

Missionary

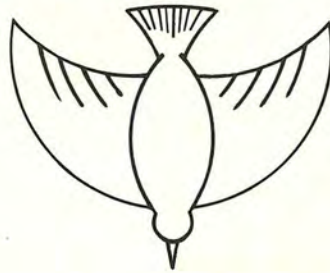
HERALD

The magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society



DECEMBER 1980
PRICE 12p

THE HOPE OF THE WORLD



A NEW RECRUIT

Tim Reed grew up in Horsham, Sussex, and has always attended Brighton Road Baptist Church, where he has become an officer in the Boys' Brigade Company. He was baptized in April 1976 and since completing his carpentry training, has felt the desire to use his skills in some form of Christian service. Over the years, his church has been developing a keen interest in the work of the BMS in Zaire and after a visit from Pastor Koli in the spring of 1979 he was challenged to offer for service in Zaire.



MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Miss V Campbell on 10 August from Dacca, Bangladesh.

Miss B Bond on 18 August from Dacca, Bangladesh.

Miss P Spratt on 20 August from Mbanza-Ngungu, Zaire.

Miss E Talbot on 28 August from Tansen, Nepal.

Mr G Smith on 30 August from Dacca, Bangladesh.

Rev J and Mrs Dyer on 9 September from Vilhena, Brazil.

Mr D Sorrill on 10 September from Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Departures

Rev D and Mrs Hoskins on 17 August for San Fernando, Trinidad.

Miss O Satterley on 21 August for Pimu, Zaire.

Mr M Staple on 21 August for Upoto, Zaire.

Mr and Mrs M Sansom on 21 August for Upoto, Zaire.

Mr H Laver and children on 23 August for Dacca, Bangladesh.

Miss R Montacute on 24 August for Kinshasa, Zaire.

Miss J Townley on 24 August for Kinshasa, Zaire.

Miss P Walton on 24 August for Yakusu, Zaire.

Mr and Mrs I Coster on 24 August for Kinshasa, Zaire.

Mrs J Watson and boys on 25 August for Barisal, Bangladesh.

Rev N and Mrs Aubrey and family on 30 August for Princes Town, Trinidad.

Miss P Smith on 30 August for Udayagiri, India.

Miss R Knox on 6 September for Mbanza-Ngungu, Zaire.

Miss P Woolhouse on 9 September for CECO, Kimpese, Zaire.

Miss G Walker on 9 September for Makaising, Nepal.

Rev D Grainger on 16 September for Curitiba, Brazil.

Births

On 6 September, in Brasilia, Brazil, to Rev S and Mrs Christine, a son, Bruce Luiz.

On 7 September, in Newcastle, to Mr and Mrs G Smith, a son, Lee Thomas.

Death

At Ampthill, Bedford, on 23 August 1980, Dr James W Bottoms, aged 78 (Bangladesh Mission 1928-1960).



THE 1981 PRAYER GUIDE

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NOTES FOR YOUR PRAYER GUIDE

David and Irene Masters (11 December) are now stationed at Yakusu.

Martin and Annet Stagles (12 December) are now on furlough and both recovering from a bout of illness.

Mrs E Williamson (13 December) was recently called home to her Lord.

Brenda Earl (17 December) has recently been ill but is now back at Pimu.

Christine Farrer (18 December) is on furlough and was married recently to Chris Spencer. They expect to return to Zaire next month.

Joan Sargent (24 December) is on furlough at present.

Rev Bruce Henry, for many years a missionary in the Kond Hills, has been invited back for six months to help in church work.

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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Another year moves towards its close. Even as it does so we look to a new beginning: not just that of another year but of a new creation to be discovered in Christ of which we are reminded as we share once more in the thoughts and meaning of Advent.

'In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea.
With a beauty in His bosom that transfigures you and me'

It is awe inspiring to realize that a babe, born in obscurity to a village maid — denied the proper shelter and privacy which were the right of a woman bringing a child to birth — should prove to be the hope of the whole world: should be God's chosen way of turning men's eyes from the past to the future, from sin to righteousness and from despair to expectancy.

It is the glad experience of this happening in their own life which has impelled every missionary abroad to share the hope of this truth with all who will listen and receive it for themselves.

The power that impels

The Christ is still the hope of all the world and in this issue of *The Herald* a number of colleagues have spoken about 'hope' as they see it for themselves and the countries in which they have been called to serve.

The hope of every Christian is to see the kingdom come on earth, but this hope can never be a passive thing — a pious wish. It is the driving force which leads, has always led, men and women to put personal comfort and security aside and accept privation and danger, certain that they have a part to play in the transfiguring work of Christ.

They know that even in the most unlikely places and with the most 'hopeless' of people a new day can begin which will be noted not only on a human calendar but in the Lamb's book of life.

A hope that is justified

Perhaps this is illustrated in a very telling way at Kivuvu — the place of hope — at Kimpese, Zaire. It was their knowledge of the loving care of God in Christ which encouraged the founding group of missionaries, drawn from a number of countries, to dare to present the Hope of the World even to those suffering from leprosy and consequently banished from society. They named their work centre 'a place of hope' and showed these sufferers a new tomorrow in which their disfigurements could be reduced if not removed: in which they could be given a clean bill of health and expect to return to their communities once more and in which those who had been forced to hobble or crawl because of damage to their feet could expect to walk upright again.

