

MISSIONARY

# HERALD

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**THE CHANGING FACE OF MISSION IN ASIA**



JANUARY 1983

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Cover Photograph — *Hope for the future* — Boys at Pokhara School, Nepal

We share in the work of the Church in:

Angola	Nepal
Bangladesh	Sri Lanka
Brazil	Tanzania
Hong Kong	Trinidad
India	Zaire
Jamaica	

# COMMENT

Soon after arriving at his first church a young minister was introduced to the oldest member. Not knowing how to open the conversation, he tried, 'I suppose you've seen many changes in this church during your time.'

'Yes,' said the old man glaring at him meaningfully, 'and I've voted against every single one of them.'

We are all suspicious of change, not only the elderly. One young deacon, enthusiastically involved in the many exciting developments of his chosen profession opposed any change in the life of his local church 'because', he said, 'if I have no security in my religion I have no security anywhere'.

### Where is our security?

Whatever happened to the pilgrim people of God whose roots and foundations are set in no time or place but in the love of Christ? Perhaps we need to look again at the church overseas to discover where our real securities lie.

Is it galling to be told, perceptively, by Indian Christians that we are too attached to our Church buildings? So many Christians in Asia do not possess the property which is ours. They are a minority in a sea of people of other religions. Their very belonging to Christ brings insecurity in a worldly sense, but because 'nothing can separate them from the love of God which is theirs through Christ Jesus' they have a security which helps them live through, and work in, the many changes of today's world.

'The only constant in the world today is change,' writes the group from the Church of North India, who recently visited the churches in Derbyshire. 'In this situation of rapid change, the Church needs to respond to urban secular issues much more consciously.'

### A Big Lesson

They speak out of their experience in Asia. Some of this is spelled out in the articles in this month's *Herald*. The BMS is responding by exploring new ways of being a partner with the church overseas. This partnership is two way. We have as much to receive as we have to give. That is perhaps the biggest lesson we have to learn. For nearly two hundred years we have been the giving, sending community, but now the world has changed, and the church has changed. If we are not too proud to accept this, then surely God will lead His people, in partnership the world over, forward into a new and exciting age of sharing the good news of His love in Jesus Christ.

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# Church of North India — Baptist Missionary Society

## PARTNERS IN WORLD EVANGELISM

The relationship which the BMS has with the Church in India is now two way. So Bishop Lingaraj Tandy told the *Herald* during his visit to Britain late last year.

We asked him about the way he saw the work of mission changing.

'Indian churches have relied upon foreign missionaries and funds for centuries,' he said, 'but now the Church in India and the missionary societies are talking about partnership and mutuality in mission. This is a two way approach.'

'It is true that the Indian church has her responsibility to evangelize the so-called Christian countries. It is an unavoidable fact that we are partners in evangelism of the whole world.'

### The Role of BMS

Since missionary visas are no longer being issued for India, we wondered whether there was anything left for the BMS to do. Bishop Tandy was in no doubt that the BMS still has a positive role to play.

'The services of volunteers and former missionaries on a short term are still welcome,' he replied. 'These friends have much to offer in developing the local leadership. Also Indian pastors and lay leaders can come to the United Kingdom for further training in different areas of church life.'

'They can also be used profitably by churches to share the life and the witness of the church abroad. The wider



*Bishop Tandy, and a meeting of lay pastors in Sambalpur Diocese*

## BISHOP LINGARAJ TANDY

experience of learning and sharing' he felt, 'will be mutually beneficial.'

### Self Reliance

In spite of the fact that the Church of North India has made great efforts to be self-reliant in the pastoral and evangelistic ministry, some areas have found it very difficult.

Bishop Tandy said that it is a healthy sign to be self reliant. 'But we cannot deny the partnership of the universal church in the common mission of our Lord through our co-operation and sharing of the grace of our Lord with the members of the Body of Christ in other countries.'

### Britain's Asian Community

When we reminded Bishop Tandy of the large Asian population in this country he regarded it as a great challenge for British churches.

'You must show sincere love and concern for these people, and contact them through the personal approach, through dialogue and in an evangelistic programme. Nominal Christians may be a stumbling block, but the committed Christians must win these people through their practical Christian witness. I trust that the Church of North India will be able to participate in this ministry.'



*The Gange School, Delhi*



*Stanley Mudd*

THIS TITLE would hardly do for most Fleet Street editors— not snappy enough, too long and much too cautious, but to modify it is to make it less than truthful. Indeed, I should like to make it longer and add ‘... many churches with which the BMS has traditional ties’, and even then, the article will be less than truthful for to generalize about India (let alone the Indian sub-continent) is to write something less than the truth.

If we cannot generalize, however, we cannot understand, and understanding is vital if we are to sympathize and learn how to give, and receive, help.

### **A bigger problem**

Most churches with which we have to do are small in relation to the communities among which they live — one Christian in 300 of the population in Bangladesh for example, but in Mizoram the community and church are almost identical. Most churches are poor — even by Asian standards — but by no means all. Is this, in fact, a problem? Are not riches, for a Christian, a bigger problem than poverty?

