

Missionary

HERALD

The magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society



MARCH 1981
PRICE 12p



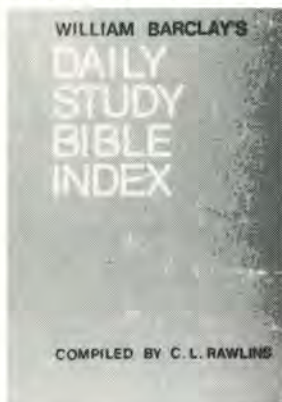
One of the last liquorice-water vendors in Brussels

BOOK REVIEWS

DAILY STUDY BIBLE INDEX

by C L Rawlins

Published by St Andrew Press £2.45



A quarter of a century of printing and reprinting has proved the worth and popularity of the Daily Study Bible by William Barclay. It has helped so many people to a better understanding of the scriptures and of their relevance to everyday life. Now C L Rawlins has given us this very helpful index to the seventeen volumes of the Study Bible so making their use even more extensive.

The index is divided into six parts. There is an index of the Old and New Testament

references. These are followed by indexes of subjects and places, of personal names, of foreign words, terms and phrases, and lastly an order of ancient writings. At the foot of each page, the numerical reference for each book of the Daily Study Bible is clearly indicated. Those who have found help and value in Dr Barclay's expositions will want this book to enable them to derive even more help from them.

AEE

THE ANSWER IS THE SPIRIT

by R E O White

Published by St Andrews Press £1.75



By the heading of the first chapter 'Let's be practical' the Rev R E O White reveals his approach to this subject. He claims that the doctrine of the Spirit was, and is, an essential truth of the Christian faith, but it found expression and elaboration in the NT documents as a prescription against certain ills, a provision for all-round spiritual health, an answer to meet specific, definable needs and situations. It is interesting to note that the books of the NT with no particular problem in view have least to say about the Spirit.

Mr White then proceeds to look at the various books of the NT which have things to say about the Spirit and the conclusion which may be drawn. There is evidence of the thorough research and scholarship of the author and the result is a stimulating and challenging book. There is a very helpful section suggesting further reading on the subject and also a comprehensive index to scripture references.

AEE

*In reviewing *Mister Leprosy* in our January issue the price was incorrect. It should read £1.50.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Rev N and Mrs Walker and Naomi on 22 November from Point Fortin, Trinidad.

Rev K and Mrs Hodges and family on 2 December from Santo Antonio da Platina, Brazil.

Departure

Rev F and Mrs Gouthwaite and family on 25 November for Potinga, Brazil.

Births

On 12 November, in Trinidad, to Rev D J and Mrs Hoskins, a son, Benjamin.

On 30 November, in Poole, Dorset, to Mr and Mrs A North, a daughter, Rebecca Anne.

NOTES FOR PRAYER GUIDE

Lyn and Carol Bulkeley (1 March) on furlough.

Stephen and Sheila Bull (23 March) now working in England.

Barbara McLean (25 March) on furlough.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously. (15 November-30 November 1980)

General Work: In memory of Mr W Perryman: £55.00; Anon (JB): £10.00; Anon (Cymro): £15.00; Anon: £10.00; Anon: £20.00; Anon: £100.00; Anon: £8.00; Anon: 19p; Anon (DS): £45.00.
Gift & Self Denial: Anon: £2.00.

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	£	p
Miss A M Graham	141.	95
Mrs L M James	405.	61
Miss I M Lyddon	112.	81
Mrs M V Parker	5,000.	00
Miss R Shaw	16,077.	87
Miss K A Southwell	200.	00
Mrs M E Walker	347.	20

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Printed by
Stanley L Hunt (Printers) Ltd
Rushden, Northamptonshire

For most trades and vocations there is a basic training that is a must for all those who would be accepted in that particular walk of life. Of course they will still go on learning and widening their experience long after they have completed their apprenticeship or their preparatory period, but first and foremost the elements of the particular calling have to be absorbed.

What is the basic training for a missionary? There are some who would argue, 'No more than a certainty that God has called a person to service overseas together with a knowledge of the Bible,' and, on an assurance with regard to these two points, they would be happy to see someone launched into another country to proclaim the gospel.

Courses need to be 'tailor-made'

A certain call and likewise a knowledge of the Christian faith as revealed in the scriptures is essential, but much more is needed beside. No one can hear the gospel without a preacher and the hearer cannot comprehend the truth unless it is presented in his own language. Each missionary must therefore spend time doing language study. Rarely is this study done here in Britain. Those hoping to serve in Zaire usually do their French language study in Belgium, but for the most part language study is undertaken in the country where the missionary is to work. Even those going to Zaire will study one of the native languages when they are settled in that land.