This was a tremendous hope to hold out before such people, yet it was not all. They were offered an even greater hope of becoming children of God, and many at Kivuvu have found, not only healing from their disease, but cleansing from their sin also and have discovered a peace in the Hope of the World.

All at Mission House pray that you too may know the healing and the peace of God this Christmas time.

THE HOUSE WHERE THERE WAS ROOM

by Joy Moseley

'To have faith is to be sure of things we hope for'
(Hebrews 11:1)

What do we, working in Bangladesh, hope for the future Christian witness in that country?

In 1978, when I first went to Bangladesh, my hopes were high. I believed that God had called me to serve Him working in the administration of our BMS hospital at Chandraghona. However, God frequently moves in ways which we do not understand, and following language study I was asked to work in Dacca, the capital city of Bangladesh. My disappointment was acute and it seemed my hopes of ever working in Chandraghona were dashed. I am not by nature a very patient person and a number of circumstances, not least my own attitude, contrived to make 1979 a rather unsettled year for me – and, no doubt, my colleagues! And yet, through all the doubt and uncertainty, there was a belief that God had brought me thus far, and so the future was in His hands. As I return to work in Bangladesh, this time to work in Chandraghona, it is in the hope that God will use me and the gifts He has given me, in that place.

What is the hope for Bangladesh? What hope can there be for a country where corruption is rife in all elements of society and where the majority of the population, as in most countries, is only out for what it can get? The Christian community is not unaffected by this desire for more and more, and we should pray very much for our Bengali brothers and sisters who face such temptation, for it must be patently clear that it is almost impossible for the Christian church to proclaim its message if it is not true to the One it serves. But do not think that all Christians in Bangladesh are corrupt – far from it. During my period of language study in the southern town of Barisal, it was a great privilege to be invited to the

homes of various people, Christian and non-Christian.

Hope in idols

Two such visits stand out in my memory as I seek to express the hope of Bangladesh. The first was on the occasion of a Hindu Puja festival – one of many. A group of Bengali girls with whom I had become friendly invited me to make a 'tour of the town' with them, to see the statues of the various gods which had been erected. It was an occasion of much hilarity and celebration, for the world and his wife seemed to be on the streets making that tour, and I imagine pickpockets were doing a hectic trade. I saw people stand with reverence before the images erected at roadsides, worshipping them, hoping to find favour with the gods. Such is the Hindu hope in Bangladesh. As well as these street shrines, part of the Hindu Puja festival necessitates the construction of smaller idols in people's homes. On a visit to one house, after being plied with cake and other sweetmeats, we were invited to see their idol.

What hope is there in these man-made carvings and how can we communicate our faith in a living God? These questions are difficult to answer. Our Christian ways of doing things are alien to them and it is only by getting alongside the individual and trying to understand something of his lifestyle that we can hope, in due time, to be able to share our Christian faith and help him realize that there is no hope in idol worship. We need to expound the message contained in our hymn: 'Jesus calls us from the worship of the vain world's golden store; from each idol that would keep us. . . .'

Christian charity

The other visit which I would like to share with you was the occasion I was invited to the home of Shefali, a Christian girl who worked in our house in Barisal. It was near



A Hindu Idol

Christmas and we were asked for a meal. Her's was an especially poor home, and Shefali had to bring up four young children. Coloured pages from magazines we had discarded as rubbish, were stuck on the bamboo walls for 'decoration', but despite the poverty, Shefali was – and is – a fine Christian. We ate our meal, over which she had taken so much time and trouble and further, had probably spent the whole of her week's wages, buying the ingredients. Then, as we were leaving, a beggar came asking for food. Without a moment's hesitation Shefali said 'Come in, I have food for you'. As we witnessed this scene, there came to my mind the saying of Jesus: 'In as much as you have done it unto the least of one of these, you have done it unto Me.'

Although we in the West have so much, I very much doubt that in such circumstances we would have been willing to give to a beggar. Surely in such people as Shefali lies the Christian hope for Bangladesh.

DIGNITY AT LITTLE COST

by Pat Woolhouse

Ngunza Pedro is 19 years old and was brought up in the Carmona area of Angola. He was quite a normal little boy, running about and playing with his friends, helping his mother in the family garden and enjoying the freedom of village life. At the age of nine he awoke one morning, unaware that the day was to change his life completely, and went off down to the river to wash. He did not return and eventually his worried mother went to look for him. Whenever he tells the story himself, Ngunza continues this way: 'When she found me, I was dead. I was dead for three years, but my big toe still moved a bit, so they didn't bury me.' We presume that he had been struck by polio, but he was fortunate in having a family who would care for him. Gradually he recovered, but at the end of that three year period he was no longer able to walk upright and ever since he has moved in a crouched position — no fun when roads are muddy for half the year and thick with dust the other half.