Most missionaries are fully conscious of the problems raised by the fact that they come from a richer country and have a higher standard of living than those among whom they work. Missionary societies are generally well aware of problems created by the progress of churches to maturity and demands of leadership for complete self-government when this progress and these demands are linked with financial dependence on the West. Aid agencies are not in the same relationship to churches as are the missionary societies, but they often deal

# **PROBLEMS FACED BY MANY CHURCHES OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT...**

**by Stanley Mudd**

BMS Assistant Overseas Secretary

with the same people and do tend to impose their own forms of working and insist on money being used only under conditions formulated by the donor. When aid agencies use missionaries in their work their method of working may distort the missionary's own priorities. To make such criticisms is not to underestimate the agencies' power for good or obedience to the injunction to feed the hungry or clothe the naked.

### **A problem Church**

All churches carry with them a legacy of the years of missionary activity. They have received, for instance, the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. To have this listed as a problem may seem perverse, but the government of India may well feel that the awakening of self-consciousness and the self-awareness of

many tribal groups in North East India through education, through contact with the outside world and, above all, through the value which the Christian faith places on the individual, has made for problems in a politically sensitive border area. It is still possible to classify the Bible as subversive literature.

Missionary activity has brought to the church an international dimension. This is of immense value to isolated Christians who feel the pressure of a non-Christian society all around them. Sometimes churches are helped by the power of the nominally Christian West and the prestige of some international Christian organizations; but for the churches to look too much for support and encouragement outside their own land is to invite the suspicion that they are not entirely loyal to their own country.



# THE CHURCH IN ASIA - a new relationship

*The Kathmandu Valley*

## A mixed blessing

Mission schools and mission hospitals still have an enviable reputation in the Indian sub-continent and particularly in India, but they are a mixed blessing to the churches who have inherited the responsibility of maintaining and running them. Sometimes Christian staff are not available and sometimes the repair of the buildings is beyond the churches' resources. There are buildings which can neither be repaired nor be pulled down, and there are institutions which can be neither run properly nor closed down permanently. Denominational divisions were imported from the West, but many of the recent divisions are owing to land and property disputes.

We, in the BMS, like to think of ourselves as a missionary sending organization. A high proportion of money received goes on training, equipping, sending and maintaining missionaries. All the indications are, however, that the number of BMS missionaries in the Asian fields will get fewer. It is virtually impossible to obtain a new missionary visa to India. Numbers in Bangladesh are being restricted and a quota system has operated in Sri Lanka for a long time. It is tempting to bewail the passing of an age, but we would do better to applaud the opportunities for the development both of indigenous leadership and of the opportunity for the emergence of new patterns of mission. Baptist churches in Derbyshire are sharing in an experiment to form a new kind of relationship with the Church of North India. It is time there were more such experiments and more people in churches preparing to involve themselves in world mission in a new way.

In 1977 a partnership was created between the Church of North India and some of the churches in Derbyshire – Baptist, Church of England, Methodist and United Reformed.

The intention was to help the world Church come alive for people in Derbyshire and North India – 'to create a vivid, personal relationship between Christians in two widely contrasting areas of the world, by getting to know each other through visits, taking advantage of the already considerable movement of people between the two areas.'

Already a group from the CNI has visited Derbyshire and reported on its impressions of church life. It is an

attached to your church buildings. Your understanding of the Church is too closely linked to buildings. You are not sufficiently aware that the Church is primarily, God's people – or "a People's Movement" as we are fond of saying back in India.'

They refer also to the large pockets of Asian and West Indian communities. 'Some of you have jointly invited a presbyter from the Church of North India to help you in your mission to Asian communities. This is commendable. But nobody seems to have any clear idea of what he should be doing and how his work is to be assessed. In our meeting with him and some others those advocating his mission in terms of conversions and

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## PARTNERSHIP

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excellent example of how mission today is two way, of how the traditional 'sending' church in this country has much to discover and learn from what we used to regard as the 'receiving' church.

In regard to Church Life, they say: 'In younger churches, it is widely believed that England is a Christian nation. On our arrival here the first thing that came to our notice was the fact that the Church in England – in particular – is a minority community. Like ourselves, you too are a minority entrusted with the tremendous task of mission to your own society and nation. This raises the question, whether or not you are adequately equipped for this task. Our impression is that you are too much

proselytizations of Asians were very loud and showed no knowledge whatsoever of the complexity of inter-religious problems. . . . We feel that your Minister to Asian communities should be teamed with an English minister, and should also have an opportunity to work with English congregations. Team ministries to both Asian and English communities are likely to be much more valuable than a one way ministry like the present one.'

Two short extracts but amply illustrating all that this partnership has to offer. The report has much to say to the churches outside Derbyshire and points the way to fruitful ways of sharing in mission in the increasingly complex world of today.



