

Missionary

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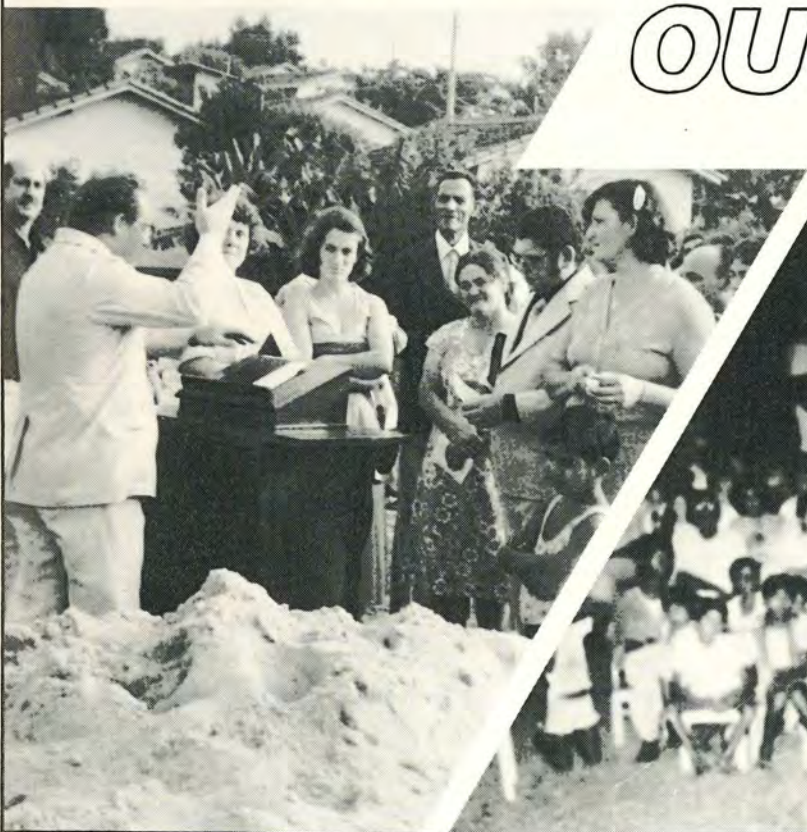
The magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society



SEPTEMBER 1981
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NEW VENTURES IN OUTREACH



HOW TO KILL A MISSIONARY

Reprinted from the 'New Zealand Baptist'

British readers may well like to follow the advice recently given to New Zealand Baptists, on the best ways to kill a missionary visiting your church on deputation.

1 Make certain that you include plenty of extra meetings without first warning your victims. This will raise his blood pressure no end.

2 Encourage his hosts to kill him with kindness by overfeeding him. Give him 'seconds', lots of cream and never take 'no' for an answer. At the very least, he should have indigestion and possibly even a stomach upset.

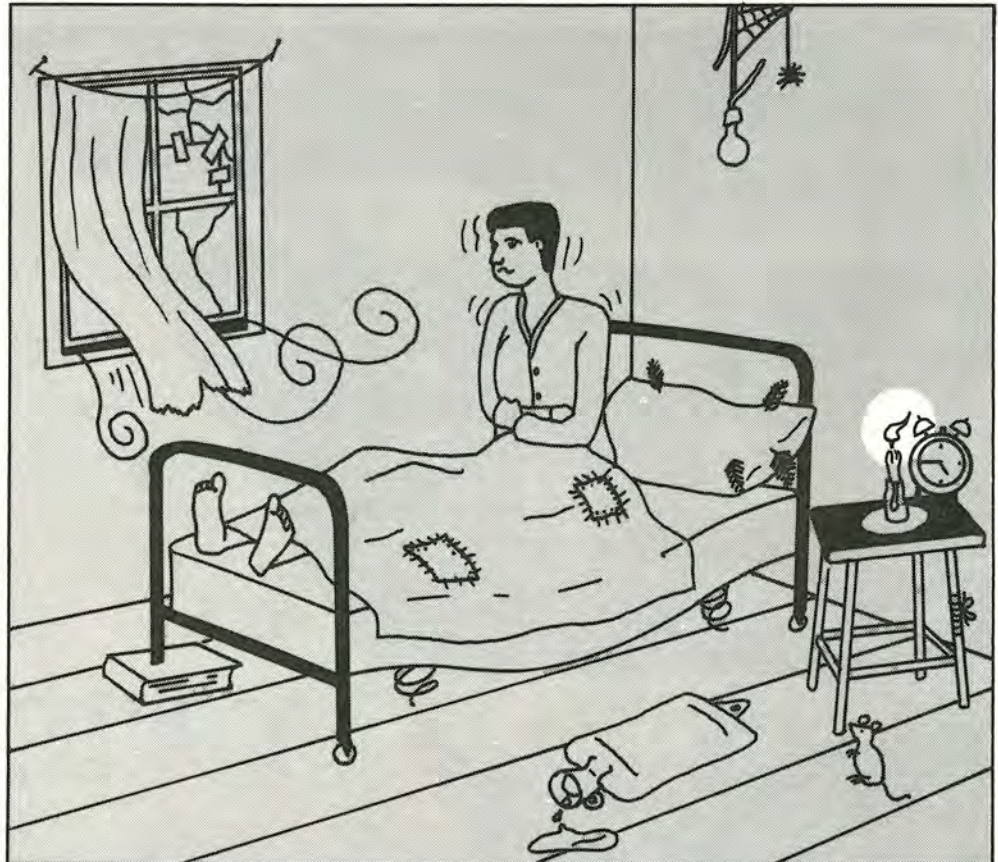
3 Keep him talking until the early hours of the morning discussing his work. This is not too difficult, as he will be quite keen to do this. Once he has started, he will be so mentally stimulated, any sleep will be out of the question.