Hope through suffering

It took no time for Ngunza to realize that he was going to have to rely on his intelligence rather than his strength to earn a living in the future, so he began pressing his family to let him go to school. They resisted the idea, thinking he would be teased and



Three months of walking like this!

tormented. Then events in Angola overtook the whole family and they decided that they must leave their home and become refugees in Zaire. Ngunza does not talk much about the three month journey, on foot all the way, much of it through mined forests and with little to eat, but when they reached the comparative safety of Zaire the only relatives left with him were his ailing mother and an older brother who had to do his best to look after both of them. They settled in a village just on the border and once again Ngunza asked to go to school. Again the answer was 'no', but this time he did not accept the refusal and went on hunger strike for 24 hours until permission was given.

In 1978 he completed his primary schooling and it was at that point that Jim Grenfell met him and, thanks to funds made available for refugee work, was able to offer him the chance of two year's secondary education in Kimpese. This meant leaving the family, but for the first year he lodged with a widow from the same area of Angola and for the second year we managed to get permission for him to use a one-roomed house next to the classrooms. He shared this house with a primary schoolboy who helped him with some of the more physically demanding tasks, like fetching water, cleaning the house, cutting the grass and so on. He has proved a good student, but what has impressed me more than anything has been his constant cheerfulness and genuine gratitude for any help that has been offered. Towards the end of this last school year, largely as the result of a visit by someone totally unconnected with the BMS, we were able to obtain for him a hand-operated tricycle which has given him new mobility. I shall find it difficult to forget his excitement the day we took him to see and try it for the first time, nor shall I forget his shy confidence afterwards: 'I've been praying for one of these for several years.' As far as I know he has never made any Christian commitment, but he is certainly



Ngunza on the new tricycle

interested and God is very real to him.

Long ones, please!

Now his first two years have been successfully completed and he has had to make a choice. At CECO we could only offer him a scientific or agricultural training, neither of which would have been much use, so we hope that he is going to follow a commercial course at Sundi-Lutete, another Christian school, but founded by our Swedish colleagues. To get there he will have to fly, so we are fortunate in having the Missionary Aviation Fellowship on our doorstep, willing to help. The chair may have to follow by road. In many ways Ngunza is one of the lucky ones, but we thank God that at least he has been helped towards a more fulfilled life and we trust that in his new school he may also come to know better the God who has made it all possible. Before coming home on furlough, I was discussing with him the uniform that he would be needing and remarked on the fact that it would include a new pair of shorts, for I had never seen him in anything else. 'Now that I have the chair,' came the answer, 'do you think I could have long trousers?' A small wish to grant perhaps, but a symbol of new hope and dignity for one young man.

NO NEED TO STUMBLE

by Margaret Hughes

'I shall give you a sermon on faith, Margaret,' said the minister of our church on one occasion a few days ago. 'Then I shall give you one on realism,' I replied. A few days later it struck me that one could bring these two together, for faith is realistic. In a sense, our faith is so often the evidence of things seen. I have faith, and so I hope in what God can do in Zaire, and I have more faith and hope than I had 12 months ago, just because of what I have seen of God's working in Zaire through His Holy Spirit since then.

There are times when Baptists, just as much as people of other denominations, are guilty of looking back to the full churches of a previous age, to the previous minister, to the church of New Testament times or to the times of, for example, the Welsh revival. I remember when I was a student at Carey Hall Missionary College, I wrote an essay which was later returned to me with a comment by the professor that for the New Testament church, the Golden Age was in the future, not the past. Obviously we can learn much from the past, both our own and, if we are humble enough, from other people's, but our main regard should be to the future — and it should be a regard towards Christ rather than ourselves, our church, our denomination or our leaders.



Rev Liolo

So many problems

It is easy to slip into despondency as one looks at the grim economic problems in Zaire (which are impossible to describe to people who think that the economy at home is disastrous) and what is even more heartbreaking is the problem within the church itself. Every week we heard of another case of dishonesty, bribery and deception, until a missionary colleague finally said to me 'Well, ignorance was bliss!' As church leaders are often involved in this corruption there is, inevitably, a resulting lack of spirituality in the worship and teaching of the church, in spite of large attendances. One pastor, concerned about the competitive element which had entered into the offerings, asked despairingly as we sat in the vestry before going into the service, 'Mademoiselle, what is the solution?' 'The Holy Spirit' I replied, and the pastor looked at me with eyes agog as if he had never heard of Him before!

'I am always thinking of the Lord,' says the Psalmist, 'and because he is so near, I never need to stumble or fall' (Psalm 16:8). By the Holy Spirit, the Helper, Christ is present in us to strengthen and to guide us, if we will listen to Him. Our faith is the stronger because of the things we have seen in Zaire already. It is as we have witnessed the Holy Spirit working in one individual and another, and it is as our eyes are turned towards Christ in man that we have hope!

Rev Liolo was the headmaster of the *Institut Lisanga* in Kisangani for the last school year. How easy it is for us amidst the rush of daily work to know our colleagues only on a superficial level. Some months after Pastor Liolo had joined us, he and I really began to talk, and he shared with me how despondent he felt about the church, some of the problems he faced in trying to run the school with justice and order and the lack of backing in certain aspects even by some

Baptist officials. No wonder he felt desperate. But he still had hope. 'God can change things,' he said, 'we must hold to this: that with God all things are possible; we must remain faithful in prayer for the spiritual renewal of the church.'