*Rally of Village Women, the Kond Hills*

# THE CHANGING FACE OF ASIA

by Neil McVicar

BMS Overseas Representative for Asia

THE HUMAN face changes in a variety of ways. Age, colour, stress, joy, pain and a different angle of observation all alter the picture. Most changes take place very slowly, but on occasions they are quite sudden.

The face of Asia, like that of other continents, has experienced change and adjustment because of a number of pressures both from outside and within. Some of them are not always immediately discernible and several are certainly outside the immediate control of individuals, groups, churches and governments.

## **Finding an identity**

In Asia, generally speaking, there is now a greater political awareness and the masses are increasingly dissatisfied with the economic situation. Many factors, including the introduction of TV, the transistor radio, and the greater mobility of the population contribute toward this. In Asia, and particularly in India, changes

motivated by a cultural and identity crisis are being called for. Politically, the governing of a majority party is no real indication that it understands the real needs of the people or is solving the problems of the population. There are pressures being brought to bear upon governments to ensure that the poor and underprivileged get a better deal.

With political economic and cultural tensions influencing the way people live, there is a greater need now than ever before, for the Christian church to find its identity and role in the changing conditions that surround it. These, perhaps imperceptibly, cause the church also to change and to seek change.

## **Fewer missionaries**

The last 25 years have seen a number of changes which have had their effect on Church and Mission relationships. They continue to cause concern. One instance has been the restrictions imposed by governments on the entry and work of

missionaries. In 1958 the BMS had in India, East Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Hong Kong, a total of 189 missionaries. Today the number serving in the same Asian countries is only 44.

The type of missionary has also changed. The 'long termers' are generally few. We are now in an era when individuals and married personnel go overseas for a shorter specified time and a more defined task. This may be due to a shift in theological thinking, but is more likely to be the result of changing social and family patterns, or because of the special expertise that is being offered.

The skyline of Asia keeps changing. Massive building programmes of one kind or another are to be seen particularly in the towns and cities. Development projects in rural areas, which hopefully will bring electricity to villages and better water and health facilities to many.

## A world power

India's population, in spite of family planning programmes, continues to increase at an alarming rate. As a nation it is exercising an increasingly effective influence in Asia. It seeks, by the internal policies and external diplomacies, to establish itself as a credible power in the world and particularly among the nations of the Third World, and it is having some success.

Bangladesh is at present in the midst of change. The Martial Law Administration by a number of ordinances, is trying to stabilize the country politically and economically. Recent legislation suggests the desire to portray the country as one where Islam holds sway. Such policies are already affecting the Church in that Sunday has been declared a normal working day with businesses, schools and colleges going on as usual.

## A Sense of Togetherness

In India, 12 years ago, the church in the north was changed by the formation of the Church of North India. Into that United Church went most of the Baptist Churches in Orissa and some from other parts of north India. Our friends in Orissa, while they continued to worship in the way they did before, are finding the organization and administration of the church somewhat complex. For some, the CNI has created a greater sense of togetherness, but others are feeling a sense of isolation from the BMS and other organizations, and a weakening of their ties.

The CNI, however, set out to be self-supporting within five years. 'In the interest of the Church's Health and Effectiveness and Service and Witness it is essential that the CNI gives serious consideration to becoming financially self-supporting in its Pastoral and Evangelistic Ministry within five years.' Such a resolution required adjustments of structures and changes in attitudes to make the ideal of self-reliance come true. The 'ideal' of the CNI, for its basic ecclesiastical needs, is beginning to be fulfilled. Such a revolutionary change undoubtedly has caused great hardship in some areas, but the goal in view is right and commendable even if the implementation of it needs some adjustment.

## The Danger of Missionary Support

The situation in other church organizations is not so encouraging. Some are still very dependent on foreign resources, both to meet their basic commitments and for the task of evangelism. Much serious consideration is being given to this problem. One of the dangers for programmes of self-reliance is that the Church and Missionary organizations may want to dictate how this should be achieved. We may be tempted to impose those concepts and methods of self-support which we believe to be the best!

The function and work of missionaries in Asia is quite different from what it was 25 years ago. Then many were in positions of leadership and often by their presence and persuasiveness gave some sense of direction to the Church Councils and Unions. That directing, though sincerely given, not always right for the church in the Asian context. Today missionaries work under, with, and alongside national colleagues. They may have very little say and may not even be listened to in the church's Councils. Such a development has its difficulties and weaknesses, but many missionaries would agree that it is in the right direction.

Generally speaking in all the countries of Asia there is a growing desire for the church to reflect the culture as well as the faith and belief of its members. In such an atmosphere of change there are the inevitable frictions and differences of opinion, but further changes are necessary if the church in Asia is to become truly Asian. Efforts are being made to enable the church to articulate its witness in language, in music and other ways more akin to Asian culture than before.

In the midst of change there is a great deal which remains the same. Village life goes on basically as it has done for centuries. Alongside modern equipment and new methods of agriculture the village farmer is still to be seen with his animal pulling a simple plough. The changes that take place in towns and cities take a considerable time to effect life at village level.