It is essential, too, that the person going out on missionary service knows something of the land to which they are going, not only for their own well being, but also that the gospel may not be thwarted because, in ignorance, they are abusing some custom of the culture. The candidate for missionary service will need a period of orientation in which they learn about the country, its people and its culture. Doctors and nurses going to some parts will need to do a course in tropical medicine before ever they will be allowed to practice in the country to which they go.

Some would be missionaries are young in the faith and need some help and encouragement in Bible Studies.

It should be apparent then that there is no one course for all candidates, but preparation has to be matched to individual needs, to the work the candidate expects to do and the country in which he or she will serve.

Learning by living together

In co-operation with the CWM (Council for World Mission) — formerly the London Missionary Society — the Society has a missionary training college in the Selly Oak Scheme at Birmingham. This college, St Andrew's Hall, provides facilities for a variety of courses to match individual needs in training. It also gives an opportunity for the candidate to live in a community of many nationalities and cultures, for the Selly Oak group of colleges draws students from all over the world and this in itself is a helpful experience for future work.

The Baptist Theological Colleges in this country all co-operate with the Society in giving training to missionary candidates who require a theological course and there are facilities in Brussels by way of hostels, language schools and medical schools for those who need that particular form of preparation. In this issue of the *Herald*, students and staff of these various institutions tell us something of the preparations for missionary service so that those venturing for Christ in countries overseas will be able to give better service.

A LESSON IN LIVING

by Gee and Maggie Hemp, who are studying at St Andrew's Hall.



Coming to Selly Oak Colleges may not be a high priority of many missionaries-to-be, but the experience, they will tell you afterwards, was very worthwhile, providing an excellent foundation for the work to which they are called. St Andrew's is one of four missionary colleges, and has 53 students from all over the world, of whom a mere 16 speak English as a first language. Translate these statistics into people and personalities and you have in the college an abundant wealth of knowledge and culture. Each term, there are some new faces and an absence of some familiar ones, but despite these changes, you can be certain of one thing at St Andrew's; that you will

meet people from many different countries and share with them the ups and downs of college life. The students have different previous experience and different ambitions. Not all missionary candidates are ministers, and not all the students are missionary candidates either. As well as ministers from many countries, there are development workers, medical personnel, educationalists and even a chef!

Permission to mend his trousers

Communication largely means conversation which can be limited at first, while people become accustomed to speaking and listening

in English. The British students must be aware of the limitations of others and speak slowly and carefully. It is a lesson in caring for one's neighbour and it is not always easy. Nonetheless, great friendships can be made through halting conversation, with just a sense of humour and a little patience. After the initial stage of learning names, which causes difficulties but also raises many laughs, the topics of conversations deepen. This is when students can learn so much about the way of life and the problems in other countries. 'Why should I ask my husband's permission to mend Enoch's trousers?' asked a baffled Englishwoman.



BMS group at St Andrew's



Jim Grenfell, Tutor at St Andrew's Hall

The answer was that such an action would be misconstrued in Enoch's homeland of Zimbabwe unless she did. It is very heart searching for us when we hear of the plight of the South Africans and those in Korea and Taiwan. World events which we did not fully appreciate come alive, as fellow students share with us and let us see them from a fresh point of view.

The fellowship at St Andrew's is something to be cherished. Sport crosses all kinds of barriers, particularly that of language; table-tennis, volley ball and swimming are among the most popular pastimes enjoyed by Swedes, Indonesians and Chinese (to name just a few nationalities). The community also meets at mealtimes and at prayers, every day. The first is a noisy occasion. Often at a table of six people, six nations are represented. Prayers in the chapel provide an opportunity to pray for the world, for each other and for our family and friends who, for so many here, are very far away. Occasionally there is a chance for the students to visit somewhere like Stratford-upon-Avon as a group, enjoying the day together.