I was thrilled as he spoke because I felt he really meant it, and was not just saying something he thought I would like him to say, which is often the case in Zaire.

Thirst for God

Certainly he was sincere in his appreciation when I lent him a copy of *Forgive me Natacha* by Sergei Koudakov, a young communist leader who organized the persecution and beating up of Christians in a certain Russian town. Later, Rev Liolo came into the laboratory where I was working, marking examination papers, and he was almost without words to describe what it had meant to him to read that book. 'I've never read anything like it,' he said. He had Bibles and theological books, but very little in the way of simple devotional books and up-to-date testimonies. On that particular day, not long after Rev Liolo had left, I saw Babundo going past the door. He was an old pupil and I do not know what he was doing in our school just then, but he came in to chat and he too was almost speechless with delight over a book — only about 25 pages long — which I had lent him. It was a simple basic Bible correspondence course, *The Christian Life*. 'Yes,' I said, 'when I was sent extra copies I thought one might help you in your teaching of the Young Inquirers class you were telling me about.' 'Oh yes, it does help,' he replied 'but not only for that, but for my own spiritual life, too.' I can share with you what he said but I cannot possibly describe how he said it. His thirst for God was evident as we talked and although I did not get so many examination papers marked that morning, I went home with my heart uplifted,

praising God anew, and full of hope, because

'Where meek souls will receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in.'

Another occasion which gave me great cause for hope was when I discovered earlier this year, just what kinds of books are available in the Roman Catholic bookshops these days. I cannot remember what I had gone into the bookshop for, but when I came out, I probably had a huge grin on my face! For myself, I had already found so much help over the previous months from such books as *The Divine Pity*, *Love in Action* and *The Second Touch*, but I had often felt sad and frustrated because when I was particularly encouraged, challenged or uplifted by something, I could not share the treasure with my Zairian colleagues because the books were in English. The official language in Zaire is French, so I was delighted to find *Pardonne – moi Natacha* and Roy Hession's *Reveil Aujourd'hui* and others on the Roman Catholic bookshelves. Sometimes I had felt similarly frustrated when I enjoyed cassettes sent to me by ministers, deacons and lay preachers at home. However, when visiting friends in Montreal for a few hours they were able to let me have a Christian Literature Crusade catalogue of French books, and I now have more books and a cassette on order from their branch in Birmingham. We sometimes bewail the lack of literature in the tribal languages of Kikongo and Lingala, and people are working on this, but there is a terrific ministry open to us in sharing French books with a number of Christian colleagues in Zaire today.

Desperate for spiritual food

When the Rev Angus MacNeill came out earlier this year to run retreats for missionaries and pastors, the notice we received of his visit was very short, and so it was only on the Friday that Annie Horsfall and I went to the headmaster to ask

permission to miss school on Monday and Tuesday in order to participate in the retreat at Yakusu. 'Of course you may go,' said Rev Liolo. 'It's very important, and after all, I'm hoping it will be my turn next.' Unfortunately, his eagerness was unrewarded for the Regional Church Council decided that there was not time to organize retreats for pastors. But as I talked to Rev Lituambela (who is a lecturer at the Baptist Theological School) and his wife, I learned of their plans to persuade the Regional Secretary to arrange something for Kisangani and Yakusu pastors at least, as they were nearer than others. I was encouraged as I realized their thirst for God. They were not concerned as to who should pay their fare to Kisangani (by Land Rover or Taxi bus) or whether they would be given anything to eat. 'We'll walk,' said Rev Lituambela (15 miles!) 'and we'll tell the Secretary that we will not need anything to eat.' They were so desperate for spiritual food. This again gives hope, for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.

We cannot cling to our culture

The conflict between culture and Christianity is not new. Paul advised his friends in Rome, 'do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed', but it is not always easy for the 'western' missionary to discern what is essentially Christian and what is only western.

'You westerners lay too much emphasis on words' said one pastor when I told him I was unhappy about a communion service he had led. 'It's different for you people in the west,' said the manageress of the Residence where I was living as she gave me a lift to church.

'Let's stop making our culture an excuse for disobedience of the Word of God! If we are born again Christians there are some things in our culture that we cannot cling to,' said Citizen Mperere, a young Zairian lecturer and a deacon at the university campus church,



Banundo on his wedding day

in his sermon one Sunday morning. How much more effective this is than for a western missionary to say 'You must stop. . . .' Some weeks later the chaplain Citizen Rev Nzemoti used a bank holiday to hold a retreat for students to consider 'Birth, Marriage and Death: our customs in the light of the Word of God'.

It gives me hope to go along sometimes to that university service, to see so many future key personnel (there were 500 at the Easter service) attending a service which is God centred in every aspect. Here spiritual food is faithfully meted out Sunday by Sunday, problems seem to be honestly faced and New Testament solutions sought and there is real concern for the true spiritual well-being of students. This is as much a Zairian church as any other; the chaplain is Zairian, the deacons are Zairians, and there are no European or American members of this 'parish'.