The face of Asia is certainly changing. We pray and hope that the changes we see taking place and the often forgotten powers of industrialization, high technology and secularization will make the Continent of Asia more responsive to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it is preached and lived by His Church in the towns, cities and villages throughout these great lands.



*Modern Hospital, Vellore*



Ghandi

Taj Mahal

# REFLECTIONS ON INDIA

**Paul Weller, a minister in the Tameside Fellowship, recently spent three weeks in India. His trip was sponsored by the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland and the Gravesend and District Community Relations Council. Some members of his party went to see and understand something of the work of the Christian Church in India. Others went to understand something more of the culture and religions of India in order to help them with their work with the Asian communities here in Britain. Some went for both reasons.**

First impressions are always vivid . . . we arrived at Delhi airport at night, and as we came out of the plane the heat and humidity hit us like a wall! In the airport, we were besieged with people wanting to carry our luggage. Then we found out that one of our party did not have his case — it had gone missing. This provided us with our first taste of Indian bureaucracy — forms in great detail, filled in triplicate, taking about an hour! From here, out in the city, travelling by bus to our hotel. There were quite a lot of cars around, although they are all basically of one model. Importation of cars is not allowed. On the roadside were rickshaws, parked, with their drivers sleeping in the warm night . . . on the pavements, people asleep.

The following day, the first impression was the vitality and vibrancy of the place. This came as something of a surprise and a shock — it was so different from the media images of passive Indians always begging for help. Beggars there were, of course, and to be begged for money is a difficult experience to cope with without becoming hard and cold and devoid of humanity — or giving away everything in ten minutes. Poverty there was, and many were obviously weighed down by it, living with its burden, but also, all around, people were taking responsibility for their own futures. We saw this especially when we travelled to the State of West Bengal — particularly in the rural areas.

## Encouraging Rural Development

The ruling party in West Bengal is a Left Front coalition, dominated by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), and in the rural areas, they were a very popular government indeed. Their policy is to encourage rural development and strengthen the village economies, because the vast mass of the people of India are rural dwellers. Mahatma Gandhi had always stressed that in the villages lay the skills and the talents of the people, without which India could not prosper.

Because of the policies that are being followed, the rural people are being given hope — and this has done something to stem the flow of the vast trek of hopeless humanity, who, in the past, have streamed to the city of Calcutta in search of the promise of streets paved with gold, only to find themselves locked into a heap of humanity sunk in poverty and homelessness. Yet it must be said that even these people had a dignity which commanded respect — whilst in Calcutta, some missionaries told me of a lady, that they know, who had objected to being evicted off a piece of pavement where she lived. She had been born there, and so, too, had her children and grandparents — why should she leave?

The respect that these people evoked prevented me from taking many photos

of their homes. Such photos might help others here to see what life is like for many in India, but even if they lived on the street corner under a couple of bits of plastic sheeting, that was their home, and I felt that I should respect the privacy of it in the same way that I would not take a photo of the inside of someone's house in this country without knowing them well or asking their permission.

## Social Work

All of this brings me to say something about the work of the Church in India in relation to poverty. In Calcutta we saw something of the internationally known work of Mother Teresa. Her orphanage was the only place where I found the ravages of poverty really difficult to cope with and felt tears in my eyes because of seeing the young children suffering from malnutrition, lying motionless, not responding.

Although her work is internationally known, Mother Teresa and her Sisters of Charity are not the only ones at work in Calcutta. The Cathedral Church of the Church of North India Diocese has an extensive social service work which originally sprang out of relief work with the refugees who poured into Calcutta during the Bangladesh War of Independence. The pattern of their social service work is to work intensively in a small area over a long period. This is very valuable but they are under no illusions. However much work is done





Baptist roots and links with William Carey. We also spent much time with BMS missionaries at the transit house in Calcutta. They came to our rescue when we found ourselves stuck in Calcutta for an extra four days because of the overbooking of the plane. At this house we met David and Joyce Sorrill who work in Bangladesh. David is an engineer and administrator and Joyce is a leprosy expert. But there isn't too much about specifically Baptist work, because although Baptist traditions and forms of Church life are still very much alive, many Baptist congregations are part of the United Church of North India.

five years; of the splendour of Islamic architecture in the Taj Mahal and many other beautiful and impressive buildings; of a hair-raising jeep ride up from the plains of India, through the Darjeeling tea gardens and up to Darjeeling itself at a height of 4,000 feet; of wandering through the vibrant bazaars at night; of tea and an audience with the Governor of West Bengal in the Raj Bhavan, the first seat of imperial government before the British moved their administrative capital from Calcutta to Delhi.

In a country where only two percent of the population are Christians, the Churches can't afford to maintain divisions in their life — especially those that are imported from the history of the Church in Western Europe. Thus many Baptist congregations are now presenting a joint witness within the Church of North India, in a country where Hinduism, Islam and Jainism predominate.