Spoiled for choice

The lectures are a major part of college life and are attended by people from various



Relaxation from studies

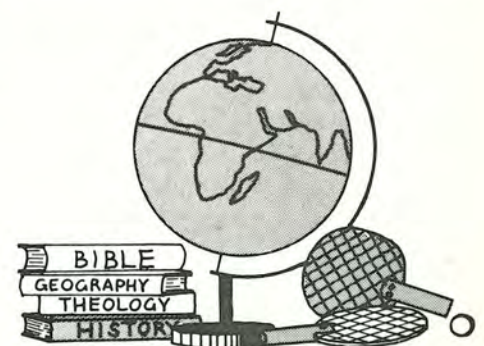
denominations, each with their own bias and opinions. As we have already said, not all the students are on the mission course; some are studying development in the Third World, some are learning English and others are undertaking Islamic studies, with a view to working among Muslims. Those who are prospective missionaries are on the mission course, however, and the wide choice of topics available for study makes selection difficult. There is simply not enough time to do all that one would wish. Teaching seminars on various aspects of mission, communication, places and people all help to develop our thinking and, we hope, prepare us to serve more effectively those churches overseas to which God is calling us. The certificate course of one year allows some students to follow a more organized course in which essays are a requirement.

The staff at St Andrew's (and all the other colleges), are most encouraging, guiding us in our quest to do His will. Because they live in with us, they are part of the family and show a great concern for the students in their care.

All in all, St Andrew's provides its students with the chance to learn about themselves and other people, together with what the

Bible has to say and what the world needs from them as Christians. As we realize how limited is our experience, we are made to ask ourselves some pertinent and searching questions: 'Why are we going abroad?' 'What is Christian and what is merely western?' 'Is all development good?' These must be answered before we begin service overseas.

The studies are challenging and sometimes disturbing, but we should be prepared for challenges. Even, or perhaps especially, of our beliefs. Life at St Andrew's is not necessarily easy, but amidst the tension of finding the place the Lord has set aside for us, waiting for visas, packing all we need for a few years, sorting out our business and, one day, saying 'goodbyes', the family here gives support and love which is invaluable.



MISSION IS.....WHAT?

by Stanley Wilton, the Principal of St Andrew's Hall.

'There's glory for you,' declared Humpty Dumpty. 'I don't know what you mean by glory,' Alice said. Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. 'Of course you don't — till I tell you. I mean, 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you'.

'But "glory" doesn't mean a nice knock-down argument,' Alice objected.

'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less'.

The word 'mission' is a big word too. Combine it with 'training' and there can be a fearsome range of nice knock-down arguments. There are the very different emphases of mission as liberation and as the abiding task of proclaiming the Gospel so that all may hear the Word of Life. The demonic nature of knock-down arguments is that there is such preoccupation with denials that there is not time to weigh the truth of what is being affirmed.

The nature and purpose of Christian mission must be multi-faceted if we hold to the fulness of the biblical revelation. As we recognize the variety of God's gifts to his servants and the multitude of human problems so we seek to share in a many-sided mission. Over-riding all else and giving cohesion to many patterns of obedience and service, there is the central belief that Jesus Christ lives for all mankind. Jesus Christ lives, He lives *for* all mankind, *for all* mankind.

Multi-coloured learning

The internationalization of mission is reflected in the College community. In a year's academic session there may be students from 40 countries, some as far afield as Upper Volta and Malaysia, others from Europe and, of course, Britain. When it comes to ecumenical relationships across confessional boundaries, the community cannot avoid the

challenge, nor the tension, within the prayer of Jesus that they may all be one, that the world may believe.

British candidates from our three sponsoring bodies of the Baptist Missionary Society, the United Reformed Church and the Council for World Mission, form a significant minority, and their presence is not least due to the three sponsoring bodies themselves having worldwide recruitment through partnership in obedience to the Lord of the Church and His Mission.

Classroom and table are crowded with cultural surprises in a mixture of races and a babel of tongues. This is witness enough to the truth that God calls His people from all six continents to dwell together to learn from one another, to join black, brown, white and yellow hands in the partnership and adventure and search of what it means to be alive in new forms of obedience to God, who is no narrow, denominational, stay-at-home deity, but the God who is moving on and through every limitation and every boundary, breaking all the barriers of human devising. The front-page headlines of the breakfast table are tellingly incarnated in Bible study and group encounters, with tears not very far away in personal tragedies, within the common discipline and mutual exploration of what it means to be engaged in the Mission of God in our divided world.

With the average age of the students over 30 with professional training and expertise (in some cases overseas experience either as volunteers or as missionaries) well represented, there is a mutual learning process, particularly by the meeting of cultures.

Many topics, one aim

The Certificate in Mission seeks to provide a year's course of study and training which will enable those participating to have a wider



and deeper understanding of God's Mission and be better equipped to serve it. The three sections of the certificate cover:

(a) Required subjects. This is the foundation of the course and covers subjects such as the theology, the history and practice of mission. One subject is called 'Living Issues in Mission', and it covers such challenging themes as, 'Justice, Politics and Easter,' and 'Gospel, Church and Culture.'