Our hope, however, is not in the university church nor in the Roman Catholic bookshop; our hope is not in education nor in some spiritual experiences, but in Christ. Not everyone in the church in Zaire is burying his head in the sand. 'The Christian life is a life of repentance,' says Rev Liolo, and this is as true for the church as it is for the individual Christian. Recognizing our sin is the beginning of the solution because when we realize our sin, we see our need of a Saviour; when we realize we have gone astray, we begin to see our need to come back, to turn again to Christ, to confess, to receive cleansing and forgiveness and to be directed by Him alone. For Zaire and for the church there and all its people, we say again

'My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness'

CAN YOU IMAGINE?



by Stephen J Bull

No high street stores laden with every conceivable merchandise?

In a Nepali village there is no question of 'popping around the corner' to the local

grocer's to buy a pound of sausages or a cream cake when visitors call unexpectedly. In the rural areas there are few shops and what shops there are will only stock really essential household commodities such as



Nepal is a very beautiful country. Some say it is the most scenic country in the world, with its stupendous views of the mountains and the friendly welcoming people.

However, Nepal is still a relatively unknown Hindu kingdom lying between the towering Himalayan peaks, with her snow-fed rivers disgorging their waters onto the Indian Ganges plain. Cut off from neighbouring countries and the world as a whole until as late as 1951, Nepal has only opened up her borders to the influences of Asia and the West comparatively recently.

sugar, tea, salt, spices, rice, kerosene, soap, matches, a limited selection of cloth and vegetables and fruit when they are in season. The occasional spending spree is usually made by the menfolk of the village when they travel to the nearest town centre, or even the capital Kathmandu (which is many days walk away) in order to sell any surplus farm or dairy produce to earn some cash. A very poor family may be forced to sell an ox or buffalo or even a piece of land in order to obtain cash for the purchase of much needed household goods, clothing and bedding, payment of the children's school fees or medical bills.



For hundreds of years, Christians were forbidden by law to live within Nepal's borders, and it was not until the formation of the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) in 1954 that missionaries were permitted to serve in that land. The main emphasis of the UMN since then has been the development of health care, education and technical training facilities. At present, 18 BMS missionaries are serving in Nepal with the UMN in all its activities.

Against this background let us see what life is like there for the Nepali people.

a life expectancy of only 39 years?

A high infant mortality rate, the harsh living conditions and minimal medical facilities mean that a person reaching the age of 39 in Nepal can consider himself very fortunate. We are informed by the statisticians that 40% of Nepali children die before they reach the age of ten (compared with about 0.1% in Britain). There are a number of factors contributing to deaths among young children. Many families still depend upon traditional customs and medical practices, especially in the villages. These customs are not as effective as modern medicine. The unhygienic feeding of small babies is also a contributing

factor. As children grow older they require nourishing food and a balanced diet, but many farming communities simply cannot produce enough food, which leads to malnutrition and even starvation. In this

mountainous countryside fatal accidents are not uncommon, and this accounts for some deaths.

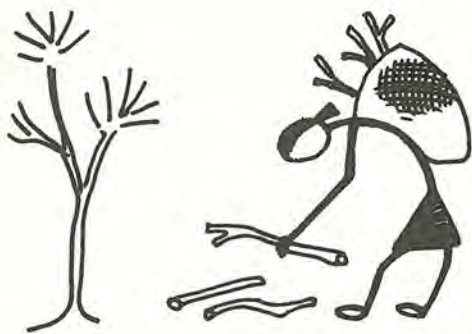
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CAN YOU IMAGINE?

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The UMN offers advice and assistance to Nepali farmers. Information on the availability of improved seeds, on how to make compost, construct a simple irrigation system, and find the best market for their produce can make the difference between life and death for many people.



having to walk for half a day to gather fuel for cooking your food?

Most Nepali homes are dependent on wood for cooking, whether in the towns or in the villages. Vast quantities of wood are used to supply Nepal's fuel needs. It is not uncommon for the women and children of the family to scour the countryside for very many hours, looking for dead wood to carry home to cook the evening meal. As trees are felled and the wood supply diminishes, there are longer and longer trips and higher and higher climbs up the mountainside.

Great areas of forest are being cut in order to supply the fuel needs of the town dwellers (who, for obvious reasons, cannot collect fuel for themselves) for sale at government controlled prices. Because of this, Nepal's timber and fuel resources are being dangerously reduced. As people become aware of the lack of wood, they wonder how they can solve the problem and how they can find an alternative fuel to wood.

The UMN, in cooperation with the government of Nepal, is attempting to tackle the problem, and meet the challenge, in two ways. First, the people in Nepal are being made aware of the need to replace all felled trees through an afforestation programme with the people themselves planting and looking after the saplings. A Nepali postage stamp encourages them to do just that.

