COLLEGE

BOOK REVIEW



**ON YOUR MARK – A GUIDEBOOK FOR
CHRISTIAN TRAVELLERS TO CHINA**
by **Leona Frances Choy**

Published by Christian Communications Ltd,
Hong Kong. US \$2.00

Written for American Christians visiting China on conducted tours, and particularly for those who would witness to their faith in Christ, this little book should prove valuable to all tourists from the West. The style is lively and interesting. The recent history of China and of Christians there is outlined, and an account given of Chinese ideas and customs. The various pitfalls for the unwary foreigner are indicated. The reader is encouraged to be a good Christian and to witness in ways which will bring neither embarrassment nor harm to the Christians in that country. The least satisfactory section is that on missionaries. The tone of it is unworthy; and the sweeping generalizations give the impression that the writer has accepted uncritically a great deal of hostile anti-missionary propaganda.

ASC

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously or without address.
(28 May-25 June 1980)

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Miss E I Wyatt on 1 June from Khulna, Bangladesh.

Rev R E Connor on 5 June from Cascavel, Brazil.

Miss J Sargent on 7 June from Udayagiri, India.

Miss G J Walker on 13 June from Makaising, Nepal.

Rev M L R and Mrs Wotton and family on 14 June from Curitiba, Brazil.

Mr S P Mantle on 17 June from Yakusu, Zaire.

Miss R Montacute on 17 June from Kinshasa, Zaire.

Miss M E Philpott on 17 June from Kinshasa, Zaire.

Miss J A Townley on 17 June from Kinshasa, Zaire.

Miss W Aitchison on 19 June from Tondo, Zaire.

Departures

Rev A Ferreira on 3 June for Portugal and Curitiba, Brazil.

Rev R E Connor on 24 June for Cascavel, Brazil.

Mrs M Macdonald on 24 June for Berhampur, India.

General Work: Anon (MAC): £5.00; Anon (Cymro): £17.00; Anon (remembering a dear cousin): £5.00; Anon (Zaire): £1,000.00; Anon: £10.00; Anon: £1.00; Anon (Maxco Trust): £56.00; Anon (IA): £20.00; Anon (FAE – Aberdeen): £10.00; Anon (EF): £20.00; Anon (Cymro): £10.00; Anon (Cymro): £10.00; Anon (NS): £20.00.

Bangladesh Relief: Anon (MAC): £10.00.

East Africa Relief: Anon: £50.00.

Legacies

	£	p
Mrs D K Carpenter	100.00	
Miss A F Chappell	2,250.00	
Mrs O A Chivers	1,000.00	
Mrs A E Francis	50.00	
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Mrs E Wells	100.00	
Miss M M West	1,050.00	
Miss M Wright	305.00	

NOTES FOR YOUR PRAYER GUIDE

Christopher and Jennifer Sugg (2 September) are about to return to a new location in Zaire.

Lawrence Wallace (12 September) has now returned home.

Alison Wilmot (19 September) has now returned home.

David and Joyce Sorrill (21 September) are on furlough.

Philip and Carol Stunell (26 September) have now returned home.

Secretaries

Rev A S Clement
Rev H F Drake, OBE

Editor

Rev A E Easter

Enquiries about service to:

Rev (Mrs) A W Thomas

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

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

We share in the work of the Church in:

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

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It has often been suggested that true progress comes only from overcoming opposition. This certainly seems true of the early days of the Baptist Missionary Society and in particular of the work in India.

Ironically it was the British authorities in that country who were most opposed to missionaries being admitted. The East India Company was against any forms of missionary enterprise because they were afraid that educational advancement, and the opening up of new lines of thought, would lead to unrest and create difficulties for the British administration in India.

Because of this, those missionaries who followed Carey to India a few years later, went straight to a Danish settlement on the banks of the Hooghly River, called Frederickanagore (Serampore) and put themselves under the protection of its governor, Colonel Bie.

Three become one

Faced with the impossibility of obtaining permission for new colleagues to join him in the British controlled part of India at Madnabati, Carey sacrificed much of the work he had already done and moved to Serampore. He arrived there on 10 January 1800 and with Ward and Marshman earned for it the title 'The Cradle of Modern Missions'. These three were men of high intellectual gifts and of complete devotion to the service of God. The gifts of one so complemented the gifts of another that they became welded into a single instrument for the use of their one Lord and Master.

The one great overriding purpose for their presence in India was to bring to the people of that land knowledge of the love of God, but they knew that there were many means to that end and they used every means in their power.

Serampore College, the crown of concerted effort

From the beginning of the Society those forming it recognized the importance of education, and their work in this field was truly pioneering. In the early years in India a school for Bengali boys was started and in only seven years 44 more were opened. A real innovation was the commencement of schools for girls. In this way the Serampore trio sought to serve in the education and general widening of outlook of all classes of the community, but the crown of their efforts in this direction is seen in the opening of the College in 1818.

Carey was convinced of the necessity to prepare a large body of Indian Christians for the work of pastors and itinerants. The evangelization of India was beyond the capabilities of the missionaries alone. The College was pre-eminently to be a divinity school, but at the same time it was to be open to all without distinction of caste or creed. It was to include a section for training teachers and to contain a library of books of value in any Indian language, as well as other languages, and of books in theology, humanities and philosophy.

