

Missionary

# HERALD

The magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society



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### MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

#### Arrivals

Mr P Riches on 14 April from Yakusu, Zaire.

Rev R and Mrs Young and family on 18 April from Rangpur, Bangladesh.

Miss J Smith on 21 April from Udayagiri, India.

Rev D Doonan on 27 April from Cuiabá, Brazil.

#### Departures

Dr L and Mrs Bulkeley and family on 21 April for Pimu, Zaire.

Dr D Withers on 21 April for Pimu, Zaire.

Miss L Aitchison on 21 April for Tondo, Zaire.

Mr and Mrs G Hemp on 29 April for São Paulo, Brazil.

Rev D and Mrs Holmwood and family on 29 April for Curitiba, Brazil.

#### Birth

On 21 April, in Pimu, Zaire, to Mr and Mrs L Alexander, a daughter, Rachel.



Further material to help with Harvest programmes is available from the BMM Operation Agri Scheme. Lists have been sent to every minister and missionary secretary.



### NOTES TO USE WITH YOUR PRAYER GUIDE

Mrs G C Parris (1 August) died in March.

John and Norma Clark (17 August) are on furlough.

Frank and Dorothy Vaughan (19 August) are on furlough.

David and Sheila Brown (23 August) are on furlough.

Boyd and Patricia Williams (26 August) are awaiting visas to return to Brazil.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously (3-27 April 1981)

#### Legacies:

	£	p
Mr R H Ash	25	00
Mrs A Atherton	36	43
Mrs M E Cleverly	250	00
Miss P E Fletcher	2,993	64
Mrs M V Parker	1,100	00
Mr H Philcox	2,891	25
Mrs W D Vines	250	00

General Work: Anon: £50.00; Anon: £40.97; Anon: £30.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £150.00; Anon: £1.00; Anon (FAE Aberdeen): £15.00; Anon (Cymro): £30.00.



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Rev H F Drake, OBE

## Editor

Rev A E Easter

Enquiries about service to:

Rev Mrs A W Thomas

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

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Brazil  
Hong Kong  
India  
Jamaica  
Nepal  
Sri Lanka  
Tanzania  
Trinidad  
Zaire

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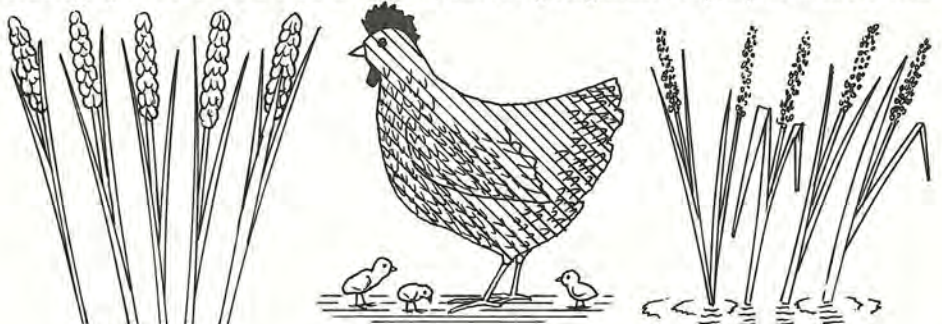
The third, or developing, world has, for a long while, been largely dependent on the affluent West for grant aid. So often this aid has created in those who receive it a psychological dependence on getting still more aid. It has sapped initiative and enterprise or it has featured a type of development wholly inappropriate to circumstances.

Since the prosperity of the West results largely from a highly developed technology and capital-intensive industries relying on high energy inputs many have thought that these are the methods which need to be passed on to the third world to lift it out of its poverty and economic crises.

An example of this was seen when the World Bank made a loan available to Pakistan for the purchase of 18,000 heavy tractors. The farmers of that country, agog with stories they had heard about western farming yields and profits, were quick to take up the offer only to find they needed much larger fields effectively to use these machines, which in turn meant that many a small tenant farmer was forced off the land. It meant too, that those using the machines had heavy fuel bills to meet and tragically the number of workers fell by 40% so that the problem of unemployment arose. What is more, it was soon discovered that the crop yields did not increase as expected.

Increasingly it is recognized that there is no real wisdom in massive transfers of technology from the industrial countries to the developing nations because they invariably raise more problems than they solve.

All the countries with whom we are involved have plenty of labour so it is not appropriate to introduce schemes which minimize this asset. The need is for labour-intensive projects. It would be comparatively simple and a source of pride, no doubt, to development engineers to sell to Bangladesh, or Nepal, a coal or oil fired fertilizer plant. After all these countries would certainly benefit from increased supplies of fertilizer for their crops. But think of the cost in foreign exchange to those countries and the continuing cost of operating such plants. Better by far, to encourage the erection of numerous bio-gas plants in the villages. These can use the readily available cow dung to give an energy source for cooking and yield a rich fertilizer for the fields as well as provide local employment. A modern drag-line could dig the canals needed in Bangladesh, about which David Stockley writes, in a fraction of the time taken to dig them by hand but rather than help the villagers this method would take from them a great deal. How much wiser it is to do what BMS workers are doing in so many places; 'beginning with what the people know and building on what they have' and thereby encouraging them to solve their own problems and giving them a dignity in achievement.





# AGAINST THE ODDS

Compiled from correspondence by  
David and Joyce Stockley

We came to Gournadi in 1979 to take charge of the Agri Project of the National Christian Council of Bangladesh. This project covers four *Thanas* (parishes) of the flood-prone area of the Districts of Barisal and Faridpur. Its aim is to encourage local farmers to

utilize all natural resources of land and water throughout the year. We help them with cropping patterns, appropriate technology, formation of credit, health and nutrition, animal husbandry, poultry keeping and fish culture. We will hire to them, power pumps

for crop irrigation and pond cleaning; power tillers for cultivation and sprayers for crop protection. We have for sale, seeds, seedlings, young fish, hatching eggs, chicks and ducklings.

Leaflets on various village problems are produced and distributed together with government leaflets where appropriate.