4 Never contact your missionary before he comes, but always leave him to find out where to go and how to get there. A week or two of this treatment and he will gladly face head hunters instead!

5 Fill your meeting with 'specials' so that 50 minutes have passed before your missionary is asked to speak. Then remind him that people hate to stay after the hour is up.

6 Always assume that your victim is superhuman, and do not, even for a moment, think of showing him the geography of the home. Anguished facial expressions will result from thoughts of the 'unreached!'

7 Lastly, remember to conserve energy. Do not provide warm rooms or bed, but do give him cold linen sheets, miserable little fires and windows that will not shut. Coughs, colds, 'flu, bronchitis and, with a little bit of luck, pneumonia become glorious possibilities.



NOTES FOR YOUR PRAYER GUIDE

David and Yvonne Wheeler (11 September) are on furlough.

Frank and Rosemary Mardell (15 September) are awaiting visas to return to Bangladesh.

Joy Moseley (18 September) has now returned to this country.

Alison Wilmot (23 September) is now at Ruhea.

Rev F W Smith (26 September) died at the beginning of the year.

The new Principal of St Andrew's Hall (28 September) is **Dr Dan Beeby**.

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Rev Mrs A W Thomas

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When Jesus sent out the seventy on a programme of visitation from village to village it was an experiment in evangelism. It was a project to demonstrate the love of God through preaching, through teaching and through healing, not by means of a select priesthood, but through the obedience of ordinary followers of Jesus Christ, and with what joy and stories of success the seventy returned.

Another experiment in evangelism took place when Paul, finding himself in the capital of the Greek world, used the Greeks' love of debate and philosophical argument in an attempt to persuade the Athenians that the God for whom so many in their blindness were searching, had actually been revealed to them in Jesus Christ. Their altar, 'To an unknown god' was needed no longer.

Different occasions, different circumstances and different methods, but directed to the same end of leading people to know and serve the Lord. So our missionaries in every field are quick to seize an opportunity, though the method may be unusual, to advance the Kingdom of God.

With the mass movement of people away from the countryside into the towns and cities of Brazil a new situation has arisen. When they arrive in these great centres of population so many discover that there just is not any established housing within their financial reach. They therefore join the increasing number of those who have to find what shelter they can in the shanty town or *favelas* which spring up on any empty plot of land. This has presented a challenge to some of our colleagues who are engaging in what is known as urban evangelism – carrying the good news to those faced with the deprivation of such conditions as exist in these slums. A novel way of presenting the truth of Christ has been used on occasions. The gospel story has been given by means of glove puppets.

Far from Brazil and in a different culture, the Cinnamon Gardens Church in Colombo, Sri Lanka has used its unique site at the junction of five roads in that busy city, and used its spacious grounds to erect an open air stage. From this the Christian message is presented by way of drama to the passers-by.

In India, Young Life Centres are creating a Christian environment in which children from the villages can receive, not only formal education, but a vocational training in some village craft. When they return to their community after three years at the centre they will be equipped to earn a living, but more, they will be able to take back to their village a knowledge of Christian living.

In this issue of the *Herald* we tell the story of some experiments in evangelism and how the love of Christ has been presented through them.