The vision comes to fulfilment

Such breadth of vision is hard to match, but how wonderfully it took shape. Down through the years these original hopes have been pursued so that today the name of Serampore is synonymous with the best standards in all the faculties. Still at the heart of this College, now a university, is the Theological School which draws its students from all over India and trains them for the work of ministry and for the tasks of evangelism.

A BRIEF VISIT TO THE CRADLE OF THE BMS

by Miss E Cave

As a little girl in Sunday school, I had been taught the story of William Carey — ‘Young man, sit down!’ and so on. As an adult and a Sunday school teacher myself, I had tried to tell my own class something of the story, but really I had no idea of the kind of work Carey did, nor the places in which he did it.

Such a noble edifice

It was therefore with lively anticipation that I arrived at the back garden entrance to Serampore College. As I walked along the little path between the flower beds in full bloom, I saw the most beautiful classical building in front of me. I had already seen the Taj Mahal, the parliament buildings in Delhi and a number of Hindu temples, but none pleased me so much as the building now facing me. I said to myself, ‘This even beats Bath!’ for it is in the same style of architecture as that beautiful city and the regency terraces of Hove. ‘Surely this can’t be William Carey’s building?’ I said to my friend. ‘He could never have raised the money to pay for such a noble edifice.’ ‘Oh, yes!’ he replied, ‘It is his building, but this is only the administrative block. You must go right across to the other side to see the front building; that is much better.’

First we went to another building where I met BMS missionaries, Keith and Edna Skirrow, who welcomed me into their home and told me that it was part of the house where Carey had spent his last ten years. Outside the front door I saw the wall plaque commemorating the fact.

They then took me to see the principal building which I found even more beautiful than the first. It has a classical facade, columns and pediment of exquisite proportions, is delicately coloured and is in a perfect state of repair. A noble avenue of trees leads from the front portico to a pair of wrought iron gates, beyond which flows the gentle Hooghly river, sparkling



Keith and Edna Skirrow beneath wall plaque marking Carey's stay in the house



Children playing in front of The College

in the sunlight and fringed on the further side by palm trees with a few white buildings among them.

'It is such a peaceful spot, surely the most tortured soul could find tranquillity and peace of mind here,' I thought. The only sound was the voices of children playing games on the rather dry grass in front of the College. Some of them insisted on being in my picture as I photographed the scene. Then Mr and Mrs Skirrow took me to Carey's library to show me the charter whereby the King of Denmark gave the land to Carey for the building of the College. I was amazed to see the volumes of bibles in so many different languages (Chinese as well as about 30 Indian) for which Carey had been responsible. He was a brilliant linguist and a tireless worker, but how one man achieved so much in one lifetime remains

to me an unexplained miracle.

Reminders of the man

Then, on to the Carey Museum, where many small relics are kept, including the pulpit from which he preached in Serampore and the rather clumsy little crutches on which he had to hobble around in later life. Then, in glass cases, there were various rocks and shells which Carey had collected and classified.

As it was vacation time there were not many students in residence, but I was fortunate enough to meet and talk with two of them, one from Mizoram and one from Zuava. These two were both Baptists, but the theological faculty is ecumenical, so most of its 60 students belong to other denominations. I was also introduced to the Principal who is a Christian, but not a

Baptist, the only Baptist on the staff being Mr Skirrow.

The control of the College is in the hands of the Serampore Council. The Senate of Serampore University awards its own degrees in theology. All trace of the original BMS buildings, the press and the school have disappeared under an unsightly jute mill. The Danish church still graces the scenery by its charm, although the district around it is now a slum area.

I had a most enjoyable time in Serampore but left it feeling rather saddened by the delapidation and decay of Carey's tomb. When C H Spurgeon's grave was damaged by a bomb during World War II it was quickly repaired and restored. Surely Carey was as great a man as Spurgeon and his grave as deserving of a similar upkeep?

SERAMPORE COLLEGE~ AN UNFINISHED STORY

based on a report by the Principal,
Dr Sailash Mukhopadhyay

Serampore College, which completed 160 years of its existence in 1978, is more than a memorial to the vision of William Carey and his associates. Founded as a divinity school for Christian youth, it also aimed at the 'instruction of other Asiatic youth in Eastern literature and European Science'. With its mission recognized by the King of Denmark (then having sovereign power over Serampore) in the Charter of 1827, and by the British Crown and the Republic of India by different statutory measures, it is the only institution in India providing secular and theological education on the same campus. The faith on which this institution has grown is the belief that secular and theological education each attain their perfection not in isolation, but in close association with each other.

It has not been easy for the College to live up to the great ideals of its founders. Recurrent financial crises have ever stood in the way of the College realizing the possibilities adumbrated in the Charter and the subsequent statutes. It had even to keep the Arts-Science Department closed for a long period from 1883 to 1911. Still, the second decade of the present century saw the re-opening of the Arts-Science Department, and the College attaining, through its newly constituted Senate, the status of a Theological University, with affiliated Theological Colleges spread over far flung areas of the Indian Sub-continent. While the College is known the world over as a centre of theological education, it is acclaimed by the elite of India as the place which pioneered in the emergence of modern literatures in Bengali and other Indian languages, and which helped in the crystallization of modern education in India.