(b) Optional subjects. For British candidates going overseas for the first time, an optional subject is covered by a study of the country and the church of their service.

(c) Specialized Study training. This requires a 10,000 word essay in a specialized field of any one of the Required Subjects, or a field chosen by the student with the approval of the Department of Mission Curriculum Committee. 'Ecumenics,' 'Urban Industrial Mission' and 'Dialogue with other Faiths' are among some of the subjects chosen. Sometimes part of the study and experience is outside the college.

To enable those who have had little or no opportunity for biblical studies, or those whose professional training may have denied them theological 'sharpening' in churchmanship or doctrine, or in the history of mission, there is a special introductory course woven into the tapestry of the first term. Given such a momentum, college worship, Bible study and social activities furthers the process of learning.

Scope for imagination

Examination is by various means. Usually an essay of about 2,000 words is required, but in the specialized study-training there are eleven methods of assessment, including a dramatic reconstruction of an incident (for example in a Gospel) in a manner relevant to one's own people and culture. The variety and scope for imaginative presentation

not only does justice to the skills and experience and previous backgrounds of the candidates; there is also no small demand upon the personal tutor and members of the Examining Board.

St Andrew's is one of four missionary colleges comprising the Department of Mission, promoting a programme with common objectives: Kingsmead, of the Methodist Church Overseas Division, Crowther Hall of the Church Missionary Society, and College of the Ascension, of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel are the others.

What about car maintenance? And the care of health in the tropics? And first aid? These practical subjects are included too and have their rightful place. All the study is within



After a service in the chapel

a community of commitment in which we discover that we do not inherit this task from Christ. We share it with Him. You and I are not the successors of Jesus; we are His

companions. Mission is simply to be at the point and place of obedience where He wants us to be and where He is already waiting for us, present as our Helper and our King.



St Andrew's Hall

THE BRUSSELS CONNECTION

by Roger Foster

It has always been accepted as fundamental that training is an integral part of any form of work or occupation. In recent years, however, we have noticed in particular an increase in the use of short courses, sandwich courses, industrial training courses, crash courses and so on. Missionary Societies have inevitably felt the same increased demand for the preliminary preparation of staff before sending them overseas. It gives modern missionaries quite an advantage over the pioneers, like Livingstone, who obtained their training 'on site'. One of the outcomes of the new approach is the sending of candidates destined for French-speaking

parts of Africa, to Brussels to brush up and expand on rusty schoolday French. (The reader will, by now, appreciate, that the old school leavers' saying, 'No more Latin, no more French, no more sitting on an old hard bench,' may not hold true for everyone.)

Brussels – gateway to Europe

Despite being a relatively recent addition to the political scene of Europe, Belgium has rapidly developed into a country of major importance. Not only is it the headquarters of the Common Market, but its central situation makes it the choice of many multinational companies for their European

headquarters.

Brussels is a fairly modern city, a fraction of the age of London, but with well placed transport facilities. It is a very simple matter to drive right through the city without interminable traffic lights, winding streets and endless traffic jams. Traffic flows smoothly thanks to the city councils' obsession with digging holes in the road: holes for road underpasses, holes for under-underpasses and holes for a new deluxe metro system. The cost of public transport within the city also appears to have been calculated to benefit the user.



Old and new in the city of Brussels.

Whether on buses, trams or metro the cost is related to the number of journeys made rather than the distance travelled. This makes travelling a far more attractive proposition than in London.

In the north of Belgium is the region of Flanders, a famous centre of the medieval cloth industry and where Flemish is still keenly spoken. Wollonia is to the south-west. Belgium's independence was obtained in the autumn of 1830, as Europe recovered during the repercussions of the French Revolution. During the Napoleonic wars, the low countries were occupied by France, but in 1815, after the battle of Waterloo (a few miles south of Brussels), Holland gained independence and then comprised all the low countries. However, in 1830, Belgium established itself as a nation in its own right. 1980 marked 150 years of the existence of Belgium, and was a year of special celebrations.

What course?

After arriving in the city one must, sooner or later, accept the fact that the business on hand is to learn French and not to pontificate on the wisdom of the city planners. Mrs (or rather, Madame) Otto is the co-ordinator for the many protestant missionary societies sending folk to Brussels for French study. She meets all upon arrival and organizes the sort of study that best suits the individual requirements.