Perhaps one final thing that could be mentioned in a little more detail is the humbling visits to places of memorial for India's great leader Mahatma Gandhi. In Bombay we visited the house where he used to stay when visiting the city, and saw a mock-up of the simplicity with which he lived. In Delhi we saw the Raj Ghat — the site where he was cremated according to Hindu custom, and the Gandhi Museum. The spirit of Gandhi still lives on — a spirit that strives for justice, that longs for freedom, that faces violence with spiritual strength, that works for reconciliation between peoples and harmony in inter-religious relationships. In the presence of memorials to this great leader, one felt an immense sense of humility before the memory of one who drew his inspiration from both the Hindu book the *Bhagavad Gita*, and from the Christian Gospels.

by voluntary organizations, it only scratches at the surface. Governments sometimes salve their consciences by self-congratulation about the wonderful voluntary work which is going on, whilst they hold tightly to the purse strings of vast resources which alone can tackle the problems.

Time and space now fail for me to tell of Serampore College; of conversations with two Tibetan Buddhist monks and a Hindu Sadhu; of dedicated missionaries working faithfully in medical work in isolated rural areas for the last twenty-

There is also the problem of unjust distribution of wealth within Indian society. There are great riches in India — but only a few control them. But even if this problem were to be tackled effectively, the country is still caught up in a web of unjust international relationships in trade, which are rooted in colonial exploitation and continued in other guises today. In speaking of what we could do in the West, the priest at St George's said, 'we want justice, not charity'. This is, of course, what Christian Aid has been telling us for years, but when one hears it from the mouth of an Indian in India, it hits home with greater force and power and relevance. To my way of thinking, my experience of India vindicates for me the approach of Christian Aid which finds that compassion soon develops into the politics of compassion (as a recent TV documentary of that name pointed out).

### A United Church

In all this, I have not said much about specifically Baptist work. We did of course visit such places as Serampore Theological College, with their strong



BMS Transit House, Calcutta

IT WAS April. I was in my little cubby-hole of an office-cum-workshop at Shanta Bhawan Hospital, Kathmandu, when the telephone rang. Richard Clark, head of UMN's Education Board was asking me to go to Jumla to install overhead electric power cables for the school being built there.

Jumla is a magic name to UMNers. It conjures up visions of mountains, hardship, limited accommodation and food supplies. It is a beautiful place. A valley, 7,500 feet high, is surrounded by snow covered mountains. To get there means a two hour flight, if it takes place, otherwise a one hour flight followed by a four day walk. At Jumla the UMN are building a trade school in co-operation with His Majesty's Government. Building construction, carpentry, agriculture and health care will be taught there.



**Glyn and Frances Phillips returned home this year after four years of service in Nepal where Glyn has worked as a maintenance adviser. Here he describes a project in Jumla.**

## Supplying Power

To supply the necessary timber for its construction a saw mill has been built, and a water driven turbine, driving an electric generator, has been installed. This powers all the machinery at the mill, but it has been decided to fit a large generator and also supply power to the school and its associated housing. The problem is that the saw mill is at the bottom of a steep sided valley and approximately one kilometre from the edge of the school site.

# NEPAL

**The United Mission to Nepal, with which the BMS co-operates, is an international, inter-denominational Christian mission seeking to witness to the Gospel of God. In Nepal Christians are not allowed to preach in any traditional sense, but as Nancy Thomas says in her article they can 'gossip' the Gospel. They can also reveal Christian love in action and service.**

**For this purpose the UMN has organized itself in three main ways through the Education Board, the Health Services Board, and the Economic Development Board.**

**In the physical field, the Economic Development Board is concerned with helping Nepalis to establish a stronger economic base to fund its own public services without having to rely upon outside resources. It is involved in the development of agriculture, irrigation, afforestation, energy supply and industrial development appropriate to the needs of Nepal. In the following articles there are descriptions of the way this is working out.**