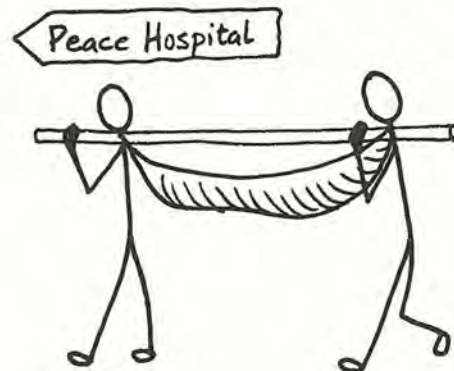


Second, various aid agencies, including the UMN are working on the development of alternative fuels suitable for use in Nepal. Such a development includes the manufacture of cooking gas (methane gas) from cow dung. There is usually a ready supply of this at most farms. Another development is the installation of a small electric generator operated by water turbines for the supply of electricity to villages and small communities.

the nearest doctor being two days' walk away?

Nepal has no National Health Service and no Social Security and it is often a long journey to the nearest doctor for medical treatment. Qualified doctors tend to be concentrated in Kathmandu and other towns, and so good medical facilities are thin on the ground throughout the rest of the country.

As a result, many sick people receive no medical treatment at all, and experience great suffering, and usually die. Sometimes they arrive at the medical centre too late for any



effective treatment. It is not unusual to see the relatives of a sick person carrying their patient through the hills in a makeshift stretcher, sometimes walking for many hours, even days.

In order to provide at least the minimum of health care for the maximum number of people, district health posts and children's clinics are being established by the government in Nepal. The UMN has the privilege of assisting in the training of the medical assistants (Nepal's equivalent to the Chinese bare-foot doctors) in its training institutions in Kathmandu and Tansen. Here the young people learn to diagnose common illnesses, prescribe a limited number of medicines and administer the health clinic. In this way, most of the population will have at least a little medical care fairly near. Serious cases can be referred to the hospitals and dispensaries.



having to walk for two hours to reach the nearest school?

Although in theory, schooling is available free of charge to every child of primary and junior age, it is still only a privileged few who can avail themselves of an education. Many families still require their young children to carry out duties in the home, such as looking after younger brothers and sisters, collecting firewood and water and assisting with farmwork duties, so they cannot attend school. For some, the cost of exercise books and pencils is prohibitive, but for

active in these schools in Nepal over the years and we hope will continue to be so in the future.

no visible Christian festivities?

In Britain we are constantly reminded of the impending Christmas season during the autumn months. There is even a countdown of shopping days left before Christmas! In Nepal, however, it is quite unusual to see any evidence of Christian worship and celebration even on Christmas Day itself. The Christian church is so small, and most villages have no Christians living there, so most people in Nepal see no sign of the Christmas festival.

and their music is, of course, heard by neighbours too.

Christmas provides strength for the many isolated Christians who lead very lonely and sometimes persecuted lives in villages where there are no opportunities for worship and fellowship. The joy of Christmas builds up the faith of such people, giving them hope.

Although the trappings of a westernized Christmas are not seen in the streets and shop windows of Nepal, it is observed by Nepali Christians with as much enthusiasm and its message is preached just as effectively.

A holy day but not a holiday

However, the day is celebrated with great rejoicing in the few churches and Christian groups scattered across the land. Like Easter, the other great event on the Christian calendar, Christmas is eagerly anticipated and has great significance: Christ has come into an alien world to bring hope and salvation to mankind. Christmas also affords the opportunity for witness. Because 25 December is not a national holiday, Christians must request a day's leave in order to attend the early morning service and the customary dinner which follows – curried chicken or goat's meat and rice. All the Christians in the area are invited to this and it is a wonderful opportunity for missionaries and other western Christians to join in fellowship with their Nepali brethren.

They cannot help but notice

As it is such a joyous occasion, non-Christians are made aware of the festival being observed. Christian institutions such as hospitals and dispensaries are decorated by the staff with streamers and balloons, which gives a perfect opportunity to explain the message of Christmas. Often small groups of carol singers visit Christian homes in the vicinity,



others school is simply too far away. The mountainous terrain in Nepal means that the usual method of travel is walking, and so getting from one place to another can take a very long time. Because of the lack of schoolteachers and funds, there is a shortage of schools. They tend to be in the towns rather than small villages, and so for children living in small communities there is a very long walk to and from school each day, taking many hours.

There is no easy solution to this problem on a national level. The UMN has attempted to provide education for some underprivileged children with the establishment of boarding schools, some BMS missionaries (Margaret Kingsley, Barbara McLean, Glenys Walker and Alan and Iris Davies) have been very



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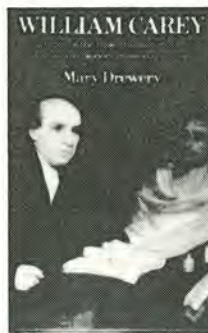
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THEY WAIT FOR CHRIST TO BE BORN

by Ruth Page

'JOYEUX NOEL!' they shout. 'JOYEUX NOEL!' comes echoing the reply: you can hear it at the market and in every village and town. A visitor from outer space would find it impossible to understand, because there are no cards, nothing special in the shops and no decorations. The lack of these western manifestations of Christmas has encouraged the people of Zaire to find their own expression of this festival of joy. Two of the least costly ways of celebrating are drama and song, and it seems so 'right' that the church in Zaire has created its own Christmas tradition. If you wish to join in you need to be strong for it is the custom to sit up all night on Christmas Eve singing carols, or as one of my students put it in an English essay, 'we stayed in the church all night waiting for Christ to be born'.

