

CONSECRATED GROUND

Mbanza-Ngungu is a town built on the side of a hill some 150 kilometres downstream from Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire. The BMS has been working there since 1911. Apart from the main Baptist church in the town, there is a newer church at Loma which lies at the foot of the hills close to a broad, flat valley.

Here the Baptists have a large plot of land on which are built a church and school classrooms. It is also planned to build a dispensary and health complex, the foundations of which have already been dug. Nearby in the valley, a Chinese agricultural mission is experimenting with the cultivation of rice. They have put up buildings next to the Loma church property.

A few months ago the Chinese mission arranged with the local authorities at Mbanza-Ngungu to encroach on the church land. They began levelling the ground with their bulldozers, destroying the foundations which were prepared for the dispensaries.

The local church members protested to the Chinese and Pastor Nkwansambu, the CBFZ (Baptist Community of the River Zaire) Regional Secretary, made representations to the local authority. All this was to no effect. The Chinese continued their preparations to build, off-loading sand and loads of rocks.

Things get worse and worse

Pastor Nkwansambu got in touch with Pastor Koli, the General Secretary of the CBFZ in Kinshasa, explaining that he was finding it difficult to restrain the church from taking physical action against the Chinese. The situation was deteriorating for, to make it worse, the Chinese were openly sneering at the church members' belief in God.

Pastor Koli contacted Bishop Bokeleale, the President of the ECZ (Church of Christ in Zaire), the organization that draws

together and represents all the Protestant denominations in Zaire. Dr Bokeleale arranged an interview with the Prime Minister, and Owen Clark, the BMS missionary who works in the secretariat of the Baptist Church in Kinshasa and who is secretary for missionary affairs, was asked to accompany the delegation. His presence was to be a reminder of the long history of the CBFZ with its origins in the work of the BMS, with whom it was still in active partnership.

After presenting Pastor Koli and Owen Clark to the Prime Minister, Bishop Bokeleale went on to say that the recently celebrated Protestant centenary was really the centenary of the work of the BMS. He outlined the problem at Mbanza-Ngungu and showed that the church was very upset about its land. It was being put to good use for the benefit of the people until being taken over, illegally, with the connivance of the local authorities, by the Chinese. These were an openly atheistic, foreign element which had been invited to work in Zaire relatively recently.

'I will build my church'

After listening with sympathy, the Prime Minister contacted the appropriate minister. The result was that within a few days the authorities at Mbanza-Ngungu had been told to find another site for the Chinese. Having been held on the leash for so long, the irate members of the Loma church were able to vent their feelings by hurling the dumped rocks piece by piece off their property.

Whilst the church at Loma is still giving thanks that justice has been done and was seen to be done, the local population including the authorities are still wondering how the reversal came about. As for the Chinese, when one of them was asked why they were not going ahead with their building on the site they had chosen, he replied, 'We cannot touch it. It is the Jesus plot of land!'

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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It is interesting to note how Jesus, in his teaching, often referred to money and its employment in day to day living. The love of money may be the root of all evil, but it is certain that our Lord regarded money itself, when rightly used, as a necessary means for the smooth conduct of living.

He told a story on one occasion of a housewife who apparently mislaid the housekeeping money and scoured the house until she found it. Then, with disaster averted, she invited friends and neighbours to share in her rejoicing. He spoke of a ruler embarking on travel to another country who financed his employees and charged them to trade with the money against his return. Christ spoke with approval about those who had done well in this enterprise.

When asked to comment on the necessity to pay taxes to Caesar he replied that the enquirers should pay back to Caesar that which belonged to him, but that they should also give back to God what was rightfully His.

There is a rightful share for God

Our Lord developed this thought in speaking to the Pharisees. He acknowledged their scrupulosity in tithing mint, anise and cummin, yet they seemed to forget the weightier matters of the law. These ought to receive their careful attention, but they were right to think that God should have a share of all our wealth — even the humble garden herbs. Then, what praise He directed to the widow who, in her extreme poverty, remembered God's share and cast her two mites into the offertory. It was the largeness of her generosity which was noted by God and not the face worth of the two coins.

God enriches us so that we may have the privilege of sharing in the work of Christ. He looks to us to steward our resources wisely and make them productive in the work of the Kingdom — the making of disciples from all nations. To do this we need to count the cost. We need to have a budget. It is necessary to share with God's people the knowledge of what will be required to maintain and advance the witness to God's Son in countries overseas.

How the loaf is divided

This is the work the Baptist Missionary Society has been charged to do by the Baptist churches of this country, in obedience to the command of Christ. In this issue of the *Missionary Herald* we have set out the channels through which the churches of our faith and order make their gifts to this enterprise for our Lord. Further, we show how these gifts are translated into work and witness in the various countries in which our colleagues are stationed.

In these days of high inflation all must be fully aware of the difficulties in trying to prepare a budget for work which will need to be undertaken tomorrow and the day after. Yet there has been a remarkable response from the churches to the challenge of this situation. The increase in giving has been generous, but it has not in fact kept pace with inflation and so we are, as it were, running hard to keep on the same spot, with not a great deal of success. The purchasing power of the monies received from the churches this year is less than that received last year, though the total sum is greater. At the same time the calls for help from the Church overseas increase, as do the opportunities to witness to Christ. We dare not turn deaf ears to these cries for help nor let these opportunities slip through our grasp.

PEOPLE, NOT POUNDS

by Vic Oxley, BMS Treasurer



Financial resources are necessary to enable the Society to carry out its work, but the Editor has reminded me that whenever I am talking about the finances of the Society, be it the budget, annual accounts, or on other occasions, I frequently draw attention to the fact that the Society is primarily about people and that pounds are incidental.

A commercial enterprise is directed to making a profit for its shareholders; all activity is to that end. A public service enterprise provides that service and makes ends meet out of charges or taxation. The Society is neither

a commercial nor a public service enterprise, its concern being to enable people from this country to take the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ to people overseas. It is essentially a story of the efforts of committed people to serve other people, and so the financial needs and resources can be seen in the light of people.

The serving people

The main resource of the Society is not money but the people who serve abroad, the missionaries. When they are accepted for service they are assured by the Society that their physical needs will be provided for; that they will be trained both before and during service; that they will be transported to and from the field of service; that they will be provided with the resources and

accommodation necessary for their work; that they will be cared for and housed during furlough; that their health needs will be provided for; that care will be taken of their children in the matter of education, either at home or abroad.

Then there are the people who serve at home, the headquarters staff, without whom the Society could not function. The raising of funds is only a small part of their duties; the care and concern for its missionaries is the main task. Each missionary is unique and requires the separate attention of many members of staff, either in person or by way of correspondence. The people who serve in a voluntary capacity must not be forgotten, including those who help at Mission House, committee members and auxiliary and church

A REMARKABLE RECOVERY

The people of the Raikola village in the Kond Hills, Orissa, India, were making preparation to take 18-year-old Sushila Pradhan for cremation as soon as she passed away. But they needed a kerosene lamp so that the cremation could be performed, and went to a Christian family in Kanabageri to borrow one. This family hurried to Sushila's house where they found her desperately ill and apparently breathing her last. They, however, had great faith in the Udayagiri Hospital and insisted that the relatives take Sushila there.