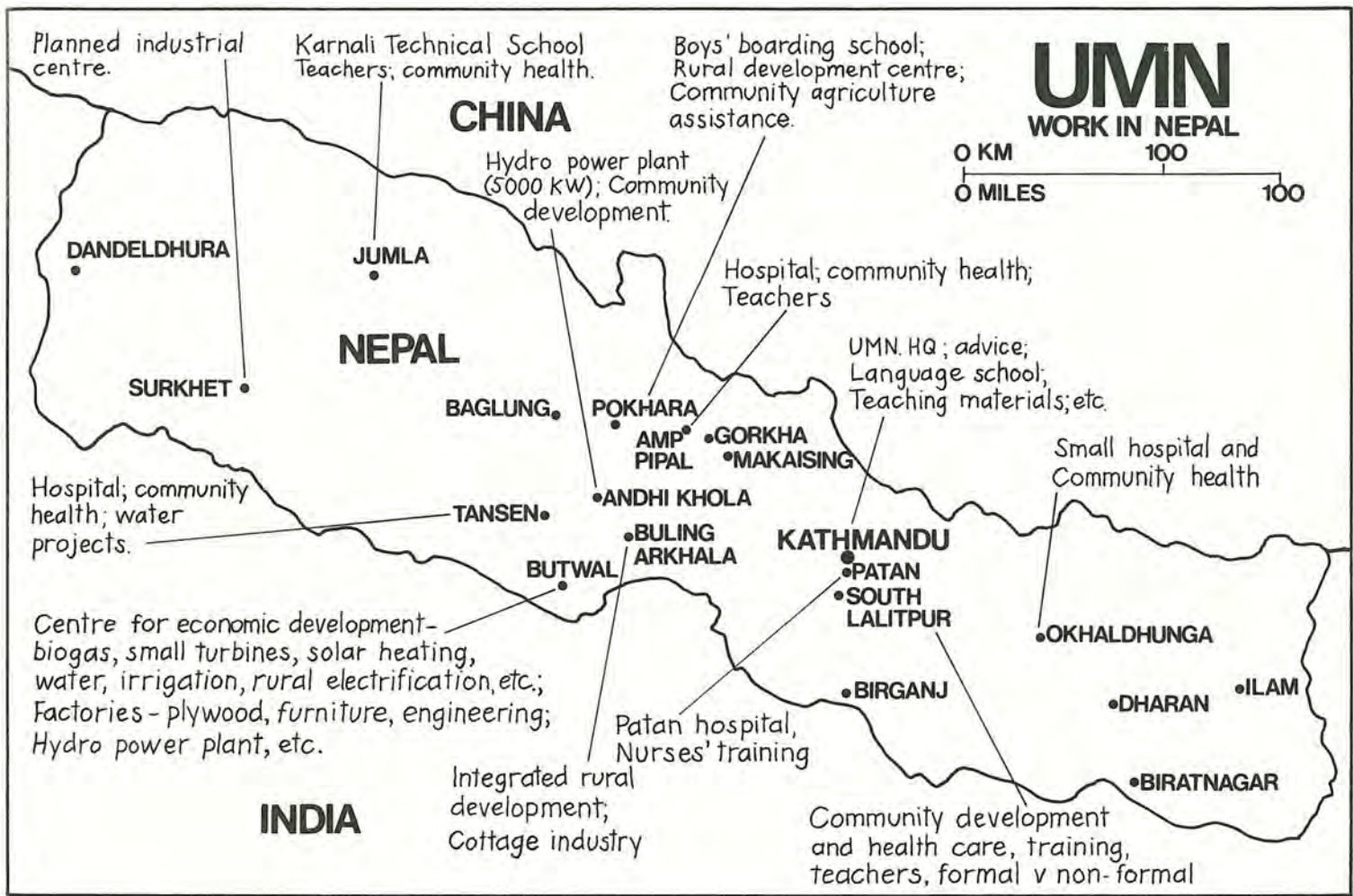
**However, in practice, the three boards work together recognizing that man is a whole entity with spiritual, health, educational, and physical needs each interacting with one another.**

The general work of designing the cable run had already been carried out by our technicians at Butwal, and the necessary heavy duty cables, poles, and insulators were already available at Jumla. The cables had all been cut into man-portable lengths and carried by porters hiking for six days over the mountains. The problems I faced were where to site the poles and how to run in the cables with the materials and labour available locally.

I am an ex-RAF Flight Engineer with a little knowledge of electrical installations, but, having borrowed the Australian Telecommunications Manual from a friend, I had at least some idea of the possible problems and their solutions.

### Everything is Black

It was cold, very cold, when I arrived at Jumla. But the two hour long hike up another 1500ft to the school soon



warmed me up. On the way I booked my return seat, two weeks hence, in the hope of a flight with a vacant seat available. In Jumla everything is black, houses, as well as people. It is too cold to wash and the pine wood smoke from the cooking fires blackens everyone's skin and clothes. But the scenery is beyond description, pine covered hill slopes, rushing streams against a background of snow covered mountains.

The first stage was to walk along the proposed route. This I did on the following morning. To understand the possible problems I walked it twice in both directions. The route was to follow the existing path between the saw mill and the school, snaking its way slowly up the steep side of the valley. I pointed out that it would be a difficult route and that there were the additional problems of the closeness of trees and the encroachment on to farm land. We agreed to look for an alternative route. After spending the rest of the day exploring the whole locality, I suggested that by using one short, but steep climb, angled across the hillside adjacent to the mill the lines could be

brought to the level of the school and could then follow another footpath. This had fewer turns, only three problem trees and no encroachment necessary. This was agreed and then approved by the local Government officers and the Nepal Electric Corporation Technical Manager.

Ragunath, the saw mill foreman, and a gang of six labourers, were assigned to me for the task of marking out the route. He was invaluable with his knowledge of the locality, and his ability to speak English as well as the local Nepali dialect.

### Holes for Poles

Within three days the holes for the poles were all dug. The 15ft poles carried to the holes and the task of erecting them began. We knew that the first eight poles would pose the only major problems as they had to climb across the face of the steep valley side. Once at the top we would then be on comparatively level ground. With much heaving and straining the poles were erected, checked to be vertical with a home made plumb line

and the rocks and earth stamped into position around the base.