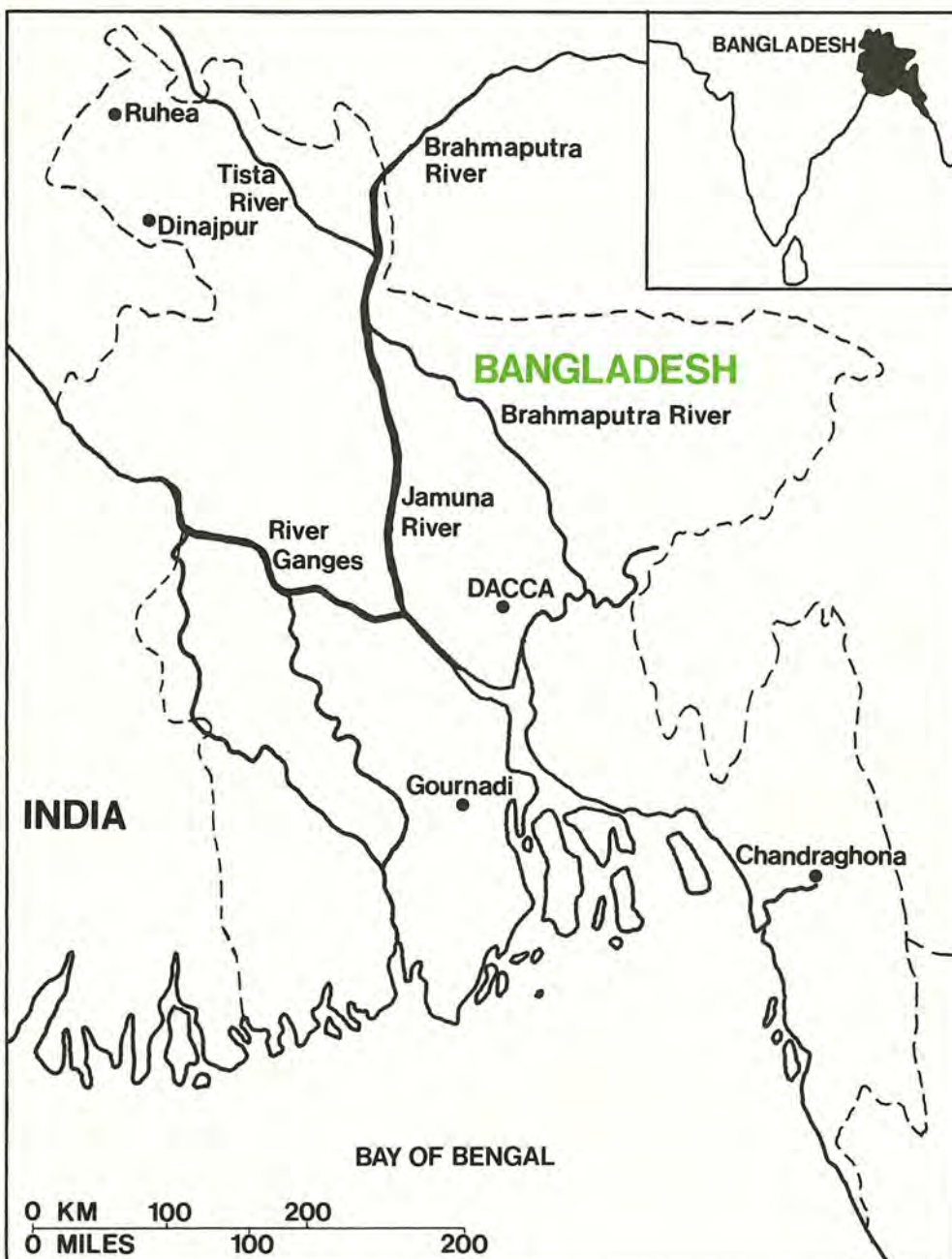
## Many set-backs

Unfortunately, there was tension and rivalry among some of the leaders of the National Christian Council (NCC) which led to uncertainty about the project. This was most unfortunate because earlier the project had passed through a period of chaos due to the dishonesty of some members of staff. That experience had led the World Council of Churches, who were funding the agency, to re-allocate its relief funds for this project to another area of Bangladesh. This more recent upset resulted in the NCC executive not meeting and therefore the plans for the project were not passed and were not forwarded to the government for approval.

We spent the first nine months or so getting to know the staff, the area of our work and the basic problems associated with the agriculture and community development. We have endeavoured to lead the staff and teach them certain skills by building on their previous knowledge. Our aim was to enable them to acquire practical skills to back up their theoretical knowledge.

## Working on a tight budget

There arose from this situation a complete change in the composition of the NCC and this new Council asked us to continue the project for at least two years. They also arranged for the Project to be written out and submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Bangladesh Government who passed it within 24 hours.







We have, however, received only one seventh of our budget! Obviously, therefore, we have to, 'cut our coat according to our cloth', but we are raising money first by the sale of stored commodities from the first project; second by making a service charge to farmers and community groups when we undertake pumping or power tilling for them, and finally by sales from the demonstration farm.

It means we have to count our *Taka* (Bangladesh unit of currency) very carefully — that is not a bad thing — but by our careful stewardship we have managed to build a house for all the workers on the site, pay their salaries and make many internal improvements.

Despite the fact that we have no signboard to indicate our whereabouts, nor do we ever advertize, thousands of local farmers and villagers have discovered that we have some answers for agricultural and community problems. Our method when approached is to encourage the people to discover their own problems and then to work together to solve them.

The main thrust of the project is motivation. This is done by a group of five young men who have received several months training — some in Japan and some in the Philippines. In 1980 this team motivated about 40 different groups in irrigated rice production and, in certain instances, for fishing. Most of these groups worked well and obtained good harvests of rice, but, of course, there were some black sheep. Some groups used their rice irrigation pumps to empty ponds and earn quick money from the stranded fish. Others broke pump parts and these mis-users were penalized.

In an attempt to avoid such happenings in the future we have introduced new rules in connection with pump hire in 1981. We now insist that the chairman, manager, farm demonstrator and pump driver of the

groups each receive two days training in basic skills and rice production techniques.