Various approaches to study are available. IFCAD, the Government run 'Institut de Formation des Cadres pour le Developpement' (the Institute for Information about the Developing Countries) is the most commonly used language school, and has courses for beginners ranging from 12 to 18 hours a week. It is just like any English college except that staff only ever speak French (unfortunately they understand English perfectly if you want to talk behind



The Foyer Selah

their backs!) *Alliance Française* is very similar to IFCAD and perhaps useful if one wishes to avoid the temptation to speak English to missionaries during breaks. Both language schools are for foreigners which means that students attend from every country in the world but Belgium.

Washington School gives individual tuition for an hour or so each day, while, for the intrepid, the 'total immersion method', is occasionally available with accommodation being found with a family in and around Brussels. All these things may be discussed with Mme Otto upon arrival. She, by the way, is American, so all your fears about whether your French is up to discussing the finer points of preferences are unfounded.

Living 'in'

Accommodation is initially provided at the *Foyer Selah*, but this can be altered upon arrival to a flat or bedsitter and occasionally

to a family. The *Foyer*, as a *pension* is very similar to a guest house. It is run by the Salvation Army and is situated very conveniently, only five minutes walk from IFCAD. It should be noted that living at the *Foyer* provides such perks as having the chairman of the European Economics Commission as a neighbour, though rumour has it that his house has now been taken over by a 'mere Eurocrat'.

With forty or so missionaries living in one area there is enormous opportunity for sharing and fellowship. I was very challenged by the quality of these folk and by their deep commitment to Christ. It was very encouraging to meet people who believed in their callings sufficiently to give up their homes and jobs, often at the peak of their careers.

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THE BRUSSELS CONNECTION

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All nations

One of the big advantages of studying in a school with foreign students is, of course, the opportunity to meet people with a vast range of beliefs, backgrounds and outlooks on life. An immigrant from Saigon can provide a fascinating insight into life in Vietnam. A supporter of the Iranian Government gives a very different view of Middle Eastern affairs than that presented to us in Britain. The opportunities to chat about different cultural practices between countries ranging from Japan, across Turkey and North Africa to South America makes for an extremely interesting pastime – even if one only discuss different ways of making coffee! One begins to get a glimpse of some of the problems to be encountered when trying to communicate one's ideas across the barriers of cultural prejudice, preconception and wrong interpretation of remarks.

Each sentence is a victory

As an agriculturist straight out of university, I found Brussels an extremely worthwhile experience both spiritually and linguistically. As I am heading out to Zaire for a couple of years the French will no doubt be of great value. Before leaving for Brussels my pastor made me promise to return still remembering how to speak English. Unfortunately, it is not quite that easy to become so immersed in a language in a couple of months, that your own language starts slipping. I found it a daily battle to avoid using English whenever possible. Every word or sentence in French became a minor victory when compared to the ease of using one's mother tongue. It is well worth using every opportunity to speak the language, however haltingly and to accept the amused or even embarrassed looks on the faces of your listeners.



Born and raised in Bedfordshire, Roger Foster was brought up first in the Methodist and then in the Baptist tradition. He found

Christ primarily as a result of the witness of his family and was greatly helped, at the age of 14, by a tent crusade held at the local football ground. He grew up on a mixed dairy and arable farm and went on to study agriculture at Reading University. It is in an agricultural capacity that he will be spending two years in Zaire.



His first taste of mission work was a four month working holiday at a trade school in Central Africa in the summer of 1977, where he helped in the field work and workshops. While he was studying at Reading interest in mission work was maintained by an active Christian Union and by church friends. These factors ultimately led him to believe that God was calling him to apply for service with the BMS.

The aim of his two year term is to support and develop the existing agricultural project at Tondo. This includes working on a poultry unit to provide improved meat and eggs for the local community, the application of appropriate technology to improve farming techniques and the introduction of new crops.

He left for Tondo in January.

BELGIUM—HERE WE COME!

by Michael Abbott

Each year, BMS missionary candidates arrive in Brussels from far and wide to complete their training prior to service in Zaire. Because French is the official language in Zaire, this training obviously involves French language study, and for medical personnel there is a further course in Tropical Medicine at Antwerp. Situated in Brussels is 'Le Bureau des Eglises et Missions Protestantes en Afrique Centrale', the purpose of which is to assist candidates with their training, accommodation and difficulties adjusting to a new culture.