Having reached the top of the valley side we then set a team of extra labourers to erect the poles along the level ground while Ragunath and I began the wiring. To join these man portable lengths, approximately 50 metres each, we had to manufacture a clamping device out of short pieces of galvanized iron pipe and steel U bolts. The cables were 30mm steel coated bare aluminium for the three phase lines and 13mm for the neutral.

We had no winching gear so it was all done by our team of local labourers pulling on cables as they ran through the insulator brackets at the top of the poles. When the correct tension had been attained they dug their heels into the hillside and Ragunath and I took turns to climb to the top of the poles to secure the cables to the insulators. Neither of us had ever done this type of work before, but after a few errors we soon began to perfect a technique. Things were going fairly smoothly and it was hot work even with the snow flurries and biting winds,



*Erecting Poles at Jumla*

but progress was halted for two days due to a snow storm which buried the hillside under a foot of snow which, as it melted, made it very slippery and treacherous underfoot.

### **Progress was made**

The days passed and soon it was the day of my return flight. Progress had been made. The four power cables were now installed up to the top of the hillside and ready to begin progress along the level part of the route. Ragnath, his labourers and I had worked up our own technique for installing and connecting the cables and in addition had built up a very good relationship. Holes for the poles had been dug right to the centre of the school site and poles installed to within its boundary. I felt confident that Ragnath would be able to complete the installation with a minimum of supervision. This I left in the hands of Allan Davies (BMS) and the other resident members of the UMN staff.

On my return to Kathmandu (yes, the plane did arrive), I had meetings with Richard Clark and others. The outcome of this was that Steve Normanton, a

its housing complex.

I enjoyed two weeks in Jumla. It gave me the opportunity to enjoy the fellowship of Allan and Iris Davies (BMS) Glenys Walker (BMS) and other UMN colleagues working in this remote area where the Good News is being spread through their lives and witness. I also carried out a job for which I had not been trained, a not unusual occurrence on the mission field.

If the Lord is calling you don't have doubts about your capability and training. He undoubtedly has a specific task which perhaps only you can fulfil. Trust Him and whatever you are and whatever you can do will not be wasted.

language student at that time, also an electrician by profession, would go to Jumla to complete the installation of the cables and the wiring of the school and



*Jumla's beautiful valley*



# COMPUTERS FOR NEPAL

**Trevor and Stella King have been in Nepal since 1980. Trevor is the Central Services Director in the UMN Headquarters and Stella does secretarial work in the Health Services Office. Previously, for 20 years, Trevor worked with computers. In a recent letter Trevor and Stella tell of plans for a computer project in Nepal.**

Trevor has been getting steadily out of touch with computers because of his managerial responsibilities. This position may change. It is possible that a Christian Nepali computer friend, shortly to return to the States, will bring with him permission to build a micro-computer in Nepal. As a software man, Trevor could make a good team with Muni, who is a hardware specialist.

It may seem strange to you to think of building computers in Nepal, and even stranger to link that with the proclamation of the Good News. Why should we think of it? Nepal is an isolated, land-locked country with enormous transportation problems. It has a great need for development resources, and has the minimum of industry. The only way it can compete with other, more well endowed, nations is to produce goods which are light in weight and therefore easily transported, desirably made with low-cost or easily extracted components. Ideally these items should need the maximum of fairly intelligent man-power. Nepal, perhaps surprisingly, but in common with many other countries in the South, has a surplus of unemployed graduates. Computers meet the criteria. They can be built almost anywhere, and the software for them requires intelligent systems analysts and programmers.

Once Nepal gets home-built computers, it could then afford to use them extensively. Combined with a tape recorder and desirably a TV monitor — we could make those too — they could change the face of development. By putting them in the villages, the flow of the able into the towns could be stemmed. Nepal could afford to develop lots of software on a trial basis, and many Western users would probably be prepared to help with basic needs.

Computer software, TV monitors, tape recordings, even disks could give us other opportunities for sharing

information and knowledge of all types. It is exciting, but it is only talk yet. What does God plan to do?

Machines are playing an increasingly important part in the life and economy of Nepal. There are plans for the introduction of television by 1984, an up-to-date telecommunications system is in the process of installation. UMN is anticipating a Telex machine in the next few months. And yet we are conscious that it is *people* who are important. Their needs should be met in the name of Jesus Christ who loved us and gave himself for us.





*Rev Nancy Thomas*

## Could God Use Me?

**As the face of mission changes, so does our idea of a typical missionary. What kind of picture do you have in your mind? At the BMS General Committee in November, Dr Ian Flowers, chairman of the Candidate Board, recommended seven people for acceptance by the Society as missionaries. BMS Personnel Secretary Nancy Thomas tells us something about them, and speaks of the qualities which are needed in missionaries today.**

SEVEN people were accepted by the General Committee in November as missionaries. What are they like? Would you expect them all to be ministers? If so you would have been surprised to hear of the occupations, professions and skills of these people, who were offering their services to the Lord through the BMS.