#### From despair to a new future

Our methods have helped to create several groups out of destitute landless, or near landless people. It is so exciting to see these groups move from an attitude of hopelessness to one of hope as they have managed to save minute amounts which added to other small savings begin to mount up. As a result of such processes one group was able to lend money to a member to buy a goat which is now in kid. Another such group have sent two of their members to us for training in the handling and driving of power tillers. It will put the group in a much stronger position when negotiating with the landowners because the landowners need technically trained people to work the land.

Another group were motivated to repair a *bund* (dyke) which had been breached in many places allowing the high tides to flood some 14,000 acres and stop the drying out of the land, the burning of straw and the sowing of the rice crop. There was a strong move by the fisherfolk, with their financial interests, to prevent the work being started, but many farmer groups took part and the dyke was repaired for the first time in five

years. The *beel* (swamp) dwellers were able to sow and then reap a safe rice harvest.

#### They make such a difference

We are now busy re-excavating a four mile long canal to drain another vast area and open up the possibility of more varied and assured agriculture. This venture is entirely in the hands of a village committee. No contractors or middle men are involved and the workers — drawn from the canal side villages — each receive the same flat rate per thousand cubic feet of mud dug out by mattock and passed up from hand to hand to heighten the canal bank and form the road.

When this project is completed it will mean that villagers will have their fields dried out and ready for working two months earlier. The canal will also give them better access to schools, dispensary, church and shops.

The government is also interested in the canal project. In the national drive for self sufficiency the President of Bangladesh declared a voluntary canal digging

*continued overleaf*



# AGAINST THE ODDS

*continued from previous page*

programme. Last year the local officials told us to volunteer on a certain Friday and we participated in the scheme with local officials and farmers. This year we were just informed that 100 feet of canal had been allocated to us. Since this canal is nine feet deep and thirty feet wide it is no mean task. We took part on two days, but then we saw that the work was being done by professional labour — possibly for wheat or money.

In co-operation with the Rice Research Institute we are carrying out trials of rice types in actual farmers' fields. This also involves noting the response to fertilizers and to trace elements. One of the experiments we carried out involved the soaking, germination and then the sowing of samples of different rice types in the same seed bed, but each type separate from the others. After these were established they were pulled up and transferred to different lines in the field and careful checks kept on them. This was quite a task.

## **Deficiency caused problems**

We have also assisted the Rice Research Institute in defining one of the major problems faced by the farmers, a deficiency of zinc in the rice fields. The problem was so acute that many farmers were going out of business because one crop after another failed and large acreages which should have been growing this food were being left unused. Now that we have diagnosed the trouble a zinc trace element supplement is now available in 1981 to farmers and sulphur, to combat other symptoms, is also available. We have leaflets for distribution, explaining the two deficiencies and these are helping our extension programme.

We are not, of course, concerned only with agricultural matters. We are here to express the love of God and to proclaim Christ as Lord. Each morning we have staff prayers and have tried to make these meaningful.



*David inspects rice in zinc deficient soil*

Each Sunday evening we hold a service of worship and Bible teaching in our house to which staff families and visitors come. A midweek Bible study has been requested and for this we hold open house on Thursday evenings and it is a most rewarding aspect of our work to see our staff families growing

in Christian understanding.

The motto we have adopted for the project is: 'Go in search of your people, love them, learn from them, plan with them, serve them, begin with what they know, and build on what they have.'



# CHURCHES AND CHICKENS

by John Passmore

'Repeat after me . . .' the droning words of our teacher buzzed in my head again and I realized that four months of language study was taking its toll. On returning home from another day of classes, I found a box on our veranda. Inside I discovered a dozen eggs and a note which read 'Find yourself a broody hen!' In order to relieve the dull routine of study, and thereby maintain some semblance of sanity, swamped as I was by lists of verbs, nouns and prepositions, I decided to create a diversion for myself — keeping chickens. This would provide me not only with a pastime but also a constant supply of fresh eggs.

We had built a chicken coop and had everything ready — all except the birds, which the local government poultry farm was unable to supply. Word reached Chittagong, however, and when a colleague returned to where I was staying, David Stockley sent with him the 12 eggs and the note for me!

From this simple beginning developed my involvement with Operation Agri. Although a minister, I was forced to keep a few hens in order to 'escape' from language study and now I am closely linked with Operation Agri's diverse work in Bangladesh. In fact, I am often wrongly assumed to be an agriculturist.

## A novel aid to studying

Finding a local hen to sit on my eggs was not difficult and after three weeks of waiting, nine Rhode Island Red chicks hatched on our veranda. While these chicks grew I was able to obtain some adult birds from David Stockley and so speed up egg production. Sanity was maintained and the language exam was passed at the end of that first year.

We had managed to eat a few eggs during that time, but many more had been sold or given away. When locals saw the size of the Rhode Island birds and the size and quantity

of their eggs they begged us for some eggs to put under their own hens to hatch. Although they were scornful of the fact that I kept my birds in a house, and actually fed them, they had to admire the superior results.

It was then decided that Nan and I should move north to Dinajpur for our second year where I would continue with language study and also begin to have an idea of the kind of pastoral work ahead for which I had been trained.

## An unusual cargo

The date for our move was fixed but the day

before it was expected to take place another lot of chicks was due to hatch. The removal truck arrived a day late and our first task was to load the small coop complete with mother hen and her 11 two day old chicks!

Chicks and adult birds all made the 500 mile journey on the back of the open lorry and word soon spread around the Dinajpur mission that the new missionary had arrived complete with his 'foreign' chickens!

*continued overleaf*



*Feeding time for a hen and her chicks*



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Again in Dinajpur many people bought eggs to put under sitting hens and to improve their own stock, but also, their reluctance to feed or enclose birds remained and many of 'our' chicks fell victims to crows, foxes, disease and starvation. Then we had some news which we thought would help the project off the ground in an exciting way.

A local Swiss-backed relief organization had a new incubator and rearing equipment which they were prepared to give to me. I was working closely with Bob Young at that time and it was obvious by now that rather than being a hobby, the poultry keeping

was developing into something far bigger. Bob contacted Operation Agri who granted us some money so that we could erect the rearing house.