IN THE DEVIL'S BACKYARD

by Gerry Myhill

Debinho, recently converted and baptized, happily sang, 'With Christ in the boat, all will be well,' as he piloted our vessel through treacherous waters. Every so often the pitch blackness of the night suddenly turned brighter than day as lightning flashed and thunder rolled in great waves all around us. In the moments when the sky was lit, I could see the mainland a couple of miles away. The islands were closer but did not offer any shelter, being whipped by the same rains that were soaking us. I cannot say that I was afraid of the river or the storm, but I do know that I wondered what crazy idea had driven me to buy this boat, rename it 'Messenger of Peace', and leave the safety of solid land to visit a chain of islands in the River Paraná.

I knew the answer

As Debinho continued to sing and happy in his new found faith, oblivious to my thoughts, God spoke to me through Romans 10:14 – 'How shall they hear without a preacher?' I thought back to the days in Peru when I felt the call to serve God and the faith put in me by Spurgeon's College in accepting me to train for the mission field. I thought back to that first interview at the BMS and I knew whose crazy idea all this was. It was God's, and I was thankful for the pouring rain which was not only filling my shoes but hiding my tears, as my resolve never to return to the islands – to suffer the heat and the mosquitoes, to put my life at risk in the face of such storms as these – melted and turned into a strong conviction that this was God's place for me. I was discovering that my call to serve in the North-West of Paraná, to live in Nova Londrina and work in the surrounding towns and countryside, had something extra and a little different. God had given my wife, Johan, and I a chain of islands which I sometimes picture as a string of beads around the Devil's throat. The islands are places of fear and superstition bound by spiritual darkness and there is a great need for the preaching and presence

of the Living Lord Jesus and His liberating power.

Shortly after the night of the storm, I was invited to a wedding on 'Japanese Island', and was met there by Debinho. There must have been about 200 people present, and the drinking and the dancing had to be seen to be believed. I retired to the back kitchen-area with Debinho, the only other Christian present, expecting trouble, as the majority of these folk practise spiritism. However, as we sat by the light of the kitchen fire with our Bibles open, a steady stream of people came to us to ask questions about



our faith. We were there until 4 am taking advantage of this opportunity to witness to the saving power of the Lord Jesus in the Devil's own backyard, or so it seemed, as the festivities reached their crescendo.

Mosquitoes and toads

Not long after the wedding the house was destroyed by a flood and the owner and his family were forced to move to higher ground and rebuild. To our surprise and joy we were asked by Sebastian, the owner, to hold a service in his new home, asking God's blessing on it. We turned up in force on the appointed day and a service was held.



Flooding is not uncommon here



Senhor Antonio and family—a visible difference

However, to any casual observer it would have seemed anything but a Christian service, the strangest part being the closing prayers. We were gathered together in a large circle inside the bamboo stake house. It was almost dark except for two paraffin lamps burning. A little old lady was running around the circle swinging a tin of fiercely burning embers, letting off a thick black smoke in order to keep the clouds of mosquitoes at bay. The mosquitoes did not take the hint, however, and instead of holding hands for the prayer as is the custom, most people were enacting a strange form of dance as they beat their bodies in order to defend themselves from the attention of the insects. Into the centre of this weird scene I hopped an enormous toad which sat and peered around at us all, approving of the attention we appeared to be giving him.

The service was different but the Christian message is always the same: 'Only Jesus Saves'. The outcome too is always the same. People come to know Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and the darkness is dispelled a little more with each soul that is saved.

With the passage of time, our conviction of the need to amplify the work on the islands has led us to purchase a better boat.

With the help of friends in England who took up the challenge our hopes were realized in the form of a 7 metre aluminium boat, light to handle and powered by a 25 hp outboard engine. With this craft we are now able to travel far greater distances, covering in 40 minutes journeys which once took us more than four hours.