A healthy church

Many of you reading this will have had the opportunity of hearing the Kitega choir from Kinshasa who toured Britain as part of the celebration of the Centenary of the work of the Baptist Missionary Society in Zaire. You can therefore picture some of the enthusiasm, harmony and spontaneity of African choirs. One of the features of church life in Zaire during the past ten years has been the increase in the number of choirs: male-voice choirs, women's choirs, and young people's choirs. Using African airs and harmonies, and having practices two or three times a week, they do far more than give a lead to the singing — the young people invite senior members of the church to be honorary members of their committee, thus providing a healthy and natural way for the more experienced Christians to offer advice, leadership and financial backing while keeping strictly in the background. There is surely great hope for a Christian community where the sixth-formers and university students welcome the collaboration of those who never had the chance to climb to such educational heights.

When you visit a church I expect you notice the different groups that make up the congregation: it always seems to me a healthy sign when there is a wide range of ages and a fair proportion of men. So how does a typical congregation strike you in Zaire? If we take the one I know best, I think you would have good reason to feel full of hope for the future of the church in Zaire. The age-range is all-embracing from babies tied to mother's back, through to children of all ages, who insist on coming to church even after attending Sunday school prior to the church service, on through to the young people whose intricate hair-styles and immaculate appearance enhance their natural poise. Then there are the young marrieds, the stalwarts of many years' standing and those whose grey hair signifies wisdom not senility in Africa. But if you are really seeking the significance of this congregation for the hope of the future, you need to perceive more than their years. Had you been there on one particular Sunday you would have heard the pastor asking the members of the congregation who were carpenters to make the coffin for the burial of an elderly church member. Besides the carpenters there would be a wide range of occupations and professions — I readily call to mind masons, schoolteachers, clerks, a pharmacist, electricians, shop-keepers, a judge, civil servants, a bank manager, doctors, nurses, a college lecturer, students, mechanics, a veterinary assistant, school inspectors and headmasters. It is a congregation that has the means of making an impact on the community and does not hesitate to do so.

Making an impact

This year we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of Independence. It is now twenty years since the Belgian Congo became an independent republic, and in a country where only five years ago we could not teach religion nor have time on the media, we were invited to hold services attended by all



Joyful worship

the local civic authorities and we received an invitation from the President of the Republic to give a message of Christian hope to people wrestling, along with leaders in the 'developed' countries, with problems of inflation, the ever-widening gulf between the rich and the poor, and a shortage of essential goods and services due to economic circumstances seemingly beyond their control.

Unmistakable too as a sign of hope is the desire of all sections of the Christian community to learn and to serve. In the Mbanza-Ngungu areas each local church selected a quiet place, cleared the bush or the forest, and, with a careless abandon of creature comforts, spent a day and a night in worship, Bible study and testimony. One village church counted four hundred people at their clearing in the forest. One of the encouraging features of church life is the willingness of those who have been successful to put back into their own village some of the money they earn in the big companies in Kinshasa! They do it in recognition of the fact that they were given a start in life at a mission school, and they want the youngsters in the village to have the same opportunity of a Christian education. In Zaire, those living in the capital retain the closest links with their family, their tribe and their village and they gladly make the hundred-mile journey to join in the annual thanksgiving service on their local village church.

Hope through renewal

Another encouraging aspect of the church life in Zaire is the tremendous increase, noticeable too in other parts of the world, in Bible reading. The Catholic and Protestant communities have drawn closer together for this very reason and the students at the teacher training college at Mbanza-Ngungu have a joint weekly Bible study. Can you imagine the frustration after all the years of waiting for such a spiritual renewal to have

continued overleaf

HOPE DAWNS AT CECO

by Citizen Babantikidi

people of all ages and all walks of life turned away from our Christian bookshop because we have no Bibles to sell? When I left Zaire this August there was not a copy to be had of the Bible in the local language spoken by millions of people — neither at the Bible Society in Kinshasa nor the Bible Society in London, and all because the Bible Society in Kinshasa has virtually no way of obtaining sterling or dollar currency. So you can imagine the joy of being able to say to students, who have waited for more than a year, that there are now Bibles in French for sale at the bookshop!

One of the very real marks of the life within a church, and therefore of one's hope for the future of that church, is the quality of those who respond to God's call to enter the ministry. Years ago it was rare for the best educated to avoid the temptation of more lucrative employment, whereas today we are faced with the dilemma of candidates for the ministry who already have a good qualification in a subject other than theology (university degree, teacher's diploma or the like) and who are unable to train. Baptists do not find it easy to support their theological colleges in Britain, and for the Baptist churches in Zaire to have funds to train men at this level is well nigh impossible. It would be a tragedy indeed if we failed to make possible the realization of this great and God-given hope for the future ministry of the churches in Zaire.