I could not fill the incubator from my own stock but was able to have 50 eggs from a government farm in Rangpur, 50 miles away. All the preparations were made, the brooder lamps installed and food supplies bought and mixed.

### Disaster at the eleventh hour

In fact all went well until the crucial 20th day of incubation (chickens take 21 days to

hatch). The electricity went off for 12 hours! The temperature dropped in the incubator and many chicks who had already begun to pip their shells died.

We used the incubator four times having obtained eggs from as far afield as Dacca (300 miles) but each time were plagued by difficulties including further power cuts, diseases and snakes. Out of a total of 300 eggs set in the incubator only five birds survived to maturity.

The final blow to the incubator saga came when the organization who gave it to me in



*John with his hens*





the first place handed over their project to the Bangladesh Government. The incubator appeared on an inventory of equipment and so had to be accounted for and returned. Perhaps the saddest part of this story is that there were no plans for it to be put to its proper use and because it was made of such lovely wood, one of the officers decided that it would make an excellent drinks cabinet!

Of course, I still had my original hens all this time and by now many who had taken eggs, had raised birds now in lay.

I had been told that Dinajpur was a notoriously bad place for poultry rearing because of the problems of disease but the government veterinary clinic had a poultry day one day a week when any birds taken there could be vaccinated. Unfortunately, they often ran out of vaccine and it was also time consuming and expensive for the local people to take large numbers of birds to the clinic.

#### **Sowing seeds — of the gospel, too**

At around this time, I completed my second year of language study and it was decided that I should stay in the district but move 50 miles north to the village centre of Ruhea and that Bob Young should move east to the District of Rangpur. This meant that there was no-one left in Dinajpur to oversee the wider

agricultural work which was mainly seed multiplication. Through the poultry keeping I had established a link with Operation Agri and so it was decided that I should supervise the agricultural work at Dinajpur. My evangelistic and pastoral responsibilities fitted in quite well with the agricultural side, as all the church members are themselves farmers.

The main problem facing me when I took on these additional responsibilities was the apportioning of time and getting everything that needs doing, done!

Eventually I was forced to give up keeping chickens myself, as I found I was spending too much time with them at the cost of other duties. I gave my birds away to those of our villagers who had shown both an interest in the poultry and an ability to care for them. It is still a joy when visiting a village to see the distinctive dark red of the Rhode Island hens scratching the earth alongside the local varieties. Despite the many hazards, 'my' birds and their descendants survive and continue to multiply.

The main thrust of the agricultural work in Dinajpur had been the introduction of wheat as an extra crop during the dry winter months between rice crops, and the multiplication and supply of good quality wheat seed.

Some new high yielding varieties of rice, which are particularly suitable for the northern area have also been supplied. This work has continued, and winter vegetables have also become a feature.

Meanwhile, the monthly Bible classes continue and now there is usually a session included on a relevant agricultural topic for the appropriate time of year. Teaching has been given on the storage of seeds (especially wheat) and the growing of new crops and vegetables, and forms of new intermediate technology — such as a bamboo tube well — are demonstrated and supplied.

#### **A way to witness**

My involvement has developed simply because I kept a few chickens. There are two full-time workers on the farm in Dinajpur and one part-time worker in the villages involved in the sale of seed and debt collecting!

The task is immense and our project is really very small by comparison. Not everything we try is a success, and there are many lessons to be learned.

As we experiment with new crops and advise others, we teach, preach and show God's love in practical ways and as we experiment with livestock and crops, we do so as ambassadors for Christ.



# JOURNEYS OF CONTRAST

by Michael Putnam

Treasurer of the Operation Agri Scheme

Let the song go round the earth!  
Lands where Islam's sway  
Darkly broods o'er home and hearth,  
Cast their bonds away;  
Let His praise from Afric's shore  
Rise and swell her wide lands o'er.

S G Stock

BCH 376

Miss Sarah Stock was closely involved in the work of the Church of England Missionary Society when she wrote this hymn and died just before the start of this century. While she may have had a vision of the extent and scope of modern missionary work, she probably did not imagine that, nearly a hundred years later, 'Islam's sway' would seem ever wider and the bonds ever tighter. The inclusion of the great continent of Africa in the same verse is fascinating, particularly since there can be no greater contrasts than those between the areas of Asia and Africa where our own missionaries are now working.

It is always unwise to generalize from a narrow field of knowledge but I have been able to compare Zaire and Bangladesh following short visits to both these countries. Though a year apart, these journeys were sufficiently similar in character to enable relevant comparisons to be made between them. My purpose was to review the agricultural missionary projects and their potential and to report back to the newly-formed Agricultural Advisory Committee. Both countries are similar in that they have a food problem. They are unable to feed adequately all the people who live there, hence the need for agricultural development projects.

## Everything can be lost!

Bangladesh is a very flat country. It is a vast alluvial plain created from the silt overspill of the great rivers Ganges and Brahmaputra.

Although it is no larger than England and Wales, 90 million people are crowded into it risking their lives and possessions in huts built on earth platforms only a few feet over the level of the plain; if the rivers flood, or the monsoon bring cyclones and unusually heavy rain, all can be swept away. They take advantage of the lower flood waters to irrigate the paddy fields and produce good crops of rice, but that only happens once in most years, whereas they need two – if not three – rice crops a year if they are to produce enough rice for the teeming millions whose staple diet it is.

David Stockley and many others have been

helping the Bengali people to achieve these extra crops. The three key factors are water, fertilizer and the right rice varieties. The Rice Research Institute in Barisal, which works in liaison with the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines, has produced a series of high yielding varieties with different growth patterns to suit the three seasons and the different soils in various parts of the country. Information and training in the choice and use of the most appropriate types is largely dependent on David and other agriculturists like him. Many farmers are willing to listen and learn; while I was staying at Gournadi with David and Joyce Stockley a group of local farmers



*Pumps for irrigation*



had come to the farm for an all-day training session in rice improvement. The soil, rich alluvial silt, can support three rice crops providing the mineral goodness removed by the rice is replaced as fertilizer. The land needs extra water from irrigation ditches and wells, sources which can be used only if pumps are available.