Among those who arrived there last autumn

were my wife, our baby daughter, Kathryn, aged five months, and myself. We arrived in Belgium without any mishap, although we did have one brush later with an official. We passed through two customs checks with passports which we had forgotten to sign — not, you may think, a very important oversight — but an astute Belgian bank official refused to hand over any money to us until the omission had been duly corrected! At the airport we were met by Rev Bob Otto, who assists at the Bureau. The three of us, plus our luggage, were squeezed into his overworked Volkswagen car and taken to our apartment. Our flat is conveniently

situated close to both the language school and some shops. It is pleasantly furnished in an ornate but functional Belgian style, with chandelier lighting (no less!) and a stone fireplace. It also has a balcony overlooking 'la rue' (the street).

One baby versus red tape

All foreigners entering the country must register with the authorities and obtain an identity card, involving lengthy form-filling and fingerprint taking. This somewhat bureaucratic procedure was hurried along considerably in our case by Kathryn's piercing cries!

continued overleaf



Students at Brussels University

BELGIUM – HERE WE COME!

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Each candidate arriving in Belgium has a different standard of French, so students are allocated to language schools best suited to their individual requirements. As you can well imagine, the rate of progress varies from student to student, but for most candidates, private tuition is a necessary supplement. Missionary candidates do not find acquiring a language any easier than do other students. Everyone goes through periods of encouraging progress and of lengthy frustration. We value highly your continued prayers for all candidates on language study. Our ultimate aim is to communicate the gospel in words as well as action and this is

only possible with a proper grasp of the language.

One of the community

Belgium is predominantly Catholic, but there are a number of small Protestant congregations scattered around Brussels. Some of these are English speaking, formed to minister to the many expatriots here. One is a Scottish Presbyterian Church, just five minutes walk away from our flat, which we attend on Sunday mornings. The congregation consists largely of business people and their families, and students. The high turnover rate of the members of the congregation

means that the running of the church rests with a small minority. How encouraged we are by their sense of mission and purpose! Much of their income is dedicated to mission within Belgium and other parts of the world.

Extra lessons in Swahili

Brussels is a capital city which, although busy, lacks the frantic pace of London. It is a curious amalgamation of old and new; for example, the transport system has old fashioned trams and an ultra-modern metro system complete with moving pavements. Of course, the heart of any city is its inhabitants. There are two million of them here, including many immigrants from such places as Vietnam, Iran and China. Although we are in Brussels to learn French we often hear a colourful variety of languages, for instance, Swahili and Spanish!

The native Belgians are a naturally reserved and polite people who enjoy a lifestyle generally higher than found in England. The pronounced materialism here is seen in the large cars and the well-dressed appearance of most of the Belgians. The national passion is for dogs, and one soon discovers that the best way to strike up a friendship with a Belgian lady is to admire her dog. The locals drive their cars like maniacs, so the simple task of crossing the road with a pushchair becomes a highly hazardous occupation.

Putting a quart into a pint pot

Candidates spend a maximum of one year in Belgium, but the usual length is six months. In this short period of time we hope to attain a working knowledge of French. Naturally, we are all very busy and feel under some pressure as we prepare ourselves as best we can for those whom we will serve. Each candidate is aware of the responsibility he has to the supporting home churches and studies as hard as possible.

From time to time, meetings are arranged

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BEHIND THE SCENES

by Mme Wilda Otto

for the candidates to get to know each other better. These are enjoyable times of fellowship, providing also an opportunity to meet some African students. This is a valuable way of obtaining first hand knowledge of life in Zaire.

The prayers of those in Britain are so important to us. We particularly ask you to pray for those who are studying for the tropical medicine examination as well as doing language study. We are grateful for your prayerful support and the continuing guidance of God in our everyday lives. We go forward with faith and hope, 'looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God' (Heb. 12:2).

'Le Seigneur Jesus – Christ soit avec ton esprit. La grâce soit avec vous tous.'
(The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you) 2 Timothy 4:22.

The Protestant Missions Bureau, in Brussels, has been in existence for over 60 years, serving as a cross-cultural training centre to some 30 missionary societies from Great Britain and other parts of the world.

The BMS sends missionary candidates to Belgium for French language study and Tropical Medical training before serving in Zaire.

I am the Administrative Secretary whose job it is to assist missionary candidates and international students in their initial period of adjustment. One of their most pressing needs is accommodation, which I arrange for them in a Christian boarding house, the *Foyer Selah* or in furnished apartments. I also try to answer their stream of questions about Belgian identity cards, transport passes, medical care, banking and securing visas for Zaire. Our modest two room office has a good reputation with the Foreign Affairs Department of the Belgium government and also with many Belgian proprietors (landlords).