CECO is an interdenominational cooperation in teaching at Kimpese, Zaire. It consists of a primary school, a junior high school, a senior school offering scientific and agricultural training, and a Bible school which is totally supported by the church. There are four participating missions at CECO. The American Baptists and the BMS were the two founding members in 1908, joined by the SMF (Swedish Mission) in 1938 and the CMA (Christian and Missionary Alliance) in 1957. These four are united in their efforts to train nationals to work in the church of tomorrow.

Our aim has never changed

The main purposes of the Kongo Evangelical Training Institute, as the establishment was first called, were to spread the gospel in the Congo, and also to train young people for the dual role of teacher and pastor. In 1932 it became known as the Evangelical Pastor's Institute (EPI) and this period saw much progress made in teaching, with the introduction of secondary education as more and more young people developed a thirst for knowledge. In 1971 the Evangelical Centre for Cooperation (CECO) came into being. Despite all these changes in name and structure the central aim of teaching at Kimpese has always been that of evangelism. It was a venture begun in great hope, but sometimes that hope must have dwindled, for its history was not always a happy one. Teaching underwent many changes, and while it is impossible to mention them all, three main stages emerge.

The first stage is the period before Independence. The cost of living was lower then and so both the teacher and student lived comfortably, and their morale was high. Teachers were responsible in carrying out their work and pupils applied themselves to their studies and this was reflected in the results. A youth organization called 'Jeunipro' was started and a library and several

laboratories were built. However, there were problems during this period too. The Constitution, written in 1922, only permitted Christians to study there, which was resented by non-Christians, and in 1933 there was friction between students speaking different African languages. Another cause of dissatisfaction among the students was the compulsory manual labour in the fields. This was described by one student as 'a stick in the school wheel'. In 1959 a student demonstration led the governing body of the school to make the labour voluntary.

Difficult times

Independence came in 1960 and with it the second stage in our history of education here. It was difficult to find money for the board and lodging of students, but an uprising led to the creation of a refectory in 1965. It was at about this time that secular government began to take over the financial administration of the school. Despite its 'independence', Zaire still relied on outside help. As this was undesirable, there was a general tendency towards complete 'Zairianization', so that all the establishments would be run by nationals. However, this was a period of great confusion and disorder. Cheating became 'cooperating', corruption was the way to 'advancement' and personal belongings became the 'property of the community'. Those in positions of power were there because they had contacts, not because they were skilled. Owing to bad administration, engineers became politicians, doctors became bankers and businessmen became teachers. It was total chaos, and many must have lost all hope for CECO and for Zaire. The young suffered psychologically and socially, religious morals disappeared and all desire to work hard was lost. It was almost impossible to tell the difference between teacher and student as there was no discipline because they were social equals. Equipment such as chairs were sold.

This period did not last however, and it was realized that progress had not really been made. It was now time for a new hope: time for important positions to be given to responsible people. The problem of the schools was a delicate one, needing much thought. New men were needed for the important roles of leadership. A backward step was necessary before progress could be made, and it was decided that the management of the schools should once again be put in the hands of the church. The Catholics, Protestants and Kimbanguists (an African denomination represented in the World Council of Churches) signed an agreement with the government to this effect. The task ahead was daunting. The students had to be inspired to work once more, the teachers had to be taught how to teach and new equipment had to be bought. Education was adapted to meet the future needs of Zaire. The course in religion was reintroduced, uniting teachers and students twice a week through discussions of the Word of God. There were further additions to the course such as 'studies in life' to aid general awareness and development.

A hope fulfilled

Now CECO is a healthy institution. From time to time people from all over the world come to share in the work. To prevent boredom and delinquency among the students, leisure activities have increased and they now include sport, theatre and films. The church continually encourages the young people to join in its activities such as the Sunday service, the Bible study groups and the choir. There are two pastors in the school; one is with the younger classes and another is amongst the older students.

The church continues to support CECO's development by various gifts, in order to provide equipment. For example, a new school building has been constructed, laboratories for chemistry, physics and

biology have been renovated, a projection room has been opened as well as two new classrooms for the agriculture section, and the boys' camp is now supplied with water and electricity. Our hope for CECO is being fulfilled — but we have our problems too. For example, lack of funds means that teachers cannot be paid on a regular basis, but we still live in hope. Education is bringing about a great change in individuals, and students are now showing respect towards authority, be it academic or spiritual. We are hoping to teach at university level one day. Already several students who once studied at CECO are studying further

elsewhere, some for doctorates. Young able pastors are sent to England to benefit from further training there. Somebody once said of CECO, 'it is rare to find a school where the development of young people is not only academic but moral and spiritual also, and where, despite the problems, the teachers give themselves body and soul towards both areas of development.' This is certainly our aim, and our hope for the future.

The students at CECO perform a nativity play





Scott McMunn, who attends Shotts Baptist church in Scotland, has been busy raising some money to help the BMS. Although he is only eight and a half years old, he has held two jumble sales on his own, selling his books and comics. Last year he made £10 for the BMS and in May this year he made £9.80.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously or without address.
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