#### **All the eggs are in one basket**

It was said by the local papers while I was there that Bangladesh should not need to import any rice in 1981 and that, providing there are no natural disasters, they should be able to produce sufficient tonnage of rice for all their needs. Unfortunately that is only part of the story. So many of the small farmers have ploughed up their land for a profitable rice crop, that there is none left for vegetables and other foods; and so much effort has been put into promoting rice to make the country self-sufficient, that the livestock have been neglected. The third problem is that it is the richer, large landowners who are able to grow the better rice crops for sale to the cities while the poor landless peasant farmers, who have less than one acre, are still unable to provide for their families.

All the farm work, particularly in the Muslim villages, is done by the men. The women are 'brooding o'er home and hearth' and can only leave if heavily veiled against the view of men outside the family. Whereas in Hindu and Christian villages the women tend the vegetable patches, market spare produce and entertain visitors, the Muslim women are limited to working the paddy to remove the husks, cleaning the house and compound and cooking the meals.

#### **Plenty of chickens but not enough**

There are chickens running around the villages. They are scavengers and many show signs of European ancestry, both in appearance and in the extent of egg



*Women working near Rangunia, Bangladesh*

production. Eggs are a very popular form of food and intrepid salesmen always try to vie with each other to sell travellers on ferries and at street corners hard boiled eggs. But again, there are not enough chickens to provide sufficient eggs for an impact to be made on the vast protein food requirements of the country. There are milking cows in plenty but they produce very little milk. While I was at Ruhea, John Passmore and I were entertained by a very poor farmer who brought his cow to us as we sat on his veranda; he milked it out completely, boiled the milk and gave it to us. We had a small cupful each.

The will to learn is there in most farmers, but they lack the teachers and the necessary money to buy the better seeds, to afford fertilizers, to hire the irrigation pumps, to purchase and feed good chickens or improve their dairy cows. These are the major needs of the people now that there seems to be enough rice in the country. The farmers need the help of agricultural experts to help them use what they have to the best advantage and to join together in co-operative groups to share their resources.

#### **A different approach**

Zaire, in contrast, does not grow rice. The

staple food is *Kwanga* (we call it manioc or tapioca) which is a root cut from a small bush. In Zaire the soil is so poor that once it has been exposed, it is unusable after two or three years and has to be allowed to revert back to jungle. Vegetables and fruit are also grown but this is usually women's work. There are a few chickens running around the villages but these are kept to breed poultry for meat; few eggs are eaten because of local taboos. There are very few cattle and any milk there is comes from goats or sheep.

It is clear to me that the peoples of Bangladesh and Zaire need help, but the programmes of assistance which would benefit the Bengalis would not be of the same advantage to the Zairians. We need agricultural missionaries on the spot to give training and assist with resources for the appropriate development of the things they need. An illustration I use frequently when discussing these problems is the way in which the tribal people in the forest villages find caterpillars a meaty delicacy. These

*continued overleaf*





*A woman prepares Kwanga*

## JOURNEYS OF CONTRAST

*continued from previous page*

caterpillars only appear for about six weeks each year. If a way could be found to extend the caterpillar hatching season by another six weeks the people would benefit far more than if they were offered imported beef steak and chips.

### **A native agriculture needs to be developed**

If we are to make a real impact on the food problems of these countries, many more dedicated agricultural workers will be needed with the insight to develop the farming that has evolved in each country rather than superimpose a form of European agriculture on them. Christianity can make a greater impact in these practical ways than it could with any amount of prayer and giving which lacks action to interpret it.

Let the song go round the earth;  
 Jesus Christ is King!  
 With the story of His worth,  
 Let the whole world ring,  
 Him creation all adore  
 Evermore and evermore.



*A farming scene in Zaire*



# MANY HANDS – MANY CHICKS

by Jack Norwood  
A lecturer at Southend Polytechnic

The plane bounced down at Mbandaka and I wished I could stow the 50 chicks in my hand-luggage as conveniently as the mothers were tying their children to their backs. With my arrival, began the final stage of the Operation Agri project to establish an incubator plant in Tondo, Zaire. John Mellor, who has been working in Tondo for the past ten years, has been able to identify some of the problems which limit the incubation of chicks. Incubators need heat, close temperature control and the right humidity and air flow, none of which is easy to regulate in the African jungle. However, Operation Agri has a team of

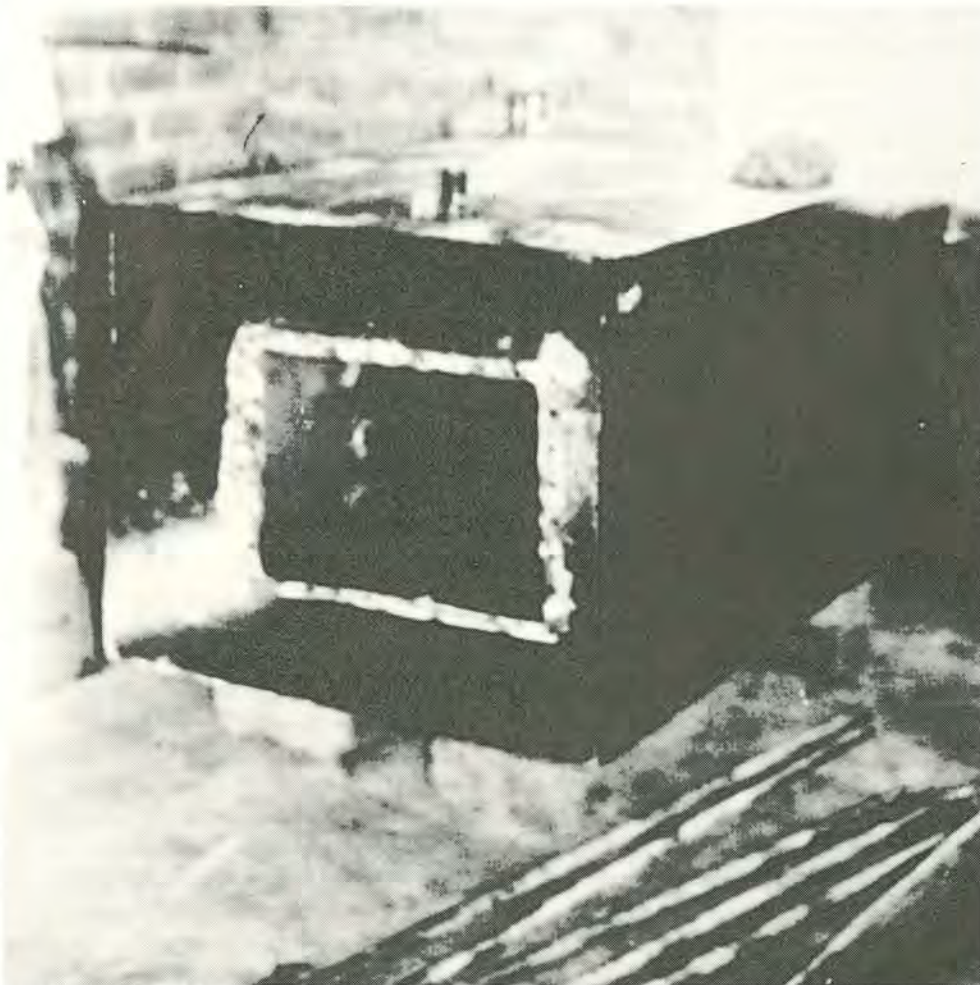
supporters working through Stan Crees, the Liaison Officer, to tackle the problem. Whatever else it may lack, Tondo is never short of sunshine, so the most effective way to produce the necessary hot water is to use solar panels. Most of the plant had been shipped out in a special two-ton trailer made by a Baptist who supports our work, John Billows. This preparatory work had taken three years and is a tribute to the willingness of many Baptists to give so freely of their time and talents. My wife and I spent a month at Harper Adams Agricultural College, Shropshire, testing and modifying two incubators. We picked a church from