The go-between

I often act as an intermediary between the missionaries and African students here, both as translator and counsellor. In addition to this work, I work 'behind the scenes' with the missionary societies in the buying and sending of medical books, medicines and Christian literature to Zaire. Sometimes I even have to send motorcycles and vans!

Missionary candidates study French for six to ten months, along with other students at the IFCAD Institute (*Institut de Formation des Cadres pour le Développement*), or the *Athénée Royal de Wavre*. Excellent intensive courses are also offered at the Washington School and Brussels University, for short-term candidates. BMS doctors and nurses study tropical medicine with Belgian and African students at the Tropical Medical Institute in Antwerp. They must pass certain examinations before they qualify to practice in Central Africa.

There is plenty of opportunity to learn about African life. Belgian church leaders and Christian African students frequently lead discussions on various subjects of African history and culture, missionary methods and renewal in the church. Some African students have received scholarships to study in Brussels. Two Zairian Baptist pastors began studies at the Belgian Bible Institute in January.

Missionary candidates are encouraged to attend services regularly and enter fully into the life and work of a local congregation. The more fluent their French, the better they communicate the gospel, and they make a tremendous spiritual impact during their stay in Belgium.



Mme and Pastor Otto

NO EASY TASK

by Stanley Thomas

'This is the Captain speaking. We are approaching Dacca Airport and a furious storm is raging over it. For your safety and mine we shall go to Calcutta and wait there until the storm subsides.'

Such was the beginning of my recent trip to Bangladesh to meet the missionaries and Church leaders. Eventually we got to Dacca but my troubles were by no means over for, a few hundred yards on the road from the airport, we had a puncture and I found myself invited to help change a wheel!

There were even more excitements to come as I travelled the country. There was the occasion when two of us were jogging along in a cycle rickshaw. Suddenly there was a mighty crack – the rickshaw had broken in two and we were deposited gently on the road! Or there was the time when I climbed into a bus – it would never have passed the MOT or any other test in this country – and very soon every seat was taken. But there was still a great crowd of struggling men determined to get on and after much shouting and pushing most of them did, so that I was completely immobilized like a sardine in its tin! Even more people were on the roof and not a few were clinging to the back of the bus as we lurched and trundled our way to the destination.

But even so, the worst journey for me was the drive in a Land Rover from Chittagong to Chandraghona. I was the victim of a tummy bug at the time – yes, even doctors are not immune. The road was full of potholes, some looked big enough to hold a football and there was an old, narrow and crumbling bridge – long since condemned, but not yet replaced – and a tight jam of noisy screaming traffic crawling in both directions. The return journey a few days' later seemed not nearly such a nightmare, but by that time I had recovered from the tummy upset which made the first trip so unpleasant.

An experience is shared

Thinking about this I realized that, along that same road, daily there moved a stream of sick people going to Chandraghona. Perhaps a man with a broken leg, a woman in obstructed labour, or a child badly burned or suffering from high fever and all these would be bounced along that rutted way on the hard seats of the local bus. How much they would suffer!

To endure such discomfort their faith in the hospital must be very great and we must not disappoint them.

Where many roads meet

I spent five happy days at Chandraghona, set on the banks of the Karnaphuli river. Cured from my tummy ache, I was delighted to see the great advances in medical work at this hospital since my first visit in 1938. People of all shapes and sizes were crowding into the Out-patients' Department. In the wards there were very few empty beds and on one day alone 19 cases were dealt with in the operating theatre. In the Private Wards I met a Canadian Catholic Priest, a Bengali Lawyer and a woman who had just had a baby – her husband was a local business executive. In the General Wards there was a Bengali man who had come home all the way from Muscat in Oman because he trusted his own rather than their hospitals. Then there was a child who had been carried through the jungle for four days from a village across the river. All these were present because they believed in the hospital. Indeed, everywhere I went in Bangladesh people spoke in glowing terms of Chandraghona. I had been told by a fellow passenger in a bus that it would be so, and he was right. A Nursing Sister, working in a small village clinic more than a hundred miles away told me she sent all her difficult cases there, while people in Khulna and Jessore spoke warmly of the loving care and attention they had received in our hospital. Good surgery



is rare in Bangladesh and good nursing even rarer, but both are found in Chandraghona and we thank God for these things.

Yes, there is much for which to be extremely thankful to God but there are some things that sadden one and call for repentance before God because perhaps we bear some blame. Even the most efficiently run hospital and one which is absolutely dedicated to caring, occasionally has its difficulties. Chandraghona is no exception.