Venerable centre of education

The cultural resurgence that took place in the nineteenth century Bengal derived part of its momentum from the activities of Carey and his colleagues. With its students

and teachers drawn from different religions and different nationalities, Serampore College has been in the estimation of the people and the Government of India a venerable centre of education where seekers of truth can conduct their quest, unhampered by strait-jackets of any kind. So the College receives recognition by the media, both radio and press, on the occasion of academic and other functions, such as the Carey Day celebrations. In the matter of finance the College has received help from missionary societies, from the Friends of Serampore, and from Danish, British, Central and State governments, for the furtherance of its educational aims. The British Council has also presented the library with microfilm equipment. Besides the University Grants Commission, wider sections of the public, at home and abroad, have given assistance.

With two breaks, the period 1883-1911, and a time of affiliation to Burdwan University from 1960-1966, the College has remained affiliated to the University of Calcutta since

the latter's foundation in 1857. At present the College teaches the following subjects up to the honours standard: English, Sanskrit, history, philosophy, economics, political science, Bengali, commerce, maths, physics, chemistry and botany. Zoology and physiology are taught up to the pass degree standard. With the restructuring of the pattern of secondary and university education in West Bengal, Serampore has had to fall in line with other colleges in the State by offering a new two-year Higher Secondary Course. The record of the students for the honours courses in BA, BSc and BCom examinations has been comparable both in quantity and in quality with that of the candidates sent up by the best colleges in West Bengal. If the record of the pass degree examination has not been equally satisfying, it is largely consequent upon the heavy increase in the roll strength of the College during the early seventies, a period marked by the worst indiscipline on academic campuses all over West Bengal; but for the last three or four years academic discipline has been steadily improving and the present outlook is quite promising.

All round development is the aim

Though lack of funds is always an impediment, best efforts are made to ensure through extra-curricular activities an all round development of the students. The major organ where the students learn the art of self-government is of course the Students' Union (which includes the students of the theology section also). The students elect their own office-bearers to conduct activities such as games, debates, cultural functions, and the College magazine. With the help of financial assistance from the Government, the College also runs a National Cadet Corps and National Service Scheme Units under the direct supervision of College teachers deputed for the purpose. We aim at giving the students a sense of social belonging, and developing among them



Placing wreath on Carey's tomb,
'Carey Day'

business qualities and technical attitudes orientated to the real needs of the developing economy of India. A unit of the College has organized science exhibitions inside and outside the College and has worked Government sponsored health camps for public welfare. It has undertaken relief work in times of natural calamity. And, for a number of years, the College has been associating students with the College faculty and its sub-committees and this has helped to build up in Serampore a much better staff student relationship than exists in most colleges of a comparable size in West Bengal.

Since 1973 the non-teaching staff of the College have had their representatives on the faculty and committees. This practice, the first perhaps of its kind to be introduced anywhere in India, has not only instilled into the non-teaching staff a greater sense of responsibility but has also helped the formulation of correct policies and procedures in a more expeditious manner. The non-teaching staff have their own cultural centre, the Carey Centre for the Study of Arts. Of late the centre has acquired a television from friends in the USA, UK and India. They have run also a relief centre to help the dependents of needy members of the staff with books, medicines, and other requirements.

Special thanks are deserved for the teaching staff of the Arts-Science-Commerce Departments for their efforts to arrest the academic indiscipline which engulfed the College in the recent past. The lead taken by them in the struggle, against heavy odds, to re-establish academic norms here, was noted with acclaim by Government, University and the teaching community in general.

New legislation at a critical time

Under pressure of local circumstances, for a number of successive years in the early seventies, the College had to admit many



The wrought iron staircase of the main building

more students than is desirable for a healthy academic life. Further, the increases resulted in serious imbalances on the academic side. Heavy debts can be cleared up only through the most stringent curtailment of all kinds of expenses. Late in 1977 the regular payment of staff salaries became a problem for the College administration. At this critical juncture, by new legislation, the State Government undertook to meet the payment of all salaries of all colleges which agreed to come under the scheme, and undertook to deposit regularly with the Government 75% of the income realized from students' tuition fees. It remains a difficult task for the college to maintain buildings, library and laboratories with 25% of its fees, and on its 'secular' side the College feels acutely the need of outside aid. Serampore has numerous buildings scattered over a large campus. Probably the best solution to the problem is the establishment of endowment funds.

On the 'secular' side there is an acute shortage of up-to-date books for the library although gifts and loans from the British Council and other agencies have in some measure saved the library from being an out dated collection. For many years the College has been unable to purchase new equipment, or even renovate

the old, for the laboratories.

The acoustics of the hall are deplorable. For the needs of the College, and the important meetings for which it plays host, a new building with stage and auditorium or else a complete restructuring of the present building, together with a new roof, is a 'must'. A lump sum of at least £12,000 is needed for either measure.

Films and records have been put at the disposal of the College by the British Council, but the College has failed to take proper advantage of this because of the lack of projectors etc. The College is confident that audio-visual equipment can be fruitfully used for the better education of its students. A system of intercommunication is a sheer necessity on a campus with buildings scattered over a large area. For many years there was an admirable system but because of serious mechanical defects the College has had to dispense with this altogether. A new intercom system would help all the wings of the College in the smooth and efficient conduct of their business. We look to the Lord to supply all our needs and praise Him for His provision thus far.