the Baptist Directory and contacted the minister. Within a week two deacons had completed the plumbing. Well done Stafford Baptist Church!

## Lost – one missionary

All this is by way of background. Meanwhile, at Mbandaka airport, I looked around anxiously at the people in the reception area hoping to see some sign of John Mellor, but soon it dawned on me that he was not there. It is very disturbing to arrive in a strange country, unable to speak the language, and find oneself completely alone. Eventually I found an American who persuaded a Zairian to drive me to another American couple's home. Here I was given a bed for the night and the chicks a safe haven. Christ said, 'I shall never leave you nor forsake you,' and I thank God for people like Mr and Mrs Weeks, who run a Bible shop in Mbandaka and keep a room for stray missionaries. The following day Mr Weeks offered to drive me to Tondo. This proved quite a trip, as the first mile was on tarmac, and the next 90 miles on rough track. We crossed streams by log 'bridges' skilfully placed by the Zairian mechanic who accompanied us. We arrived safely at Tondo – to the great surprise of John who had not even received the radio message that I was on my way.

It is the contrasts of Tondo which impress me most. The beauty of Lake Tumba, particularly at sundown, the stately trees and rich variety of wildlife are a backdrop to extreme poverty and dilapidation of accommodation. Even the wildlife seemed mostly intent on biting me! I stayed with John and Rena Mellor on the farm. Roger Foster joined us in January and it was a great privilege to share in fellowship with these dedicated missionaries.



The new incubator

*continued overleaf*



# MANY HANDS— MANY CHICKS

The aluminium roof

continued from previous page

## Down to work

Our first task was to build the incubator house. Builders' merchants are not much in evidence in Tondo, so we had to dig out the sand, stones and rocks ourselves and transport them to the site. I had to admire the strength of the pygmies carrying large rocks up the cliff face. Little chaps with big muscles! The wall blocks were made from a mixture of gravel, earth and a small amount of cement, compressed together by a hand-operated machine. Once the foundations were completed, building operations speeded up and the two bricklayers did an excellent job. We had a very steep roof compared with local practice — folk were sure it would blow away in the wind. Trigonometry, strangely enough came in very useful in setting out the roof beams. The timber, although a gorgeous mahogany was far from straight so accuracy to a millimetre was rather futile. The help of Tata Loleka, the foreman on the agricultural project, was invaluable, and we developed a sort of language with a slight resemblance to French for basic communication. Arguments with the carpenters were frequent but without any ill feeling; after all, they were experienced and I was not. The construction for a solar plant was novel to us all — the trusses were asymmetrical for a start — but if I could persuade Tata Loleka, the others were no trouble. The roof has a double aluminium foil membrane covered with roofing sheets. We obtained these sheets in exchange for wiring. It happened this way. We stayed for a few days at the house of an American, Pat, who was running a house project at Mbandaka. The electrical wiring at his house was shocking (in both meanings of the word!), but we were able to measure up and use our supply organization in UK to provide the cable and fusegear for a rewire. In return we were given the roofing sheets which made a far better roof for our project than I had anticipated.

We ordered the louvred shutters for the windows from a local carpenter, glass being

very expensive and not essential. If light is needed then the shutters are opened. This carpenter, Jim, was not in a hurry. The order was placed in October and about two thirds of the work was finished when I left in March! The workmanship, however, is admirable. There are no wood working machines so the two cm planks, as cut from the trees, had to be planed by hand to one cm to make the louvres. When the building was habitable we began to erect the solar panels, boiler, tanks and incubators.

## Success at last

My experience of plumbing in the UK varied from limited success to various degrees of disaster. I needed all this experience now. We had a good set of tools, but some of the thread cutting dies were rather worn. The piping was in steel, copper and plastic as appropriate. With the plant complete we filled up with 300 gallons of rain water and were ready for test runs. Our main problem at this time was the solar panels. These were polypropylene standard UK panels. In theory, they should have produced hot water at 60°C (140°F); in practice, the best was 52°C so we had to run a fire most of the time. However, the first hatch produced 150 chirpy chicks, not to mention one even more chirpy missionary. Then the big incubator arrived, made by a group of Baptists in Southend, Essex.

Transporting such a large object to the remote site was quite a feat. It had a capacity for 2,000 eggs although we did not have the hens to lay eggs of this number yet. We soon settled down to a routine of setting eggs every Tuesday and hatches kept 'happening' the next Monday. Production was about 110 chicks per week and John Mellor had no problems selling them at three weeks of age. Eventually we hope these 'Rhodes' will replace the small village hens.