Overwork exacts a toll

Under the conditions experienced by our colleagues in Bangladesh occasional breakdowns in relationships between members of staff can occur. With a work load such as that shouldered by the staff there must be from time to time, mistakes, in diagnosis, errors in treatment and even the loss of a patient who might have survived had there been, for example, an Intensive Care Unit with, of course, the highly trained staff which such a facility requires. The wonder is, and the cause for thanksgiving is, that so many go away healed and rejoicing.

Then, too, there is the ever present problem which is experienced in so many countries – the expectation that bribery will be accepted in the hospital as in all walks of life. It has to be remembered that the missionary staff are in the minority, also the hospital is not under the direction of the BMS, but is controlled by the Baptist Sangha (Union) of Bangladesh. Certainly the Sangha does not countenance bribery, any more than would the BMS and notices are displayed throughout the hospital giving warning that if proven evidence is found of bribery, action will be taken.

But, as will be appreciated, it is very difficult to establish real proof that would stand in a court of law. Obviously, those engaged in the practice would not volunteer information



Chandraghona Hospital, the Karnaphuli river and the Chittagong Hills

and others may be afraid to, for a variety of reasons.

It is important to know the background

It may well be, therefore, that there are instances of this occurring for it is an ever present temptation for some, in the climate of the East, working at the hospital to ask for more money than is legitimate, then to pocket the extra. It may not be even as direct as that. The patient may persuade the worker that the money is a gift in gratitude for the help given or about to be received. Always, as in so many countries there are those who believe that money talks and they come to the hospital seeking treatment and carrying a bundle of money eager for quick results.

Consider these pressures over against a chronic and grim economic situation in the country which makes a person's future so unsure. Consider, too, that some workers

at the hospital could easily be in debt to a money lender, or blackmailed because of some former indiscretion, or because, even, they are a Christian and a landlord is threatening to turn them off their land. These are the pressures which so easily can become unbearable.

But, while being realistic and recognizing that such immoral practices might take place and possibly have occurred, it would be totally wrong to give them a prominence they do not warrant. Without a doubt we must always be vigilant and apply the law if and when wrong is proved — but we must be compassionate and merciful in our judgment even as our Father in heaven is merciful.

There is always another side

But surely the attention should be drawn to the devoted and dedicated work of the many. Surely, also, one should bear in mind the

tremendous achievements in the treatment of leprosy and the advances in remedial surgery which has helped so many who have suffered this disease to be rehabilitated into society — all as a result of the hospital's dedication to Christian serving and caring, in the name of the Lord. Proper regard needs to be given to the positive side of things and thanks given for those who, not once, but many times, have resisted temptation and dealt with all as they believed their Master would have them behave, seeking in their work at the hospital truly to glorify the Lord.

Rejoice that visas have been granted to Richard and Judy Henderson Smith to take up their work at this hospital. Richard comes from a family with a long line of BMS missionary service. His father, like him, is a doctor and served in both China and Zaire. These two colleagues will add greatly to the strength and the service of Chandraghona.

A DAY FOR WHICH TO BE THANKFUL

November of last year saw the culmination of many months of patient and consistent effort by members of the Church and congregation at the United Free Church, Pinner. It was the day of the Christmas Fair, the net proceeds of which were to go to the Baptist Missionary Society. There was a consistent flow of visitors, estimated to be between 600-700. The stalls of various kinds were well stocked, although it was no mean effort to keep the supplies going for the five hours the Fair was open.

In addition to the faithful hard work done at home, a number of weekly groups were organized to learn various types of craft

work. Members of these weekly meetings were taught by experts within the Fellowship of the Church how to make different craft goods and the group then put their learning into very worthwhile practical effort. The meetings of these groups not only produced goods to sell, but were also enjoyable social occasions.

All organizations within the Church helped to the full in the effort. The Youth Organizations planned and arranged their own special activities. The Brownies and Guides, with their usual supporting help from relations and friends, provided various stalls.

The Cubs and Scouts added to the attraction of the Fair by manning side shows, and a very attractive Grotto for Father Christmas. A flight of stairs was transformed with ingenuity and the judicious use of a large fishing net, board, decorative paper, balloons and blankets, to form a cave-like approach to the Grotto. An additional attraction was housed in the Scout Hut where the Methley Vintage Railway, which has been featured in the Muppet Show on TV, was on view. All in all it was a happy and successful day and produced over £1000 for the Baptist Missionary Society!

Thanks be to God for all that was achieved

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