VIA THE CROWDS

by Edna Skirrow

'Stop this city, I want to get off.' These were the headlines of an article which appeared some months ago in *The Statesman*, a West Bengal newspaper. The city was Calcutta, a traffic warden's nightmare. After a few weeks of living there, you come to accept the difficulties and frustrations of getting from A to B. There is the struggle to get on trains, on trams and on buses. Always there is someone fighting to go in the opposite direction from that which you want to go. In the crush you clutch your handbag as there are those watching and waiting to pull the zip and take your purse. Or there is someone with a razor blade, seeking the right moment to slit your bag and remove its contents.

Amidst the hustle and bustle

There are people, people, people everywhere. Many are going somewhere, others just live on the pavements with nowhere to go. You pick your way along broken pavements, round heaps of garbage, street vendors and groups of people bathing and washing clothes at the water hydrant by the side of the road. Then there are the bundles of rags under which human beings lie sleeping, as the noise and bustle of the city swirls around them. Competing in the streets are trams, buses — double deckers and single deckers — cars, cycles, lorries, hand carts, taxis, hand-pulled rickshaws, cows and pedestrians dodging in and out of the traffic to cross the road. Ninety per cent of the population is dependent on public transport and everything on the road believes the right of way is theirs. But those who live amidst this hustle and bustle come to love the city because it has character. The people are cheerful and mostly polite.

Calcutta has its 'oases', too. There is the open *maidan* (plain), although sadly some of it is being dug up for the underground railway, and there is the swimming club for those fortunate to be members. The St

John's Church, which was once Calcutta's cathedral, is old and beautiful, quiet, has a good pipe organ (tuned once a week) and is a lovely place in which to sing. The church life in Calcutta is alive. The Circular Road Baptist Chapel, under the capable leadership of Rev C Devasahayam, is very much alive.

It was here that Keith and I saw in the New Year. The memory remains of a moving experience as church members of all ages brought a gift offering to the communion table and spoke a few words of testimony and thanksgiving for all God's provision throughout 1979. Then next to the chapel is the oasis of '44', the BMS house, lovingly run by Lt Col and Mrs Koshy. Here there is a clean bed and a good meal for missionaries breaking their journey, or children going to and from school or maybe those who have just come to Calcutta for shopping.

Clinging to the sides

But I am supposed to be writing about Serampore rather than Calcutta, so let us now move on. First we must get from '44' (Acharya Jagadish Bose Road) to Howrah station. The cheapest way is by tram (about 2p) but it may take anything up to an hour. The dearest is a taxi (about 75p). At certain times of the day neither are possible, as the trams are too crowded and the taxis refuse to go because of the inevitable traffic jam at Howrah itself. If we have no luggage, then we try for a tram. Being a lady I am entitled to a ladies' seat and I eventually get one. The tram rumbles along. More and more people get on until there does not seem to be another inch for the standing passengers. Yet still more find sufficient foot space to enable them to cling on to the outside. Eventually Howrah bridge rises against the skyline, majestic and silver like a giant meccano model.

At Howrah station you fight your way off the tram as the masses surge on, each one



The Sunday school at Serampore mission church

eager and hopeful of a seat. The entrance hall to the station platforms is littered with groups of people sitting, lying, standing, all with their few possessions around them. The vendors are there, too, selling water bottles, ribbons, handkerchiefs, pins, brushes and all kinds of things which are in constant use. Then there are the fruit sellers and the peanut wallahs. Making your way through all those, you find which train is going to Serampore (a frequent service). There is a ladies' compartment on every train, so I sometimes get a seat.



The house where Carey once lived, now staff quarters

TO CAREY'S DREAM



h with Edna Skirrow on the left

Rickshaw ride to Carey's dream

Eight stops and half an hour later Serampore is reached. You get ready to jump off as the train only stops for half a minute or even less. Having gone down the subway and on to the road, you are greeted by the rickshaw wallah's call, 'College! College!' Then follows the bargaining, 'How much?' 'Two rupees' (6p). 'No, no; 1.50.' You pass on and soon find someone to go for Rs 1.50. During the next ten minutes you are bumped and rattled along as the rickshaw takes you by the old Danish church, and then along by the



arters

Hooghly river and the old mission church, which was Carey, Marshman and Ward's first home. Then come some of the jute mill buildings, after which is the college. The building with its five massive pillars stands stately in the grounds of the college campus. This was Carey's dream, built with the money he earned while lecturing in Calcutta. The vision he had of educating the people of Bengal and other parts of India is fulfilled as some of the 1,500 or so students of the arts and sciences walk up and down the steps to the library and classrooms. Others sit on the grass relaxing between lectures. In the afternoon there are games of football, tennis, cricket or whatever is in season.