A dramatic change

At present we can look out at the islands and they do not look quite so forbidding. Jesus, who is the light of the world, is dispersing the darkness. We can see this happening in families such as that of Senhor Antonio on Tarara Island, 50 kilometres up river from Japanese Island. A few weeks ago on our first visit, we were received by a suspicious and unkempt family. The faces of the children were covered in open sores from the bites of cockroaches. Ten of the 22 children were already dead from various illnesses. This family is typical of those we have found among many of the island families; poverty of mind as well as economic poverty is rampant, the one breeding the other. It has been our experience that Jesus Christ can change this, and the parents can receive a new lease of life. They want to learn to read in order to read the Bible. They want their children to study so that they too can

improve themselves. They take a new interest in their appearance and this means an improvement in hygiene. The photograph of Senhor Antonio and his children was taken a few weeks after our first visit and it shows a real change in him and his children. They are clean, clothed and no longer have their faces covered in sores. When I first arrived at their house, carrying my paddle to defend myself from any dogs (one never knows what to expect!), I found the dog too weak even to get up and bark! The children all fled into the jungle to hide, badly frightened. Now, they run to meet us when they hear us coming and are learning to sing choruses. We have been invited to hold a service in their house soon. Again, I am reminded of the question: 'How shall they hear without a preacher?'

A small miracle

During the past five years I have seen something of the fear and superstition that rules so many people's lives. Many of the customs and beliefs here seem to have their origin among the Indians who once inhabited the islands, and whose presence seems to

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IN THE DEVIL'S BACKYARD

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make itself felt in some mysterious way beyond the burial grounds that mark their sojourn here. I have seen the resigned way in which a family accepts the death of a boy of two years who had been playing innocently with a poisonous snake. Or another, drowned while fishing. So many tragedies are due to lack of care and understanding; so many die for want of hygiene. Yet so many times I find myself asking, 'whose crazy idea was this?' and I am not ready for the answer. On one occasion recently I was surrounded by a group of people at the closing of a service in Porto Rico. 'Pastor, I have a pain'; 'Pastor, I am ill.' Among them was a young

woman with a baby only ten days old, which had been sent home to die by doctors. It was just a tiny bundle of bones and a small, frightened face. 'Jadur is his name,' said the mother. 'Pray for him Pastor.' I prayed for him but I prayed mostly for the mother that she might accept the inevitable and I prayed also for myself that God might forgive me for my lack of faith. Four weeks later while putting the boat in the river, another boat arrived and from among the people who disembarked, came running a woman, shouting, 'Pastor, look at Jadur!' and she held out a gorgeously fat baby smiling contentedly. God said once more,

'It's my crazy idea.' This time the tears were tears of joy, and there was no rain to hide them.

Jadur's parents live on one of the islands and we plan to visit them soon. Our prayer is that Jadur's life be used by God to cast light into the lives of many, expelling the darkness and the grip of Satan for ever by the presence of Christ.

The chair in which I am sitting, and which always occupies the place at my desk, is not particularly comfortable. It is not a place to which I retire by choice, but of necessity.



A family in need of Christian help

However, it does help when I am sitting here at my desk preparing a sermon, or service, to remind myself that it once belonged to the Rev Arthur Elder. Probably, in those early days in Brazil, Arthur did not mess about on the river in boats, but I believe that he and his wife were confronted by difficulties of many kinds. Perhaps Arthur, travelling on horseback for the first time, might have wondered, 'Whose crazy idea was this?' Like me, he too must have known the answer: it was God's.



Rice cutting by the Paraná River



Gerry, Johan and two friends in the new boat

EVANGELISM ON STAGE

by Peter and Margaret Goodall



It all began with a murder. Shirley and Lena Perera were members of Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church, Shirley being a deacon of long-standing. He was approaching the age of retirement, and was looking forward to engaging in more evangelistic work. With this in mind, Shirley and Lena moved into the flat above Ranasinghe Hall, a Mission Hall situated in one of the poor areas of Colombo, where they worked, and began to build up the Sunday School, run a boys' club and lead the worship on Sundays.

In August 1970, Shirley and Lena were discovered dead in the Mission Hall itself, cut down on the preaching dais. They had died in the place where week by week they had proclaimed their living Saviour.

The denomination as a whole was deeply shocked, but in the fellowship at Cinnamon Gardens this tragic loss was felt more keenly. Shirley had been involved from his earliest years with the Baptist Young People's Association and with the Christian Endeavour group at Cinnamon Gardens, first as a member and later as one of the adult friends, and members of the group had helped them with the work at Ranasinghe Hall. For all these reasons they began a memorial fund for Shirley and Lena. The fund was started with no clear idea of what form the memorial should take. There were various suggestions, but most of the schemes were too ambitious for the amount of money collected. The money was banked, and for some years nothing further was done about this project.

In Shirley's footsteps

Then in 1979 the subject of the memorial was raised again, and this time a new suggestion was put forward.