Dr Milton Das, the Medical Superintendent, was fast asleep in bed after a full day's work at the hospital, when he was awakened about midnight by the entire village crowding into his courtyard. He hastened to the hospital

where he saw the young mother with her 10-day-old baby and the whole family weeping loudly and preparing for the end. The husband was completely shattered and beside himself with grief, fully expecting to lose his young bride.

Prayerful treatment

'I had a word of prayer,' writes Dr Das, 'Lord, here is a girl, only 18 years of age with a 10-day-old baby and a small family; I trust you to look after her. You are the same God who healed the paralysed man and brought the dead Lazarus to life. Please heal this girl.'

'When I examined her I found her to be suffering from severe meningitis with high fever and paralysis of the left side of the

body. We gave her treatment and cared for her for six weeks, after which she was completely cured from the meningitis and its affects.

'Praise the Lord, for He is the great healer and has done great things for Sushila Pradhan. Her family are reunited and she left us with a broad smile carrying her little baby and accompanied by her husband and relatives.'

This was a poor family who could only pay one eighth of the cost of treatment. There are many other patients in a like situation so that much of the work of the hospital must be paid for from the gifts of those who support the work.

'We treat all such patients very

missionary secretaries.

Then there are the people who have served and come to the end of their active career. These people are cared for through the Society's pension arrangements and the provision of retirement accommodation. Widows and Orphans pensions are provided when the occasion arises.

The served people

Next we come to the people we serve. In carrying out our duties to take them the gospel, we find it necessary to help them in a number of ways. We assist with the provision and equipment of churches, schools and hospitals, the provision of transport, and aid towards agricultural projects. Pastors are helped to take advanced

training by lay-courses away from their own country in the UK or elsewhere.

The far greater part of the needs of all the above people is met by the direct and dedicated regular giving by the people in our churches. They are a people who are informed about the work of the Society, who pray regularly for it, who consequently are persuaded of the need to be generous contributors to the work, and who belong to churches which provide a regular flow of candidates that the work may continue.

People not only remember the Society during their lifetime but also in their wills and so provide some income as the legacies are used up, and some interest until they are disposed of.

People plus people equals commitment

The financial equation of the work of the Society can be expressed as follows:

The total commitment of the Society is the sum of:

- The people who serve abroad
- The people who serve at home
- The people who have served
- The people who are served

This commitment is met by:

- The people in our churches
- The people who have remembered the Society at the end of their lives

We praise God that over the years the commitment has been met.



Sushila and family leaving hospital

sympathetically and lovingly,' says Dr Das. 'God is great and He is leading us over many hurdles and bringing the hospital to a stable situation once more.

'Dear reader of this true story, there are many needy patients around us who need your sympathetic attention. Let the Lord speak to you, as you read this, to be more generous. Let Sushila remain as an example of how the mission hospital is able to help – even at the point of death.

'We are grateful to the Baptist Missionary Society for all the help it gives and we ask for your continuing prayers and support so that the compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ may be expressed to all who come to us for help and healing.'



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PARTNERS IN PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS

by Vivian Lewis, Assistant Secretary for Promotion

We normally think of Paul as a 'self-supporting' missionary — one who, accepting the call of Christ to be an apostle to the Gentiles, undertook that call at his own expense. Such an idea is backed up by the mention in Acts chapter 18 of his joining Aquila and Priscilla, setting up in business as tentmakers.

In support of this picture, we are reminded that he could write to the Thessalonians saying that he worked for a living night and day, rather than be a burden to anyone (1 Thess 2:9), and claim, in writing to the church at Corinth, that he had made no charge for preaching the gospel (2 Cor 11:7) and that he made it a rule 'as I always shall, never to be a burden to you' (2 Cor 11:9).

The burden is shared

Such a picture, though, is an oversimplification which is far from the truth. In that very passage where he makes the claim not to have been a burden on the Corinthian church, Paul is able to do so only because, as he says, 'anything I needed was fully met by the friends who came from Macedonia' (2 Cor 11:9).

That reference to the friends from Macedonia points to the loving care given to Paul by his supporting churches, and especially by the church at Philippi. The epistle to the Philippians makes that very clear. Paul opens his letter to them with thanks to God for the part the fellowship at Philippi had taken 'in the work of the gospel from the first day until now' (Phil 1:3-5). What was that part? The last chapter of the letter spells it out.

Their care for him had blossomed afresh (v 10). It was kind of them to share the burden of his troubles (v 14). In the early days of his mission when he set out from Macedonia, they alone were his partners in payments and receipts (v 15). They contributed to his needs, not once, but twice over (v 16). He was paid in full now that he had received from Epaphroditus what they had sent. It was a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God (v 18).

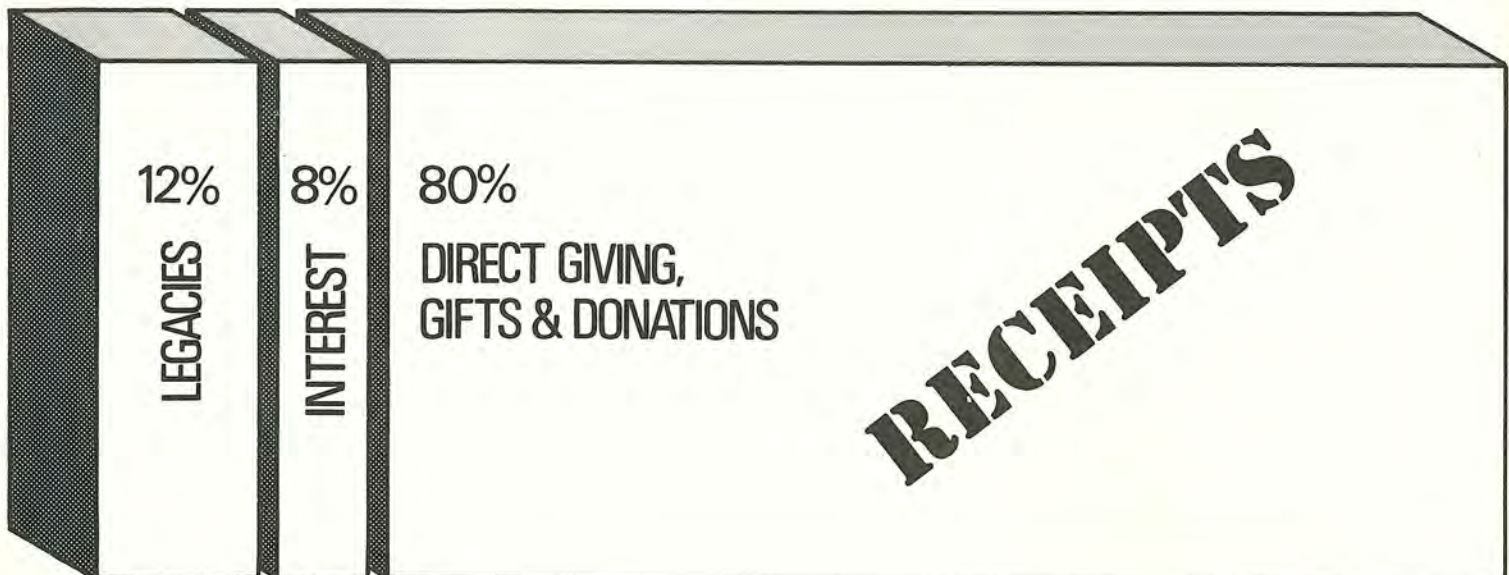
Partners in payment and receipt. Surely this is what we are called to be in Christ's mission to the world today? Those who go out from our churches to share in that mission through

the BMS depend upon our loving support to free them to respond to Christ's call.