When I was a schoolgirl I remember asking the teacher, 'Why do we have to do history?' I cannot remember her answer but some 40 years on I now realize myself something of the answer to my question. It is found here at Serampore, in the atmosphere of the place; in reading the various biographies of Carey, Marshman and Ward, the first Serampore missionaries; in the vision they had of bringing the gospel to Bengal; in the lengths to which they went to get the Bible translated and printed into the Bengali language, and eventually many other Indian languages; in the fire which destroyed the press and in a few hours ruined years of work and yet those men could praise and thank God that all was not quite destroyed and that no lives were lost. It is a thrilling story and an inspiration to all as we can look back on the history of this place and be moved to at least try and do better in the small tasks we do for God. We are not all meant to be like Carey and excel as he did in languages, science, botany, horticulture and social reform. But we are meant to use the gifts God gave us and do all we can, be it large or small, to furtherance of His Kingdom.

Missionaries are often called upon to do

tasks for which they are not trained, and this is not always easy to accept. I came to this continent as a nursing sister and through the years we spent in Bangladesh I have always had some kind of nursing job. Now here in India at Serampore I find myself as a teacher of English. The theological students come from different language areas where English is the common language. Often the students' wives come not knowing much English at all. This year there have been five wives in the class. With just four hours of English per week it has been encouraging to hear their progress. Most of the students themselves have learnt their English from other Indians with the result that strange pronunciations are often heard. I have been able to give some simple elocution, voice production and pronunciation classes, and English sounds that come naturally to us are sometimes difficult for the Indian to pronounce, so we have some amusing and enjoyable classes. However, I do look forward to the time when I shall be able to do some medical work. The needs around are great and the frustrations many when you feel unable to provide any help.

Attempting great things for the Master

Carey said, 'Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.' Carey expected and attempted and achieved much for the people of India. He was a humble cobbler with a vision, and he went all out to fulfil his calling. Some years ago an Indian said to me that Christianity was too deeply rooted in the soil of India for anyone or anything to destroy it. Those early missionaries laid deep foundations, indestructible foundations, and we, the Church in India, are here to build on those foundations. May God help us to expect and attempt work for Him here at Serampore, in the training of Indian men and women to be better equipped to serve their Lord and Master, in preaching and teaching the good news and building up the Church in India.

COLLEGE FOR ALL INDIA

by Keith Skirrow

William Carey early in the nineteenth century began the College at Serampore with the intention that it should be a college for all India, and for all Christian bodies. Moreover it was not to be for Christian students only, but was to draw keen minds of Hindus and Muslims to impart to them knowledge of the Bible. From the start Carey meant that his students should be taught science as well as theology, and the literature of the east as well as that of the west. The end of the twentieth century is very different from those days: nevertheless Carey's aims may serve as a touchstone by which to examine Serampore today.

Large catchment area

There is no doubt that Serampore can be said to serve all India, and most of the Church bodies. Students come here from Kerala and Tamil-nadu in the south, from

the Punjab in the west, from the Central Province, and from eastern India, i.e., Orissa, Bihar, Bengal (which includes Bangladesh): though the majority come from the north-east, i.e., the states of Mizoram, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam and Hill Tipperah.

An atlas will show how vast are the distances separating these places but it will not show how disparate they are in character, nor what proportion of the population in each case is Christian. Figures showing the percentages for the various religions in India present an average for the whole, but like most generalizations they can be very misleading. Thus Kerala, which contains the oldest of the Christian communities, has about 20% of its population Christian: Bengal and the Central Province have as few as 1%: some areas in North India, from which

at present we draw no students, have even less: but the north eastern areas, such as Nagaland and Mizoram have 80% Christian population or more. These are facts which are very relevant for the work of the College.

It is not surprising that within a student body coming from such a diversity of cultures as these there should sometimes be tensions. Rather the wonder is that we are able to live and worship together, to share one another's experiences and to learn from each other. But it happens.

Ecumenical background

The diversity of church backgrounds is nearly as great. Baptists are the biggest group — nearly all from Nagaland, and from South Mizoram. There is also one from Orissa (plus one ex-Baptist, now a member of the Church of North India), one from West and one from East Bengal. The Nagas are from churches evangelized by American Baptists and the rest are the special interest of the BMS, though this year we have one student from a New Zealand Baptist field. The students from North Mizoram, Manipur and Meghalaya are Presbyterians and those from Central Province, Assam, Orissa, Bihar and Bengal are Lutherans. Three are from the Church of North India and several from the Church of South India, while a few are from the Mar Thoma Church, an evangelical offshoot from the Syrian Orthodox. On the staff at the moment Lutherans predominate.

Naturally, the students as individuals are far more interesting than the categories in which I have placed them. I wish there was room in this *Missionary Herald* for each to speak for him/herself. Some already have had pastoral experience, being ministers of many years standing. As colleges go, the average age of the students is high, correspondingly we look for maturity, and usually, but not always, we find it. About a third are married, and there are two families and three childless



The College chapel



*A bust of Carey
in the Horticultural Gardens, Calcutta*

couples on the campus. Many students have had experience in social work, and others in evangelism. Some like Lal Than Zuava have been in government employ.

It would be helpful if I could visit our present or past students in their homes and now that our sons are going to school in South India, I may have occasion to see our students in Tamil-nadu or Orissa. I would love to go to Mizoram but special permission is needed for foreigners to visit these north-eastern areas, and in the present troubled circumstances it is quite unlikely that such permission will be forthcoming.