Shirley Perera had been an excellent open air speaker. He was extremely good with crowds and had been active in previous open air witness at the church, so someone



A small space but great opportunities

suggested building an outdoor stage in the church garden where open air evangelism could take place. This type of outreach had been going on for some time, but a stage would be a very useful addition. It was felt this would be a project after Shirley's own heart and the stage was soon under construction.

On 23 December 1979, a Sunday evening, the stage was dedicated to the memory of Shirley and Lena Perera, and taking part in the short ceremony was their son, Kingsley, a member of the church. Since that day

there have been open air evangelistic services held monthly on Sunday evenings.

We never lack an audience

The church at Cinnamon Gardens is in a very central position. It seems, at times, that the whole world passes our doors. Close by are many bus shelters where crowds queue, sometimes for hours. Just opposite is the Eye Hospital and nearby the General Hospital, where discharged patients or visiting families from far and near go by. We also have our 'resident' pavement dwellers around the walls, the beggars, the hawkers,



Children watch a film attentively

the fortune tellers and astrologers, and those who prefer the interest and comradeship of a busy city street to sitting at home in some little shanty house.

All these people form a ready audience, and as soon as the lights go up, or the recorded music starts, or the screen appears, the crowds begin to gather along the walls.

Children gather quickly and they are happy to come in at once and sit on mats near the stage, older brothers and sisters looking after toddlers, safe for an hour or so from the dangers of the street. Adults are more wary. We start with a sprinkling of church members sitting in the audience as encouragement, but it is not until darkness falls that the majority of those watching from a distance will come and take a seat. But eventually they do come and when the chairs are filled then they stand behind or lean on the wall.

Culture barriers

Our evangelistic committee plans to have a varied programme, but we know that the one sure 'crowd-puller' is a screen on the stage,



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Evangelism in Kavi

EVANGELISM ON STAGE

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so we try to provide a film or film-strip each time. We have problems, of course, because nearly all the films available to us are in English, or rather American English, and many of those whom we are trying to reach are Sinhala or Tamil speaking. Not only are the films in English, but also about people of a different culture, and we realize that the main message must come through our evangelists speaking the Gospel in the language of the people.

Music, too, plays its part. Month by month our young people practice and sing in both English and Sinhala and a very talented group they are too. Sometimes we borrow groups from other churches and on one occasion were glad to have a Hewisi band lent to us by the Salvation Army.

Sri Lankan people are very talented when it comes to drama and we try to produce something new for the great church festivals. Plays are acted with the absolute minimum of scenery and props. It is really amazing to see what costumes can be made from a sari and a packet of safety pins!

Always something different

It would be very easy indeed to slip into a rut and stay there, so easy to produce the same pattern of singing, film and gospel message each time. We are very conscious of this and try to provide something a little different each time. On one occasion one of our old retired pastors gave a message in *Kavi* — this is a type of Sinhalese poetry which is chanted or sung to traditional tunes. He is one of the few Baptist pastors who can compose and perform Bible stories in *Kavi* form.

The lack of suitable films in Sinhala has led us to try to produce our own tape and slide stories. The aim is to produce stories photographed locally, and if possible true stories of local people. We want so much to



The young people singing

get away from the idea that Christianity is a 'foreign' or 'imported' religion.

What results have there been from these efforts in outreach? Well, it would be untrue to say that we have seen conversions and numbers being added to the church; it is just not so — not yet. But each month crowds are hearing the joyful songs of the gospel, and they are seeing and hearing the message of the saving grace of Jesus in picture, drama and preaching. Some of them are beginning to talk with us, and many of them are carrying home with them a tract or scripture portion. If we are faithfully carrying out our

commission to preach the gospel, then we may happily leave the Holy Spirit to work in men's hearts.

We have a stage then. Just a thing of bricks and mortar and asbestos sheeting. But just because it is there, we have a constant reminder that it must be used. We have a training ground for young evangelists, a focal point for experimental drama and somewhere from which the gospel is proclaimed — that gospel which is based on victory over death.

Shirley and Lena did not die in vain.

HOPE REBORN

by Keith Hodges

There was nothing extra special about the weekly Bible Study series entitled 'Being a Member of the Church', which we were following at the Santo Antonio fellowship. In the fourth study, 'Baptism', we referred to baptism as being part of a believer's response to God's revelation of Himself as the One who redeems fully those who follow Him. Baptism is a sign of the commitment to God of the person made alive in Christ Jesus. The study seemed to have gone well and all was left in God's hands. The following day revealed just how much God made Himself known through the teaching of His Word.