In the financial year which ends this month, the BMS budgeted for an expenditure of over a million and a half pounds. Some people believe that the Society has large financial reserves that could provide the bulk of the income needed. How false!

Where then does the money come from?

- (1) INTEREST. What the BMS receives by interest on the funds that are held amounts to only 8% of its total income.
- (2) LEGACIES. A further 12% comes from legacies, because many people remember the work of the Society when they make their wills.
- (3) DONATIONS. That means that 80% of the income comes directly as gifts and donations from individuals and churches. Without that loving support the work undertaken by over 200 missionaries serving in 10 countries would be impossible.



But how is the money spent?

OVERSEAS 76%

- 57% Personnel (missionaries' allowances, passages, training and housing, and the cost of schooling and hostels for missionaries' children).
- 8% National churches (bulk allocations to overseas church bodies for their work).
- 6.5% Buildings and equipment.
- 2.5% Hospitals (supplies of drugs and equipment).
- 2% Administration (offices overseas and contingencies).

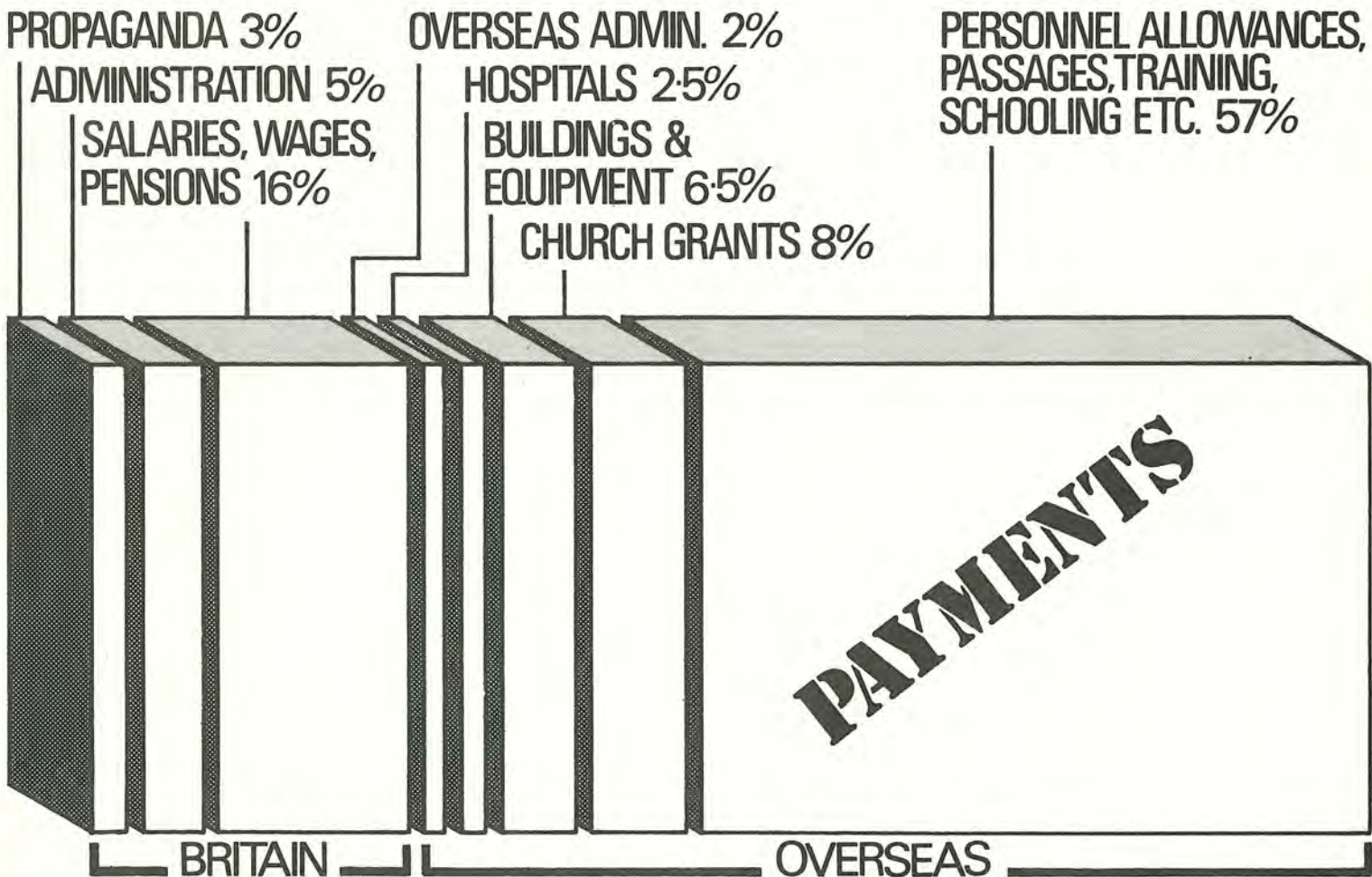
IN BRITAIN 24%*

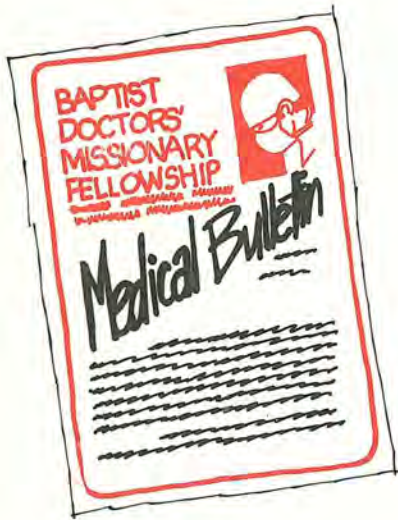
- 16% Salaries, wages, and pensions.
- 5% Administration (Mission House expenses, printing, postage, committee expenses, etc).
- 3% Propaganda (AVA material, magazines and literature, deputation and travelling).

*This second section represents the support and servicing programme which enables the overseas work to go forward. It includes the salaries and travel expenses of the two overseas secretaries, the costs of the medical department and its care of missionaries' health, and other such things.