Fulfilment of the dream

Many of the students will return to their own areas for pastoral work. Some will have administrative responsibilities, and some will be missionaries in other areas. I doubt whether people in England are fully aware of the missionary movement which exists in India. Men and women from the stronger churches, such as those in Mizoram, are sent to places where there are hardly any Christians at all. Sometimes they are sent outside India, as for instance to the Persian Gulf, where of course many Indians have migrated for work. Other students see their future in teaching. For example, one of the last year's batch is now doing postgraduate work in the USA. He is sponsored by Serampore and we anticipate that in 1981 he will be teaching Old Testament here. In

so many ways the College is serving India and beyond, thus fulfilling the dream which Carey had for it.

Serampore means more than just the College. Besides the College there is the University of Serampore, governed by a Senate. This is the principal body for granting degrees in theology in India, and most of the major seminaries and theological colleges are affiliated to it. Some of these are local, meant for their own situations, and so use their vernacular. Some of them take the students up to BTh standard but our own College concentrates on the BD. We are hoping that soon postgraduate students will come to study for their Master's Degree. In another direction we hope to extend to extra-mural courses, but not much can be said about these things until they are in operation.

Bridging the gap

Carey had another intention in founding the College, that those who came with a view to equip themselves for the Christian ministry should study alongside Hindus and Muslims; and that there should be contact on a deep level. As other articles will show the secular departments, as we call them, form a large part, numerically by far the larger part, of the College. This has a great reputation to maintain. One of the biggest questions which face us is how we can make the contact between the departments, and reach out with the gospel. Not many years ago there were great tensions between the theological and other faculties with the result that a commission appointed by the College Council advocated a complete break. In recent years, however, there has been improvement and the secular students are welcoming the theologians. We on the staff are able to help in the process of making contacts, e.g. by teaching some English and German to students from other departments. I myself am at an advantage in that I have knowledge



Students outside the chapel

of the local vernacular, Bengali. Our students in theology are greatly handicapped in that, with a few exceptions, they do not have such knowledge.

We feel the challenge of the place in which we are. Bengal is at once the home of the Indian Renaissance, of vigorous thought and political aspirations and yet the scene of great industrial depression. The poverty of Indian villages is appalling, but the life of the slum-dwellers and the homeless of the cities like Calcutta is without the compensations which the villages give. What an opportunity is here. We as a staff are very much aware of this, and we are trying to help the students to face the challenge also. The difficulties, however, are formidable. There are differences in culture and in language to be bridged. Even in the local churches the students get little chance to exercise a preaching ministry, because they can only speak in churches which use English for their services. I have the advantage that I can minister in Bengali-speaking churches and last year I was recognized as a presbyter of the Church of North India, which has widened my ministry still further. In other ways we are trying to reach out to the people, including visits to the local Cheshire Home and milk distribution among the children of local slums. Conscious of how inadequate it all is in face of so great a need, we ask for your support in prayer.

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF!



Rabindra Debbarma and Lal Than Zuava

Nearly all the students in theology at Serampore are from Christian homes. The exception is Rabindra Debbarma, who here gives his testimony. His home is Tipperah, a mission field of the New Zealand Baptists. The people of Tipperah are mainly tribals. Rabindra belongs to the main tribe who call themselves Hindu, though their religion is animistic. Rabindra's parents are Hindu, but have not opposed his coming here. He came to Serampore just over a year ago having already spent one year at Yeotmal College in Western India.

'I was born and brought up in a Hindu family. My parents loved me so much, yet my life-style was a miserable one. In my high school I started practising all sorts of bad habits — smoking, gambling, drinking. I used to steal money from my father's pocket. I used to lie to my mother to get money from her. I abused the money on the cinema and alcohol.

I often thought this worldly life to be useless and hopeless. People, I know, hated me for my crazy life. I was aware that I was living a sinful life and wanted to get away from it all. Sometimes I tried to give up all my bad habits, but I couldn't. That worldly life gave me no peace. I had an anxiety for my future career too, and there seemed nobody who could guide my life.

Once I happened to attend the Christian meeting in the village nearby. There I heard an old man preaching on II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any one is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come." It seemed that he was speaking to me, directly. It seemed he knew all about my life. After the meeting was over, I came home with questions in my heart. "Is it possible to be a new man? Can a person give up his old habits? Who is Jesus who can change old into new?" The next morning I went to that particular

preacher. I put my questions before him. Knowing my curiosity he took time with me. He answered my questions one after another. It was the first time I came to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who loves sinners, who is the Saviour of the world. It was the turning point in my life. There I saw a hope: hope for a new life, a new creation. There in the presence of that man I confessed all my sins. I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and Lord. I prayed to God to accept me as His child in His family. Truly, the Lord Jesus Christ took me as His child. Since then there has been a great change in my life. Now, definitely, I know that Christ is the Prince of Peace, in Him there is new creation. I thank God for drawing me to Him.'

Now we hear the testimony of Lal Than Zuava, who gave us this account before he finished his studies at Serampore earlier this year.