'I have something special to say to you Pastor,' Yvonne said, her face beaming. 'I must be baptized as Jesus taught.'

Yvonne was a gem! She had given her life to Jesus some weeks earlier, won to Christ through the friendship and testimony of Augusta and Barbara. Now we were seeing the fruit of her new life in Christ. How happy we were that day because of the excitement and joy of a new believer, eager to follow her Saviour's teaching.

A day later, Barbara, my wife, and I visited another new Christian, Dona Iracema, an



elderly widow, who was growing in faith.

'Pastor, I must be baptized. I want to be a real part of the Church,' she said, her face shining with happiness. 'I know I have much to learn, but I must be baptized.'

Words could not describe how Barbara and I felt, as we sat there listening to her testimony of God's leading. Two baptismal decisions in one week! It just did not seem possible, but there was more to follow. On the next Sunday after the service, Dona Ida who had served the Lord for many years as a Presbyterian, also made her request for baptism. Ida had been worshipping with us for the last two years and had seen her granddaughters, Marilza and Nilza, won for Christ and baptized. Now she too, wanted to be one of the fellowship in a complete sense.

What a week! Typically human, I wondered why every week could not be the same. Then, I recalled the earlier years.

Not always so good

A dilapidated, dirty, abandoned wooden building, an epitaph to a lost hope, a small group of disillusioned people, the opposition of the local authorities, calm yet adamant in their claim on the land upon which stood the chapel, the scepticism of the townsfolk on discovering who we were, made clear in their scornful comment — 'You don't belong to that group do you?' Any real progress was prevented, as we were gripped by a history of inconsistent leadership, bad witness, and a lack of dedication and purpose. Small victories had been gained by a face-lift to the old building, the prompt payment of bills, and better relationships within the town, but nothing much by way of establishing a

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The old church building



Building the new complex

HOPE REBORN

continued from previous page

worthwhile future. What was desperately needed was a new vision, a new venture, a new opportunity, but two and a half years were to pass before any signs of hope were seen.

When the 'new thing' came, it came suddenly. One could almost say, unexpectedly! For us, it was God breaking through, making His will known to us, and giving a promise of new things to come to the people of Santo Antonio. And, of course, it came through His Word (Isaiah 43), and His promise was backed in a wonderful way. The local council, who hitherto had been unprepared to listen to us, suddenly became interested in our idea of a new church building and community centre. The vast scale of our thinking captured their imagination, and new land was given to us, four times the size of the original plot. The old building was moved to the new site and tucked up into one corner so as not to impede future development of the

ground, and plans were drawn for the new venture. Months went by before these plans were ready, for no money was available to employ an architect to do them for us. It was specifically a DIY job!

Back to square one

Then the let down! By the time the plans were ready and accepted by the local authority, our own people had simply lost interest. The extent of the project overawed them! It was too big! There was no money! It could not be done! The project was shelved. What can one do when one's own people are so unenthusiastic? Barbara and I felt that the 'new thing' God had promised would never be a reality. Our work continued in the North Pioneer Association, but Santo Antonio da Platina remained stagnant. In the mother church at Jacarezinho, the young people's group grew, preaching-points in the outlying areas were served, and as some came to the Lord several baptisms were registered, but Santo Antonio changed not a bit. There were conferences, special services, church and young people's retreats, but Santo Antonio refused to move.

Then again God intervened. Through the experience of Moses and the Israelites on their march out of Egypt (Exodus 14) God

spoke to us in a forceful manner, telling us to get on with the job of putting the 'new thing' into being. We were rebuked, humbled and challenged again. The plans were rescued from 'cold storage', and the cash was counted and then spent on building materials. 18 May, 1980, was the historic moment for which we had waited so long, the laying of the foundation stone of the new Baptist church and community centre complex. When all the bricks we had bought were laid, we had a wall about 12 inches above ground level! Nevertheless, God supplied all our needs and the work continued. We could only afford to hire two men, a builder and his mate, but money to pay their salaries never ran out. The group prayed, worked and sweated, and the building grew brick by brick, at a rate which astonished the local folk. People took notice and the congregation grew slowly as the townsfolk realized we meant business. The local authorities, especially the mayor, Dr Alicia and his foreman of public works went out of their way to help us. Attitudes changed and Baptists were accepted.

God chooses the right man

During this growth period, Parana Baptist Convention leaders began to take an interest in the new possibilities at Santo Antonio. They hoped to support a Brazilian pastor



who would continue the work after Barbara and I had moved north to Mato Grosso. As a fellowship, we prayerfully sought God's guidance regarding the new leadership. God showed us the man He required, and we invited Ruy Bomfim to the pastorate, despite the fact that as a fellowship we had no means of paying him.