This is how your money is spent. This is the way that you share in the work of mission overseas through the BMS. The Society is your link with the World Church, and the means by which Baptists in the British Isles are enabled to respond to Christ's command to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. Through the Society, your giving is translated into love in action, as over 200 missionaries in 10 countries serve the national churches.

That such service can be offered and such love shown is because of your gifts — for you are our 'partners in payments and receipts'.





from the Medical Department

Our Society is associated with and gives financial aid to hospitals in India, Bangladesh and Zaire. It also supports some 48 missionaries who are engaged in medical work in those countries as well as in Nepal, Hong Kong and Brazil. Their work ranges from the highly sophisticated technology used in an intensive care unit in a large medical teaching hospital, to very lowly, very basic, but highly important work of village clinics and dispensaries. This help has enabled many sick and needy people to be cared for and a great number of nationals to be trained in the profession of nursing and paramedical skills. The money comes from several sources, but with one object, to show the love of God in a practical way through the caring and treatment of the sick and needy, and to preach Jesus Christ.

It was in 1909 that the **BirthDay Scheme** had its beginnings when the Rev W Y Fullerton, minister of Melbourne Hall Church, Leicester, suggested that his church members and congregation should give one shilling upon each birthday to what was then the Medical Auxiliary of the Society. This scheme is now used by many churches throughout the United Kingdom, and provides a considerable proportion of the money raised for the work of healing. It is also an act of thanksgiving to God for the many privileges and blessings received throughout another year.

In more recent years the **Friends of Hospital Scheme** has engendered interest, prayers and financial support as churches have become linked with one of the hospitals and received a biannual letter from the hospital about its work.

The Baptist Doctors' Missionary Fellowship (BDMF) and the Baptist Nurses' News Scheme (BNNS) were formed respectively 25 and 26 years ago for the twofold purpose of bringing to doctors and nurses at home news of a more professional nature concerning the work of their colleagues overseas, so that they in turn through their prayers and financial support, might encourage the medical missionaries.

Both the BDMF and the BNNS encourage financial support, which takes effect through a special annual project. Sums of money raised in the past have been used to underwrite such things as the cost of a drug consignment to one or other of our hospitals, towards special missionary training or in underwriting the cost of travel.

Thus through the medium of **personal giving**, the Birthday Thanksgiving Scheme, the Friends of Hospital Scheme, the BDMF and the BNNS, last year a total sum of £137,770.11 was raised for the medical work of the Society, forming a considerable proportion of the total medical expenditure. The difference was met through the funds of the Mission's General Fund.

The interest shown in tangible fashion by the generosity of the people of our churches in Britain is tremendous and for this we thank God. But the power released through informed prayer is more difficult to measure. Of this we can be sure, doctors, nurses, pharmacologists, physiotherapists and social workers have been enabled to go 'the extra mile' when their own strength was flagging; seemingly 'hopeless' illnesses have been healed; the hearts of men and women have been touched and won for Jesus — and this is what it's all about!

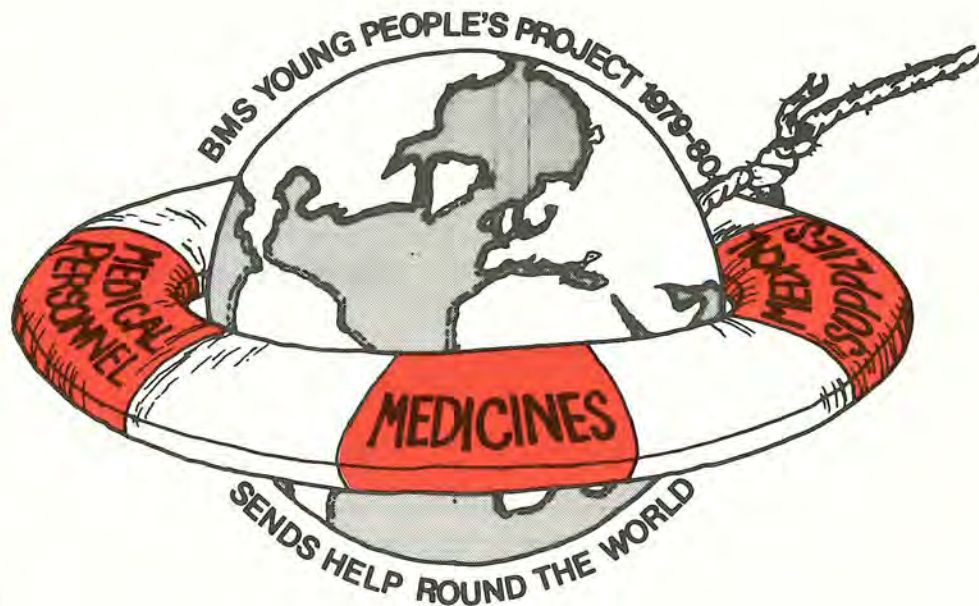
from the Women's Department

The women of the churches have always played their part in the support of the Society. They have shown their love and concern in a practical way by giving to the women's work of the Society and by special projects.

By being associated with the current project, 'Keeping the Family Together', they are helping to make the presence of all missionaries in Brazil more certain. Because accommodation for their children is provided during term time, more of our missionaries are able to remain on the field proclaiming the love of God in Christ, nurturing the churches and training pastors.

The children (22 of them) attend St Paul's School in São Paulo, an English medium school, as day pupils. As you will have seen from your July issue of the *Missionary Herald*, they live either in the main hostel (Vila Sonia) or the annexe (Jardim Paulistano). The children return to their parents during the two school holidays, but during term time they share in the evangelization of the nearby shanty towns and take part in open air meetings. In this way God is using the opportunity of the BMS needing to be in São Paulo to bring glory to Himself through the missionaries' children.





When it was necessary to supply an annexe to the hostel, the BMS looked to the women of the churches for their help and they have not failed, rather they have lived up to their reputation for generosity. The money has been raised in all sorts of ways. One meeting has collected over £50 in ½p pieces. Coffee mornings, teas, bring-and-buy sales and sales of work have all been arranged. Knitting needles have clicked, both for the making of garments for sale and in sponsored knits. In one sponsored knit, not only were the knitters sponsored but the resulting blanket was auctioned off and the proceeds given to the project. In another meeting the ladies brought a thank-offering gift in appreciation that they could have their children and grandchildren with them and not be separated from their families as are the missionaries.

The opportunities in Brazil are great. Many Brazilian churches are tackling the situation with courage and imagination, but they need help and are asking for it. By their interest and concern in the annexe the women are doing their part. There are still seven months to go before the total is announced at the BMS Women's Meeting at the Assembly in May 1981. The target is £25,000. I am confident that it will be reached.

from the Young People's Department

'Throw out the life-line' could well describe the aim of many churches and youth fellowships during 1980. Much imagination and enthusiasm have gone into supporting the current Young People's project, 'Life+Line', which contributes to vital medical work in Zaire and Bangladesh.

The old maxims, 'every little helps' and 'you're never too young to start', have also been proved to be true. Under fives have

shared in the appeal, together with older children, young people and adults.