'I was born in a little village of Mizoram in 1940. My father was the highest elder over our village, in the name of our chief who was in another village nearby. I was brought up in the Christian (Presbyterian) Church. Until I was nine years old, however, my father, as he was a drunkard, was not in full membership in our church yet he highly appreciated the Christian life. Though he was a drunkard he never allowed me to miss Sunday school and all the activities of Christian children. He brought me up in the strict Christian life of those times. He sent me to Middle School after Primary School: this was in a neighbouring village, five miles away. There I stayed in a relative's house. I ceased my education early because of financial problems, after I had passed Class VI. In 1959 I joined Government Service. I worked for 18 years in the Soil Conservation Department, during which I twice got promotion. I got married

in 1962 and have four daughters.

As I left my education early, I was always looking for a chance to study, and in this regard my wife encouraged me. I studied privately and passed the matriculation examination at my first appearance, 1970. All my family and friends, as well as myself, were quite amazed that I passed. Therefore this made me think about my future, my programme and plan. At this time I was already involved in church activities, holding different posts in the Youth Group Fellowship, as well as in the church. I was also appointed to be one of the regular preachers in our services. The experience which I had, and my passing the matriculation gave me a new thought for future plans, taking me beyond myself. I asked myself whether God had not willed me to serve Him. Had God planned me to do a particular task in my life? I was thinking and thinking about this and the year 1970 passed, but no conviction could be made.

Hearing the voice of God

At the beginning of 1971 I got promotion in my job and was posted to Lunglei, within the Baptist Church area. I joined the post immediately. In this place I joined the College, evening shift, and without a break studied till I passed my Bachelor Degree in 1976. I thank God for His blessings to me and to my family, and I made the decision that I should serve the Lord as a full-time worker. Yet though I made the decision, I had no clear idea where I should go, or what I should do. I asked God many times to direct me wherever it was necessary.

I thought I was well prepared in education, and in heart, but I hoped to get direct information from God. My wife also was ready to accept the call of God. One evening, while we had family worship, God spoke to me through Joshua 24:22, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the



The students' hostel

Lord, to serve Him." I had never had this kind of experience in my life. It made me so free and happy and all my doubts about His call suddenly disappeared. So I prayed to God, fully submitting myself, my wife, and my children to His mighty hand, and gave promise to Him that I should serve Him.

The next morning I went to the Baptist Headquarters and reported myself to be a full-time worker in the missionary work. But our church leaders did not easily accept this. Instead they advised me to have theological training. To me this was not possible because of the pressing in my heart to preach the gospel. Anyhow, I submitted my application for the post of missionary, but the Committee advised me to have theological training, and they told me there was no vacant post at present. My wife also was convinced of the need for training when I told her, but I saw no possibility of undergoing such a long course (three years) not only because of the pressure in my heart, but also because of the managing of the family. "Who will feed my family?" was my question. "If I leave my job we have no other financial resources. Also, my wife is illiterate, what will she do to maintain our family?" So from my side I saw no possibility of undergoing such training, but my wife was more and more convinced and she asked me to study theology.

The Lord provides for all our needs

Time passed, no post outside Mizoram was created, the beginning of the session at Serampore College was drawing near, so there was no alternative but to study! Then I submitted my application for theological study. The General Assembly accepted me and I joined Serampore College in July 1977. As soon as I left my home my wife started a very, very small tea shop in our house for their livelihood. Money which I left with her was quite scant, not even sufficient for one month's expenditure for them. She believed that God would be with her and would provide all her needs. I wonder at the way God has helped us. Their standard of life is far better than when I held a job. My studies also go well till now. Now I am in the last term of my course. I will finish in April this year. I am not so sure whether I shall be able to go to other states to preach the gospel after I finish my course. Our church may ask me to serve in Mizoram as a probationary pastor, though it is not my personal conviction to serve in my own state.

I have many things to say how God is with me, as well as of His wonderful guidance in our family life and my study in Serampore College. I have not enough words to express my experience of Christian faith. It is God who did great things for me and prepares me for His gospel.'

GOLDEN LINK WITH THE PAST

*Some treasures of the library –
books compiled by Carey*

by the librarian of the Serampore College
Library

Serampore Baptist Mission, organized by the early Baptist missionaries, Carey, Marshman and Ward, played a leading role in initiating the modern phase of the Indian library movement. At the dawn of the nineteenth century the inauspicious clouds of decay and despair which overshadowed India during the eighteenth century had dispersed, bringing about marked changes in the realm of ideas. This fascinating phase, or Indian awakening, was primarily due to the impact of western education with inspiration from the oriental heritage. It will not be a travesty of truth to assert that during this period there emanated from Bengal social, educational, cultural and other movements in which the role of the Baptists of Serampore was very significant.

Untimely death

To sustain and implement their high ideal of the best possible education in both eastern and western learning, the Baptists of Serampore established a library in 1800 which became the nucleus of their educational activities. In 1796 Rev John Fountain had been sent to India by the BMS to assist Carey who was then at Madnabati. Fountain was an ardent lover of books and so was appointed as the librarian. The library's primary object was to help Carey in his translation work and learning of the oriental languages. But Carey's interests were in many branches of knowledge, and subsequently the library began to collect books on various subjects. Unfortunately, within a couple of months of its establishment the library sustained a great loss in the sad and untimely death of John Fountain. The growth and development of the library was thus delayed considerably and during the formative period of the mission no concentrated attention could be given to organize the library properly because the missionaries were so preoccupied with other activities.