The staple food of the people is *cassava* sometimes called manioc. This is a root that

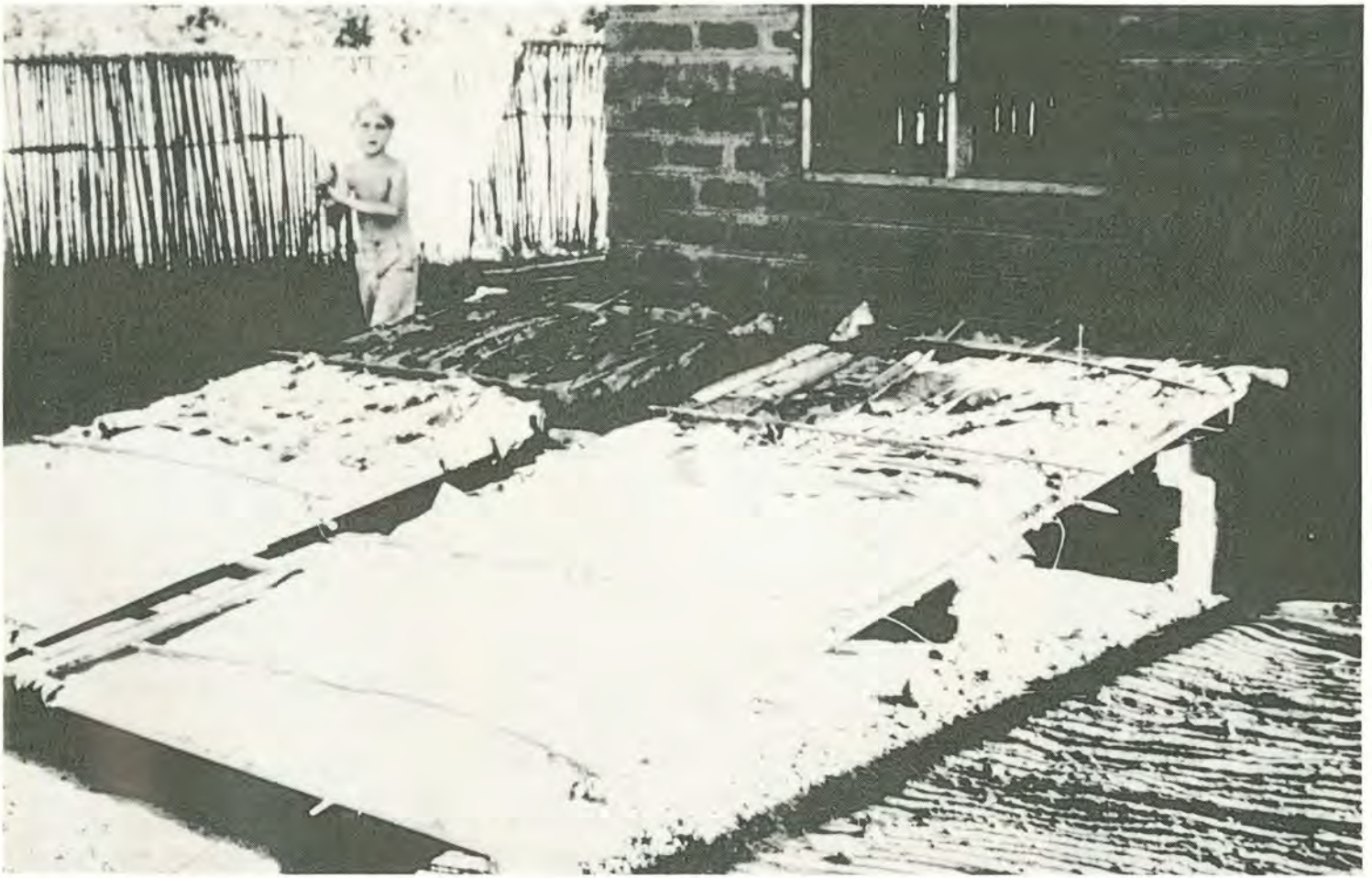
has to be soaked in the swamp to get the cyanide out before it is made into flour! It looks and smells revolting but the Zairians and some English relish it. The main problem is that it contains no protein. Traditionally the people supplement the *cassava* with meat or fish, but both of these are in short supply. Fish costs much the same as in the UK but as a day's wages for a man are, on average, 40p, the poorer folk cannot afford fish. Many of the children do not grow as they should and some have died from malnutrition.

## A full house for Wilma

Children diagnosed as undernourished are sent to Mary Hitchings and Wilma Aitchison who run feeding programmes. It is surprising how much difference a little good food makes. Early one morning I found Wilma's lounge full of children, all asleep in various positions. Do you know the 'top to tail' way of getting more children in one bed? Wilma had the little tots sleeping across the settee so more could be accommodated! These were all children from neighbouring villages who had walked to Tondo for the food 'treatment'. The BMS, backed up by Operation Agri are trying to alleviate the problem of malnutrition through the agricultural work of John Mellor, now joined by Roger Foster. More chickens would be one way of improving the protein supply.

A typical day at Tondo would begin around 5.30 in the morning. I had no clock, since a thief had broken in and stolen it, so we had to rely on the first sign of life in the eastern sky. It was easier after Roger Foster arrived with his alarm clock. Then most mornings — but not always alas for me — we would gather for prayer at 5.45. The work can be hard and crises were commonplace. It was a privilege to share these in prayer. I well remember one disastrous day. The solar panels developed yet another leak and our





turning gear on the incubator resulted in eggs falling out of the trays. The 'plop' as each egg fell made me wince. Next day at prayers, Mary and Wilma shared with us their problems in connection with the medical work. Chickens and eggs seemed so unimportant compared with the life and death issues at the hospital. Yet to hear them pray for even me and the chicks gave me new strength. Prayer changes problems into opportunities.