They have all drawn on a wealth of ideas. A popular way for young supporters to give to the fund has been that of saving ½p and 1p pieces in tubes and jars. One church put a boat and life-line on display for a weekend, together with a model of an African village and project posters. Other displays have included a range of medicines and medical instruments, all priced, to show the cost of equipping a simple village dispensary. A 'working clinic' was set up in a church hall, complete with staff of nurses, midwives, pharmacist and physiotherapist. Young volunteers, dressed up as patients, were then 'treated' before the onlookers.

Sponsored chorus singing, a concert, garden parties and coffee mornings have been among other special activities. Several services of family worship have included a mime which features the work of an Under Fives' Clinic in a developing country.

The information and involvement shared through all these efforts are as important as the money raised. All supporters of the scheme should have a clearer idea of conditions in other countries, and will know of the urgent need for community health programmes, medicines and trained medical helpers. Hopefully, this increased awareness will result in continued interest and active concern.

Medically, Zaire and Bangladesh are among the neediest lands in the world. In the UK there is one doctor for every 700 people but in Zaire the ratio is about 30,000 to 1. In Bangladesh there are only 700 qualified nurses serving a population of 86,000,000. There the average wage per head is about £1 per week. This general poverty results in

malnutrition and low resistance to disease. Small wonder that one baby in every four will die before its fifth birthday.

Christians share in the work of the hospitals, clinics and community health programmes. BMS missionaries have a small but key role in this fight against illness and disease. Along with national and other expatriate medical workers, they seek to prevent sickness and heal those who are ill. The Society helps to make this work possible by supplying drugs and medical equipment.

'Life+Line' aims to provide part of the necessary money. By the end of the year it is hoped that £10,000 will have been received. With three months to go, we are still well short of our target.

If your young people would like to join in this project it is not too late for them to give their support. Slide sets, Health Bulletins and background information are available on request.

The project, however, is not the only means whereby young people can support the work of the BMS. Over the years all types of church-based youth organizations have made valuable contributions, sometimes through the project, sometimes through other ways. Guides, Scouts and Christian Endeavour societies have all given enthusiastic support to 'Life+Line'. Endeavourers have also had their own particular interest and, for some time now, have been sending in **Green Shield, Pink and Co-op stamps**. These have helped to pay production costs of a new hymn-book for the Lingombe-speaking people of Zaire.

continued overleaf

CHANNELS OF BLESSING

continued from previous page

The Christian Endeavour magazine, *Ascent*, gives regular publicity to BMS interests and youth projects.

The Boys' Brigade has a tradition of holding its own fund-raising appeals for the Society and every Christmas the Junior Section runs a special project. Last year the cause was 'Adventure in Angola' and over £9,000 was raised. This became part of the BMS grant to the Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola as it re-establishes itself. The Company Section's project for 1980 is 'Caribbean Call' and its target of £1,000 has already been passed twice over. As the name suggests, the money will help our fellow Baptists in Jamaica and, in particular, support the work of the United Theological College in Kingston.

There are the two junior schemes for personal supporters: the **Ropeholders' Club**, for youngsters up to 13 years of age, and **Youth Partners**, for those who are 14 or over. Club letters are issued three times a year, and members pledge themselves to take an interest in the worldwide Church, to support the work of the BMS by their prayers and giving, and to encourage others to take a missionary interest.

We are more grateful than words can express for the wholehearted efforts of so many groups and individuals. The Society depends on such cheerful and generous support for the continuation of its work.

Next year's project will begin in January. It will focus on communicating the gospel and will provide means of transport for church workers in Brazil and Zaire. Full details of the scheme, and promotional material, will be issued shortly. We look forward to the continued partnership of young people not only in this project, but in the total ongoing task of presenting the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in word and deed.

YOUR KINGDOM COME

THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES' CONFERENCE, MELBOURNE

by Philip Clements-Jewery, minister of Wigan Baptist Church and member of BMS General Committee.

In May this year I enjoyed the tremendous privilege of being able to attend the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Melbourne, Australia. I would like to thank the BMS for their generosity in making it possible for me to go.

On the way to Australia, during a brief visit to Bangladesh, I was able to visit our missionaries in Dacca, and see the children's hostel and the school for blind girls. I took a flight to Chittagong for 24 hours, and spent several hours at Chandraghona Hospital. Greg Smith, one of our technical team, took me to Narayanganj, where he is supervising the building of a house for the Baptist pastor. I met Rev Rajen Baroi, the Secretary of the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha, enjoyed a cup of tea in a Bengali home and ate in a Bengali restaurant. All told, it was an intense and impressive experience to see our involvement with the Church in Bangladesh.

Different expressions of the faith

The conference itself was impressive for its variety of participants and styles of worship. It was certainly hard work, with several important and stimulating addresses to digest, and with a great deal of group discussion to hammer out statements presenting the conclusions of the conference.

I went expecting to experience a great diversity of Christian traditions and practices, and I was not disappointed. Evangelicals and Orthodox Catholics and Protestants met together in a spirit of prayer and worship. Daily worship began with the entry of the cross, and we acknowledged that we were a pilgrim people who travel on under the sign of crucifixion. By far the most satisfying element in the conference was the daily Bible study in groups of 15-20. These groups were very diverse, and yet reached a depth of personal sharing which went beyond mere intellectual discussion. In this respect, the other groups in which we shared during the

conference were less satisfying. We were divided into four sections — 'The good news to the poor,' 'The kingdom of God and human struggles', 'The Church witnesses to the kingdom' and 'The crucified Christ challenges human power'. It was in these sections that the work of the conference was done, though I came away with the feeling that a committee is not the most satisfying way of tackling theology.

Several other impressions remain with me. One is the dominance of the Latin Americans among those from the Third World, and the comparative silence of the Africans and Asians. Another is the unwillingness of those from the west to accept the more extreme views that were expressed during our deliberations, although we westerners certainly engaged in public breast-beating over our contribution to the injustices that afflict mankind. Delegates from what were called 'countries with centrally-planned economics' were very much more hesitant to criticize the systems under which they lived, and when the topical subject of Afghanistan was raised the Russians threatened to walk out of the WCC if this particular resolution was passed. In fact, it was just defeated, although only half the delegates entitled to vote actually did so.

Mission to one's own people

From the point of view of the BMS, it is interesting to note that the conference concerned itself little with what might be called traditional missionary enterprise. The emphasis was plainly on the mission of each church in its own land. The BMS already recognizes this point, and works in partnership with and at the invitation of the churches in the countries where our missionaries go. A development of this idea was the suggestion by the conference that the interchange of church workers within the countries of the Third World should be



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October 19-26



Philip Clements-Jewery (right) talking to another of the delegates at the conference, a Greek Orthodox priest, Father Miltiades Chryssavgis, who works in Sydney, Australia

unjust world, can there be equal partnership in mission between rich churches (ourselves) and poor churches? It is to be expected that a conference of the WCC would issue a strong call for justice for the world's poor, and this conference was no exception. We emphasized that the gospel is good news to the poor and that the kingdom has special significance for the oppressed. Time and time again, those of us from the rich countries were reminded of our silent complicity in a system that oppresses and exploits the poor. The gospel demands that we are responsible not only for the way we use our wealth, but also for the way in which it is gained. The preaching of the good news will have no credibility among the poor if it is divorced from such concerns. We have to admit that the vast majority of the people served by the churches which our society supports are extremely poor, and that these churches themselves are poor. We, on the other hand, enjoy the power that a budget of £1½ million affords. There is a profound challenge here to us all, a word from God to which we must attend.