When the Serampore College was founded in

1818 a thoughtfully designed plan was made to reorganize the library to promote the aims of the college. In the college prospectus a plan was outlined for the library to include:

- (1) The Vedas, the Durshunus, the Puranas and all other Sanskrit works to be obtained on any art or science.
- (2) All the works obtainable in the various popular dialects of India.
- (3) The most approved Arabic and Persian authors.
- (4) The Chinese classics and the most approved authors in that language.
- (5) Such works in Sinhalese, Tibetan, Pali, Burmese and other Indian dialects.
- (6) Every Hebrew and Syriac work procurable in the East.
- (7) The best authors in Greek and Latin.
- (8) The best works in French, Italian and Portuguese.
- (9) The most approved works on divinity, history and science in the English language.

From the above plan it is clearly understood

that these missionaries wanted to develop a 'treasure-house of knowledge' of international standard. From the elementary stage to the university level all readers were to be helped in expanding their sphere of knowledge. In collecting reading materials much emphasis was given to divinity and oriental languages.

After the foundation of the college, a plan to erect a building was seriously taken up. In the plan space was allowed for the library to be accommodated on the ground floor. After the completion of the building the library took up its position where it remains today.

Development in all fields of learning

In the second report of the college it is found that, by appealing to the friends abroad and sending suitable persons to the various parts of the country, the library was able to collect a good number of valuable works in the European and oriental languages. The accessions made during that time consisted chiefly of works in Sanskrit and other popular languages of India. Statistics in



The College library



that report show that in a total of 675 works, there were no less than 39 languages represented.

By the end of 1822, the library had expanded considerably with the addition of 3,000 volumes presented by the Serampore missionaries. In addition, the library was enriched by donations from friends both in India and Britain. At the end of 1828 the collection had reached 5,000 volumes. And so, with the policy of keeping abreast of the best contemporary thought in every field of learning, the library gradually developed. During the middle part of the nineteenth century it became one of the greatest libraries in India. In 1871 it was reorganized by the Principal, Trafford, and in 1910, with resumption of university teaching and the introduction of higher theology education, the library was again reorganized and the collection of old books kept separately. The library rendered very useful services to the divinity students as well as to the students of arts and science. Unfortunately during the Second World War the college building was requisitioned by the Government for a military hospital. At very short notice the library had to be shifted elsewhere and, probably, during the move some valuable works were lost. After the war the college came back to its own building and the library returned also, but due to financial stringency no programme for developing the library was undertaken at that time.

Five years of reorganization

Only recently during Carey's bicentenary year (1961) was the current phase of reorganization started under the able leadership of Dr William Stewart, the principal of the college at that time. Reconstitution of the library started in 1961 and was completed by 1966. The events of major importance were the arrival of Miss K S Diehl, an expert American bibliographer who catalogued the old books in full bibliographical detail, and Miss F H B Williams, a representative of the BMS who was appointed librarian and took charge of the entire library. Three professors were appointed as deputy librarians of the three main sections of the library, namely, theology, arts and science, and the old books section, which was given the name 'Carey Library'. Plans and programmes were drawn up to consolidate, improve and expand these sections, and the Carey Museum was set up and brought under the control of the Carey Library.

Since 1961 there have been many changes and improvements made in each of the three sections. In the theology section the books have been reclassified and catalogued, a well organized periodical section established and two reading rooms set up, one for undergraduates and the other for postgraduate students. Library services have been increased and an inter-library loan system introduced.

Regarding the arts and science section, most of the books have been reclassified in the modern Dewey classification and the periodical section reorganized. There are now three reading rooms – for general students, advanced students and staff – and for needy and deserving students a textbook library and book bank have been introduced. The latter has proved very beneficial to the large number of students who come to the college from the poor families in the surrounding villages. The library is grateful for the various donations of books it has received, including a number from the British Council and the late Professor D N Banerjee, an eminent educationalist and former student of the college.

Putting the collection on microfilm

For the Carey Library an air-conditioned room with steel shelves was provided to preserve the very valuable books and other materials. After completing the catalogue, Miss Diehl published a part of it as 'Early Indian Imprints', and an important project of microfilming the collection was undertaken in 1966. We are very much indebted to the British Council for kindly donating a microfilm reader, and to Mr K Baago for 90 reels of microfilm containing the reports of the activities of the various missionary societies during the past two centuries. The library has been rendering a useful service to a good number of scholars worldwide, by providing reading facilities, information, copies of valuable materials etc. Through exhibitions, seminars, discussions and other meetings, the library has drawn the attention of elite societies of India and abroad to the work of missionaries in India, particularly the early Baptists.

We thank God for this golden link with the past and pray that the library will continue to be used for His glory and the furtherance of His Kingdom.



The pastors' refresher course held at Serampore in January 1980 with Keith Skirrow third from the right on the front row

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This organization has offered to arrange an auction to celebrate the birthday of the Baptist Missionary Society on 2 October. The proceeds from the sale of items donated for this occasion will come to the Society.

If you have antiques, jewellery, silver etc. for which you no longer have need, or which you are prepared to sacrifice for the cause of Christ overseas the organizers would be pleased to receive them. Please specify that the articles you send are on behalf of the BMS and write to:

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