Ruy was due to complete his studies at Rio Baptist College at the end of 1980, and was one of the men Parana Convention had considered as a possible full time worker in the State. We submitted a request to the Convention for financial support for Ruy at Santo Antonio, indicating the full facts

behind his call. As always, when God is in something, the request was granted and Ruy became the new pastor in February 1981.

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The work goes on

The construction at Santo Antonio is not yet complete of course, and there is still much to be done now Pastor Ruy has taken over. In comparison to the early years however, Santo Antonio is so very different. Some have come to know Jesus in a new way, like Yvonne, Iracema and Ida, some have heard God's call to the pastorate like Joaozinho (Little John), Dalva and Amelia, some have realized anew the responsibility of being God's chosen ones like Iracy and Augusta, Fermino and Silvano, and are working well to justify that privilege, some are showing evidence of growth in Christ as they learn to walk daily with Him and yet others remain unawakened, weak . . . but there is hope.

Hope reborn! That is the story of Santo Antonio! God's 'new thing' is being done! Without doubt the words 'Pastor, I must be baptized' are going to be heard by Pastor Ruy many many times as he continues to do the Lord's will there. For our part, Barbara and I are happy in knowing that the Lord who called us to minister there has fulfilled all His promises.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

It had to be original, a change from the usual fund-raising efforts. Pauline Stutton wanted to raise some money for the BMS and was attracted by the idea of a charity shop. However, such a venture needs a great deal of organization and so after much prayer and consideration, she approached local estate agents for suitable premises, but without success. After several months of getting nowhere, she tried the County Council, who told her they had a property to let for a fortnight at a nominal sum.

'A bit off the beaten track,' it was not the ideal location but she gradually became convinced that the offer should be accepted. Throughout this period, the spare bedroom of her house was being filled to overflowing with gifts from friends, and church members

of her present church in Gillingham and of her former church in Margate.

At last the contract was signed and a date was set for occupation — only two weeks away! A phone call to the local radio station BBC Radio Medway resulted in some free publicity and Pauline and others placed an advert in the local paper, *The Medway Times*, at a special cheap rate. With a couple of posters for the church notice-board and shop window, the publicity was complete. The next problem was finding rails for the clothes, but this was solved by generous loans from church members and the local branch of Marks and Spencer. Public liability insurance and goods insurance was necessary but as Pauline's husband worked in insurance this presented no difficulties.

When all these arrangements had been made, Pauline and her helpers moved the goods into the shop. It was decorated with maps and posters depicting the work of the BMS and colourful posters were also obtained from the embassies of the countries where the BMS is working. Plenty of BMS literature was available for customers and during the two weeks when the shop was open, the helpers were able to tell them something about BMS work. By the end of the fortnight, all the hard work was forgotten and the tiredness was replaced by excitement as the final figure was reached: £514.71 had been raised to help spread the gospel through the BMS.

'To God be the glory, great things he hath done.'



The shop front

CARIBBEAN MISSION

The Caribbean saw a new type of evangelization programme earlier this year. 'The Mission to the 80's,' organized by the World Methodist Council, was a month-long crusade which was witnessed in the Bahamas, Barbados, St Vincent and Jamaica. Unlike previous campaigns, 'Mission to the 80's' had a broader scope than the usual one-to-one evangelism, but covered vexing social issues in the West Indies, youth unemployment, poverty, racism, violence, war and capital punishment being amongst those discussed. It was felt by the organizers that the Caribbean was being torn between Cuban communism and American capitalism. The purpose of the Mission was to offer a third way, a Christian society based on both personal freedom and social equality. It is estimated that the Mission reached over 50,000 people.

BIBLES IN DEMAND

Poland is often in the news, but it is not widely known that copies of the Bible are selling like hot cakes. At the moment, there are in print no less than two million New Testaments, demonstrating the rediscovery of the Bible throughout Poland, particularly after Billy Graham's evangelistic campaign. The Bible Bookstore in Warsaw has had to limit its sales to one Bible per customer, so great is the demand, and it was being cleared out again of Bibles shortly after the new stocks arrived from the printers. More could be printed if there was enough paper. Owing to a paper shortage in Poland, the government requires that all paper supplies should come from the West. The Baptist World Alliance has, for many years, been helping with the purchase of paper for Christian publications.