These ideas were given solid biblical and theological undergirding by the conference. A Baptist working in industrial mission in Hong Kong called for a new commitment to the evangelization of the poor, addressing them not so much as sinners in need of forgiveness (they are that, but this comes later) as those who are sinned against. The gospel affirms the value and dignity of such people, and enables them to stand firm against the principalities and powers. It is only in the awareness that they are the sinned-against that the possibility of them acknowledging themselves as sinners arises.

Concern for the periphery

In this connection, a Japanese theologian spoke about the Christ 'who is the centre of all peoples and all things' yet who is always in motion towards the periphery. He affirms

his Lordship by giving it up! If God thus declares His concern for the people on the periphery of life, then the Church must share this concern. As far as we are concerned, Zaire and Bangladesh, particularly, are on the periphery, but 'The crucified Lord is as much present (in these places) as in London'.

I hope that everything I have so far written makes clear that although the conference was very concerned with social and political issues, nevertheless it did not lose sight of the centrality of evangelism to the task of the Church. What we were discussing, rather, was the strategy by which this task must be carried out. An evangelism without attention to these other issues lacks credibility. We are called to the task of mission in solidarity with the world's poor, and this will be a costly thing if we take seriously the need for absolute identification with those we seek to serve.

While in Australia, I was able to make contact with the officers of the Australian Baptist Missionary Society and to visit their headquarters. I found this a very valuable and stimulating experience. I was impressed, among other things, by the quality of their literature, and by how much they were apparently able to do on a budget of about one third of ours.

Finally, another word of thanks to the BMS for making this trip possible for me, and a quotation from the conference message to the churches: 'Our world is deeply wounded by the oppression inflicted by the powerful upon the powerless . . . our world is full of people suffering from hunger, poverty and injustice. We stand under the judgement and hope of Jesus Christ. The prayer "Your kingdom come" brings us closer to Jesus. Christ in today's world. We invite you to join us in commitment to the Lord for the coming of whose kingdom we pray — your kingdom come, O Lord!'

encouraged, as well as a more balanced interchange between First and Third World churches.

This raises the major issue on the agenda of the conference: how, in an unequal and

NO LOOKING BACK

by Irene Masters, written during an extended furlough.

When we were forced to spend a longer time on furlough than anticipated, many thoughts and questions came to mind which caused us to re-examine our call, and to ask whether the Lord was showing us that our term of service on the mission field had come to an end. I would like to share these thoughts and questions, with a prayer that others who are perhaps going through a period of uncertainty and perplexity, of questioning and doubt, may be helped as I have been.

Obviously not all missionaries have times of difficulties such as these, but I feel that people in the churches at home should be aware that these problems exist. With this knowledge they will be able to pray more intelligently and be a help and support while missionaries are on furlough, for we are all part of the Lord's team, prayers and workers alike.

As we waited on the Lord for His word and will to be revealed, one verse in particular stood out to us with nagging persistence. It is found in Luke 9:62 and reads, 'Anyone who starts to plough and then keeps looking back is of no use to the Kingdom of God.'

The verse speaks to us of commitment, but what is commitment? Is there a lack of commitment on the mission field today? How many missionaries respond to the call of God only to give up later on when it is not quite what they expected? Why are so many leaving after only one term? Why do so many apply only for short-term service? Why are there only a few who stay for 15, 20, 25 years? The reasons are, of course, varied and numerous but perhaps sometimes it is because we have only one hand on the plough and are looking back to the homeland, then when difficulties arise it is all so easy to take that hand off and let go of our commitment. But we know, too, that our commitment is not to a particular work or mission field, rather it is to God, and we must

always be open and receptive to His voice and obedient to His will.

Testing our faith or turning our feet?

When things are going well we do not stop to question whether we are still where the Lord would have us. However, as soon as difficulties arise – perhaps doubts, opposition or misunderstanding – we begin to wonder whether we are still in the Lord's will. Are these problems sometimes of the Lord's permitting in order to test our commitment to Him? Or are they signs that we are no longer in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing?

I think most missionaries experience discouragement when they first go out to the mission field. We have so many ideas and plans which we believe are God-given and will better the life of the people, and then, oh the disappointment when we arrive and the people are not interested and cannot understand, preferring to go on in the same way as they have done for years. It is then that we begin to wonder whether we were right after all. Have we mistaken God's call? Have we mistaken all the ideas and plans as coming from ourselves and not God? Sometimes even our missionary colleagues seem not to understand what we are trying to do.

When these things happen, are we not in some measure being made to understand a little of the suffering of our Lord and to share in it? He came with the greatest message of all. His arrival had been expected and prepared for, and yet when He arrived He was misunderstood and rejected, even by His colleagues, His closest friends. Should we not consider it a tremendous privilege to be able to share a little in the suffering of our Lord? In spite of the difficulties, the misunderstanding, the antipathy and rejection, Jesus was totally committed to the work His Father had sent Him to do.

Both hands were firmly fixed on the plough and He set His face steadfastly forward, never wavering.

The differences demand great patience

When we are used to making quick decisions, it is very hard to enter a culture where any important issue must, on principle, be discussed and thought about over a long period. This process may take many months or even years before the idea is finally accepted, no matter how good it may seem to us, or how great the change would be for the better. How easy it is to try and force our ideas without waiting for them to be properly understood and accepted. In this respect churches at home can help a great deal by praying that the Lord will give an extra portion of His patience and perseverance to missionaries, especially during their first couple of years on the field.

Then again, one of the most difficult times for the missionary is coming home on furlough and feeling rather a failure but having to face congregations who are eager to hear news of the wonderful way in which the Lord is working. We wonder what we can possibly say as we look back and try to assess what has been achieved, and we feel even more wretched when someone comes up to us and says that they think we are wonderful! It is then that the big question looms up – do I return or not? Just as the disciples asked why they could not cast out the evil spirit from the young boy, so too we would ask why there seems to be no response to our work, and I am sure that the answer of Jesus would be the same, 'Only prayer.'

I believe that the role of the churches at home is so very important in the Lord's team. For we are a team and the churches have a commitment to pray; to pray earnestly and intelligently for both missionaries and the people amongst whom we work. But, I



realize, too, that those of us on deputation have a duty to give a true impression of our work including both joys for praise and burdens for prayer. For how can the churches co-operate and be one with us if they do not know what to pray for?