#### **A test of their interest**

The other task I endeavoured to tackle at Tondo was the provision of a more hygienic water supply. The main source was a spring outlet on the beach which unfortunately was likely to be polluted from the nearby school cesspit. A lot of time was spent surveying the area and looking for possible water sources whilst endeavouring not to get lost in the forest! Eventually a well site was selected and dug out by a gang of *Batwa* (pygmy) workmen. Rock was hit at just over one metre down and water nearly four metres later. The well was eventually deepened to six metres during the dry season. The next job was to lay a pipeline to the village. The task of digging a trench was given to the villagers with each family being responsible for a certain section. This work was supervised by Sam, a local community

leader. At the time of my departure the pipeline had been laid and building had commenced on a concrete water tower. This project will bring much needed water to the part of Tondo most remote from the lake.

Once water had been provided for that area, I took the opportunity of visiting Nkokomantaka with a small medical team organized by Wilma Aitchison. The trip by canoe was in itself quite an experience and the journey took four hours hard paddling. The villagers announced our impending arrival by beating the village drum. We met the village leaders in the church and explained to them our proposal for improving their water supply. We hoped that with their support we could place a strainer buried in gravel in the lake and pump water into two fifty gallon drums on the beach. The gravel and a separate membrane on one drum would then filter the water. We asked them to contribute 200 Zaires (about £28) towards the cost, ensuring that they really wanted the scheme and would also turn up on the day to dig the trenches. In fact, they raised a large proportion of the amount in one day which was very encouraging. In the past the villagers have had to carry water long distances and many of them are aware of the health hazards associated with the present supplies.

#### **Many hands — but the work is not so light**

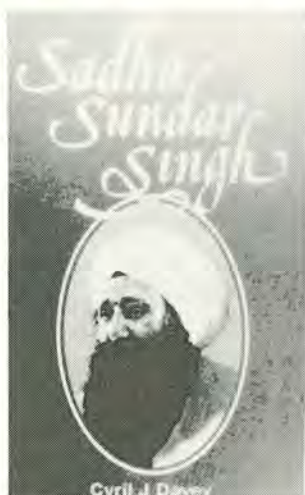
The journey home was, as is usual in Zaire, eventful. About one hour from Tondo the track was blocked by a large fallen tree. John Mellor managed to muster nine men with axes but it took nearly three hours to cut through it. It was left to me to pay them for their work as any argument with me would be futile because I did not speak the language. In the event we paid them well and they seemed satisfied.

An appropriate name for this project would be 'Many Hands'. Many hands have made the incubators and many have worked on the tanks. Many evenings have been spent in church halls and home workshops, many hands have written to me (I was constantly receiving letters, cards and parcels and I regret I had only one pair of hands with which to reply), many hands have set aside cash for this sort of work. Thanks to you for your support of the BMS and Operation Agri that makes such jobs as Tondo possible. Many hands have joined in prayer and much has been accomplished as a result. The task at Tondo continues and this chapter is yet another testimony to the faithfulness of our great God.



# BOOK REVIEW

**SADHU SUNDAR SINGH**  
by Cyril J Davey  
Published by Send the Light Press  
Price: £1.25



This book, written in a simple style, so that even a child can enjoy it, is not for the serious student. Nonetheless, the story of Sundar Singh, the Indian Sikh who became a Christian despite total opposition and eventual rejection by his family, makes compelling reading. We must be grateful to

STL for this book, originally published by SCM under the title *The Yellow Robe*.

Sundar's conversion to Christianity was dramatic. His mother, a devoutly religious woman who deeply influenced his early years, died when he was 14, and Sundar reacted with extreme hostility towards his Christian school and teachers. The hostility reached its climax when he publicly burnt a copy of the New Testament. Then, deeply unhappy and at the end of a troubled night when he had almost made up his mind to end his life by throwing himself under a train, he saw Jesus in a vision and gave his life to Christ. Convinced that Christianity had to be presented to India and the East in an Eastern and not Western mould, he donned the saffron robes of an Indian holy man or sadhu. He journeyed throughout India and neighbouring countries preaching the Gospel. 'A Christian is one who has fallen in love with Christ,' he said.

Year by year, despite increasing opposition and growing threats to his life, he entered the forbidden land of Tibet and there met with almost unbelievable adventures. His

courage in the face of constant danger is an inspiration to us. 'It is easy to die for Christ,' he said, 'it is living for Him that is difficult.' Sundar's rejection of materialism, which so shocked him when he visited the West, should challenge us, but it is his insistence on the indigenous expression of Christianity which is perhaps most important for our understanding of the role of the Christian missionary today.

It is disappointing that the author fails to examine in any depth the thinking of Sundar Singh, despite the number of books that the Sadhu himself wrote. One possible exception is the chapter dealing with his understanding of prayer. While it is true that 'his strange mystic sense of God, breaking the physical barriers of this world, would always endear him to the East and perplex the West,' it is also true that this Indian mystic could teach us much. To study his thought the reader will have to turn to other, and more scholarly books written about this saintly man, but despite this lack, this book is well worth reading, not least as an introduction to this great Christian.

CJH

## NEWS IN BRIEF

Ten thousand dollars have been sent by the Baptist World Alliance to help victims of the civil war in Lebanon. The money will provide food, clothing and shelter to those in need. In Beirut, Badan Street Baptist Church has been badly damaged by incessant

shelling. About 100 people are using the basement there as sleeping quarters, and as a safe place to hide from the fighting. No Baptist casualties have yet been reported. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has donated 25 thousand dollars to needy people in Lebanon.

Chinese church leaders met with their counterparts from other Asian countries at an historic consultation in Hong Kong earlier this year. It was the first time in about 32 years that representatives of the Protestant Christian community in China had travelled abroad to discuss issues of Christian life with other church leaders.

The Chinese church itself was one such important issue and the Chinese presented three papers at the consultation describing the challenges which face the church there. A major problem has been the image of Christianity as a Western import, a problem familiar to most Asian churches, but particularly damaging in a country which has made a conscious effort to cut itself off from the West. The Christians answered their critics with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement which affirmed its principles as, self-support, self-government and self-propagation. The Chinese leaders, while glad of the opportunity to meet and share with other Christians, stressed that China's Christian community must be allowed to develop its own style.