BRAZILIAN CENTENARY

Brazilian Baptists held a thanksgiving service in Rio de Janeiro recently, the first in a series of celebrations leading up to 15 October 1982. On that date Baptists throughout Brazil will observe the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the original Baptist congregation at Salvador. In 1882 William and Anne Bagby, Southern Baptist missionaries from the USA, organized that first congregation and by 1907 there were no fewer than 84 churches in Brazil. The Baptist church has increased greatly since those early days and has almost 3,000 churches with a total of over half a million worshippers. It receives missionaries and also has its own foreign missions board which sends missionaries to 11 countries, including Portugal. It is the seventh largest Baptist body in the world.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

The world risks being confronted with insurmountable health problems by the year 2000 unless a community approach to health care is developed. This was the view of Dr Stuart Kingma, the Director of the Christian Medical Commission which met in Bali earlier this year. The CMC which is a branch of the World Council of Churches, discussed health care in all countries, particularly in the Third World. The prevention and treatment of illness is not only the concern of specialists but of ordinary people, Dr Kingma explained. They must assume some responsibility for their health. He also made the point that the churches had a useful role in the area of health care and that they should reconsider their medical approach in relation to the actual needs of the people they served.

MISSION TALKS

The Rumanian Orthodox Church hosted a meeting of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, in Bucharest in May. It was the first time the Commission, which is connected to the World Council of Churches, had met in an Orthodox country. Participating in the talks were Christians from many countries and from Anglican, Armenian, Baptist, Lutheran, Orthodox and Reformed traditions.

In Bucharest, the Commission stated that the objective of witness and evangelism is the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom leading to conversion and baptism; this both called the individual to repentance and challenged the structure of society. The Commission acknowledged that there are Christians in almost every country of the world, but claimed that the task of evangelism 'must be pursued until there exists in every human community a cell of the Kingdom, a community which confesses Jesus Christ and, in his name, is at the service of his people'. While the command to preach the gospel is inescapable, there are right and wrong ways of doing so. No means of witnessing is neutral — it either illustrates or betrays the gospel. The spirit of the crusades is contrary to the example of Christ, as is the 'sale' of the gospel as a commercial product.

As an ecumenical occasion also, the meeting was a success. Despite the many different Christian traditions represented, those present discovered 'a profound unity in the fundamental affirmation of our Christian faith'. Evangelism is an important area where churches can unite both their spiritual and material forces. A programme which will enable Orthodox churches to participate more fully in mission was given attention at the meeting.

SERVING IN SRI LANKA



ELIZABETH McCUBBIN

When Elizabeth McCubbin first considered serving God overseas, it was to Thailand that she felt called. The challenge came while she was on holiday with the youth fellowship of the Baptist Church to which she belonged, when they went to the Keswick Convention. She realized then the need for missionaries and was particularly concerned with the need in Thailand. She became convinced of her calling to be a missionary and consequently began a three-year course at the Bible Training Institute. However, at the end of her course, the door to Thailand was closed and so for two years Elizabeth worked in a local bank. It was then that she considered serving God elsewhere in the world and she became interested in the work of the BMS, especially in Sri Lanka.

In September last year she was accepted by the BMS as a candidate and took a certificate course in mission at St Andrew's Hall in preparation for her work overseas. She joined Peter and Margaret Goodall in working for Cinnamon Gardens Church earlier this summer.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Mr and Mrs D Wheeler and family on 4 May from Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Dr A and Mrs Hopkins and family on 8 May from Pimu, Zaire.

Miss R Murley on 8 May from Pimu, Zaire.

Miss V A Bothamley on 30 May from Vellore, India.

Departures

Rev A and Mrs Goodman and Benjamin on 24 May for Upoto, Zaire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously. (28 April-1 June 1981)

Legacies:

Mrs M A Begley
Miss H C Bourne
Miss L Cusden
Mr L T Farmer
Mr F Illingworth

Mrs S F E Lacey	50.00
Miss G M Naylor	50.00
Mrs G C Parris	214.41
Mr E E Peskett	11,800.00
Mrs M Puttock	500.00
Mr P L Summers	250.00

£	p
1,793.40	
24.10	
200.00	
50.00	
40.45	

General Work: In memory of Mrs Hilda King: £40.00; Anon (NS): £20.00; Anon: £10.00; Anon (MKH): £6.00; Anon (As needed): £10.00; Anon: £1.80; Anon (FAE Aberdeen): £10.00; Anon (Cymro): £90.00.