Each one needs the other

It may well be, if we are honest with ourselves, that some of the problems which arise stem from our own pride and a failure to realize that we are a team, in need of each other. God has placed us where we are for a reason, and every one of us is equally important in His sight and service. Even if a missionary has only been on the field for one or two years, and has made many mistakes during that time, that person still has much to offer new missionaries. Nor should we forget the people amongst whom God has placed us. What must it be like for them to have different people coming and going all making the same mistakes? How can we teach them about commitment when we ourselves are not witnessing to total commitment, when we have our hand on the plough but are always looking back?

New missionaries need the experience of more senior missionaries as a steadying influence to stop them making problems for

themselves and ruining their witness through lack of knowledge of the culture, and to stop them from forcing their ideas on the people. I am sure, again if we are honest, we have all felt resentment when, bursting with enthusiasm, we are told that we cannot do something in the way we wanted. There are often many things, too, which to us seem wrong and yet nobody seems to be concerned or doing anything. Later, we find that these things have been the cause of tears and frustration for our colleagues since they first came. They may well have been trying for years to have these things changed, but have met with obstacle upon obstacle.

In turn, the more senior missionaries need the freshness and enthusiasm of new missionaries, as often we give up trying new ideas because it has taken so long in the past to have anything implemented. Perhaps, too, we are sometimes unwilling to accept new ideas unless they come from ourselves. It is so easy to think that because our ideas have not worked, an idea from someone who has just arrived on the field could not possibly work and so the idea is rejected outright.

We are called to obedience

We need to remind ourselves of the humility of Jesus and let this mind be in us which

was in Him so that indeed we may be humble towards each other, always considering others better than ourselves and looking out for one another's interests, not just our own. May we indeed allow the Spirit to produce in us His love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control, that there may be a greater love and understanding for each other, not only on the mission field but also in the churches.

If we look with expectation and hope that we shall reign with Christ, God expects endurance from us, total commitment, both hands on the plough and no looking back, even though we may not see any fruit for our labour. Vast numbers of lives were not changed during Jesus' time on earth; the dramatic changes came after He had returned to His Father. He came in obedience to the Father's will. We, too, may not see many changes but we go in obedience to the Father's will and that is what matters. The work and the results are the Lord's not ours. We are only the instruments through which God carries out His purposes. Missionaries 'new' or 'old' and praying partners in the churches are simply God's servants, each doing the work the Lord gives us to do. One sows the seed, another waters the plant, but it is God who makes the plant grow. 'The one who sows and the one who waters really do not matter. It is God who matters, because He makes the plant grow. There is no difference between the man who sows and the man who waters; God will reward each one according to the work he has done. For we are partners working together for God' (1 Corinthians 3:5-9, GNB).

So let us all witness and keep our eyes, our aims and our hopes steadfastly towards Jesus, who has gone before us.

VISION FULFILLED

by Edith Hallett, who served in India from 1946 to 1970.

I once had a vision. It was maybe not in quite the same class as that of St Paul, or even Sadhu Sundar Singh, but it was nevertheless a moment of seeing which I shall always remember. I was standing on the veranda at the back of what had not long before been the men's bungalow in Gaya, and looking at a large empty compound with a few godowns (warehouses) and unused servants' quarters near its northern and western boundaries. The vision came clearly: that was where the school was to be!

In those days the little Gaya Middle School was actually located in an old rented house

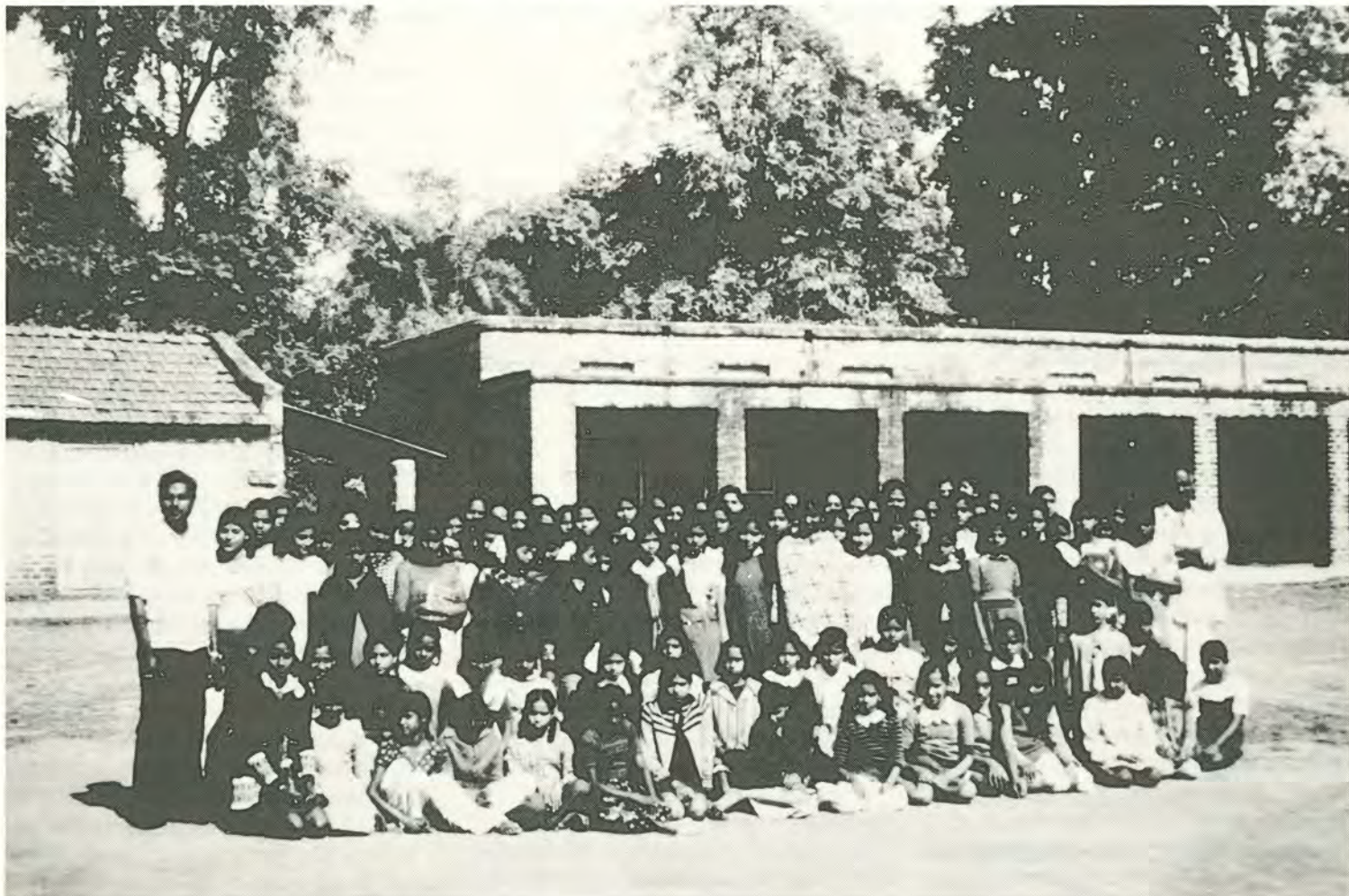
in Ram Sagar on the edge of Andar (ie inner) Gaya, the holiest part of that great pilgrimage centre. It was no mansion, having just one central room and four sizeable verandas round it. At some stage permission had been obtained from the Hindu landlord to fill most of the little courtyard with two new classrooms – one a proper room for the combined top two classes, the other an extension of its roof and floor but unwalled, where the numerous small children of Class I sat, each on her little, movable board.

Standing room only

Space was so limited that when I once made a

numerical error over admissions and admitted one child too many, it was found that there was literally no place on the appropriate veranda where another little seat-board and another little low desk could be put. Fortunately, as it happened, there was no single day when all the members of that class were present together, so no crisis occurred.

It was a school for non-Christians, it had no money or proper grant, and right from the start I had not wanted to go to Gaya. I had felt my call to be to give a deeper understanding of Christian things to Indian



High School section, Gaya



children born into the Christian fold. I did not feel called to spend time and energy raising money, as my predecessor Miss Dorothy Philcox had done, to keep running a school which was neither in accord with the current BUNI (Baptist Union of North India) policy nor with my own call. Further, a Bihar middle school needed only a trained Inter Arts (a halfway stage to a BA) for its headmistress, and I was, wastefully, an MA. But for the BUNI I was a cheap proposition to fill the headmistress vacancy, for I was paid by money from overseas whereas an Indian IA must be paid from money raised in India. So they appointed me to Gaya.

I had other ideas as to what I should do so I fought the appointment, but was defeated. Gloomily, even tearfully, I decided to do as I was asked. Later, I remember, a friend commented, 'Surely you were sent to close the Gaya school!' But it did not work out that way.

Firstly, I fell in love with the little school. Badly staffed as it was, at least on paper, it was quite amazingly successful in teaching the three R's and more. Year after year the 'mission school' came top of the government scholarship examinations. One year in particular three of our girls would have undoubtedly topped the list had the authorities not refused to accept more than two candidates from us. Further, each Sunday morning almost the whole school came along voluntarily to Sunday school. If it was partly for the pretty pictures that they came, what did it matter? They were there, all the same, listening attentively to stories of Jesus.

Time for the vision

It was not long, however, before a mountain stood in the way of progress. The government authorities demanded better accommodation for this grant-aided school, and who could blame them? But in Ram Sagar there was no

space, and anyway there was no money, certainly not for a rented building. It was then that I 'saw' the school in the mission compound garden. And I was not disobedient to my tiny, inglorious vision.

I duly set about convincing the district inspectress that we could accommodate a middle school in a few godowns and servants' quarters for the time being. When she looked doubtful, having seen them, I pointed out to her that the space available was, even then, as large as that we were occupying in Ram Sagar, discounting Class I which we could seat on the veranda of the mission bungalow until we were able to build a classroom for them. She still looked doubtful, but took a deep breath and decided to risk it.

Then I set about persuading the BUNI powers-that-be to let me keep for the time being the money that was being paid to get the entire teaching staff of six the mile and a half each day to Ram Sagar and back. This was highly irregular, for it was travel money and could not possibly be diverted to property. I am not sure that I ever quite lived that one down!

Finally, I inveigled the School Managing Committee into giving permission in writing for the moving of the school. How glad I was later that I had got that in writing, for there were faint hearts among them who, when the last minute came, felt belatedly convinced that you could not just move a school without transport for the children the whole mile and a half. The school would disintegrate for sure, I was told.

Pleasantly surprised

I recalled all this as I stood once again outside the old mission bungalow early this year and prepared to see the present school directed by Miss Johari Masih, its principal since Miss Dorothy Belham left ten years ago. When I saw it I was, frankly, surprised

as well as pleased. I had revisited it three years before and had found a considerable increase in numbers and some apparently rather ill-considered and apologetic attempt to start a high school section. Miss Masih had hinted that she would probably have to close this down again.

But I found that far from having been closed down the high school section was flourishing. It was about 200 strong. Nor had it only grown numerically. I was told with justifiable pride that of the 26 girls who had taken the Matriculation Examination the previous year, two had passed in Division I and the remaining 24 in Division II. Also, the middle department had about 400 girls now — quite a sizeable school.

It would have been satisfying, on top of all this, to have seen there a building worthy of a high school. But this did not happen. In addition to the original adapted godowns and servants' quarters there was, of course, the assembly hall-cum-classrooms built soon after the move. Then there was the nursery school building added later on under Miss Belham's capable control. Finally there was one more block in process of being built. All were small and modest. I had to console myself with the 'law' which says that when an institution attains a worthy building it is probably on the downward path!

What of its Christian witness? Well, I do know that Christian worship is being conducted in the school, but beyond that I cannot say, as there has been no BMS missionary stationed in Gaya for over ten years now. Will you join in prayer with the BUNI that the plans for the school's progress will be in accordance with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that its witness may be to the glory of God and that it may be greatly blessed and used for the furtherance of His Kingdom? The vision was from the Lord; may He continue the good work He began.

NOTES TO USE WITH YOUR PRAYER GUIDE

Dr Barbara Boal (29 September) has now retired and her place has been taken by Jim Grenfell.

Marilyn Mills (8 October) is on furlough.

Joyce Brown (19 October) has moved to a village called Devkot and is doing community health work.

selfless concern for others



BMS
Gift and self-denial
week
Oct 26th~Nov 2nd

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Mrs A Phillips on 29 June from Kathmandu, Nepal.

Rev D R A and Mrs Punchard and family on 1 July from Foz do Iguacu, Brazil.

Mrs P Hoskins and family on 3 July from San Fernando, Trinidad.

Miss B Cooke on 3 July from CECO, Kimpese, Zaire.

Miss C Farrer on 3 July from Pimu, Zaire.

Miss M A Hughes on 3 July from Kisangani, Zaire.

Mr and Mrs P H Riches on 3 July from Yakusu, Zaire.

Miss O Satterly on 3 July from Pimu, Zaire.

Miss P M Woolhouse on 3 July from CECO, Kimpese, Zaire.

Departures

Mrs E Grainger and **Cynthia** on 1 July for Maringa, Brazil.

Miss A Y Weir on 8 July for Pokhara, Nepal.

Births

On 20 June, in Combe Martin, to **Rev N G and Mrs Aubrey**, a third daughter.

On 1 July, in Birmingham, to **Mr and Mrs E F Gouthwaite**, a second daughter.

Death

At Brading, Isle of Wight, on 27 June, **Miss Florence E M Pitman**, aged 80 (India Mission 1926-1960).

OTHER WAYS OF GIVING

In this issue we have covered several of the various ways in which you can give to the work of the Society. Not mentioned are:

Gift envelopes: — for use on special occasions.

Collecting boxes: — a globe-shaped box to aid your giving.

Shareholders: — a set of 12 envelopes, marked in months, for you to use regularly through the year.

Covenants: — increase your giving by enabling the Society to receive the income tax, too.

Collecting cards: — for children.