An accountant from Stockport was accepted with his nurse wife. We hope that he will be useful as a hospital treasurer in Bangladesh, or in the financial side of a project in the United Mission to Nepal. A doctor and his wife, also a nurse, from Leeds are heading for community health work in Nepal. A builder and his teacher wife hope to serve in Zaire, and the fiancée of one of our missionaries hopes to help on a community project with her future husband in Zaire. At the moment he is doing a technical course on water engineering. They hope to be married and leave for Africa in early 1983.

### An Act of Faith

As Dr Flowers gave his report to the General Committee he reminded the members that every Candidate Board is an act of faith. The dates when it meets are set a year or more ahead. The members of this selection committee are appointed.

Meanwhile the Personnel secretary reads through hundreds of letters in a year, each with its enquiry. 'Do you think I could be useful in the work of the BMS?' Some have a strong sense of God's calling to them. Others are 'pushing doors' to see if this is the way God wants them to go. Some are well qualified in their profession. Some have practical skills, like the builder or the mechanic. Some are too young and are seeking guidance for the way their education should go if God means them

to be His missionary servants overseas in future years. The letters are all answered, hopefully with the kind of information which is needed. Perhaps the people who really feel called will come to see me, ask questions, tell us more about themselves, and probe the situation as it could be for themselves.

Finally a list of people begins to emerge. They are those who truly feel that they must test God's call by coming to a BMS Candidate Board. So the faith in which the date was set, and Candidate members appointed, begins to be justified. This is done for only one reason — Jesus told His disciples to go and preach, and teach, and baptise, at home, further away, and then to the ends of the earth. In the faith that He honours obedience, the Candidate Board is set up to be the 'hands and feet' of the Lord's work, the channel for those who feel called of Him to move to countries overseas.

## Who are the new missionaries?

What kind of people would be most welcome at a Candidate Board? Ministers and their wives for Brazil could be either the church planters on fairly primitive frontiers, or pastors for town churches. They might have more than one congregation, and those church beginnings could be fairly far away from each other. Nurses we need most of all, for Zaire. They must be State Registered nurses and midwives, prepared to teach African nurses in French, and to serve community health projects over long distances, as well as working in hospitals.

Doctors are needed for Zaire, but they have to be very adaptable, for only very rarely will they meet equipment which is familiar at home. RI Teachers and teacher-ministers would be welcome, either for our secondary schools or pastors' training schools. Graduate teachers in maths, sciences, French and English can be absorbed by the secondary schools. Both hospitals and schools are glad of the builder-courier-mechanic who keeps vehicles running, embarks on long journeys to bring in stores of food, hospital drugs, personnel or building materials.

The needs in Bangladesh include ministers for training lay people or pastors; church workers who try to ensure that Asian women may read, be able to bring up healthy children and have at least an opportunity to hear of Christ.

Nepal on the other hand can use technicians, men well versed in electrical or mechanical skills, graduate teachers, surveyors and builders, Christians going quietly about their own tasks over difficult country. Their witness lies in the kind of lives they lead, for they are not allowed to 'preach' as such, and 'gossiping the Gospel' is their usual way of communicating the Good News in Nepal. It certainly seems to work.

Four times a year we look forward, in faith, to a Candidate Board. Do you think it's just possible that you are one of the people we might be meeting there, next time, or the time after, or . . . ?



*Pastor and Madame Otto who care for BMS candidates in Belgium*



*The Dining Hall, St Andrew's*



*Rev Jim Grenfell, tutor at St Andrew's*

# Q's Q's

by Deka

Each month Deka will be taking a close and often light-hearted look at missionary matters and posing many questions.

RECENTLY I was in a Christian Literature Bookshop, and found myself fascinated and amazed at the variety of translations and types of the Bible – large and small, expensive leather-bound and cheap paperbacked editions – that are available for us in English. I brought a 'handy sized' Good News edition with a zip round it, that will be easy to carry around on my travels. Lighter and more convenient, I thought, than the larger hard-backed edition I already had.

Then I read this paragraph in a recent letter from the Rev and Mrs Drake in Angola:

*'Many of the Angolan Christians have, as their treasured possession, a well used, often well written in Bible. Some do not possess a Bible. There are not sufficient Bibles to go round – and so they are having to be rationed to the Regions. But the Word of God is not bound – and will continue to be preached throughout this land. However, if the Literacy Drive is a success, there will be many more asking for the Word of God.'*

What do I do now?

Q Q Q Q

*'One problem that Muslim converts have is that the organized church is slow in trusting them – for many reasons. In the past Muslims have joined the church, received lots of help, and trotted off home to Islam. Because*

*of these sort of people, real converts suffer.'*

That is a comment from Bangladesh, where Christians are a tiny minority of the population in that Muslim country. 'Who is that sitting over there this morning?' What is the attitude behind our questioning? Are we warm and caring in the welcome we give to new folk in our congregations?

Q Q Q Q

All the time we are gaining impressions from what we see and hear around us. As in worship, these impressions affect us in ways that we may not be conscious

## Good News - - -

– the BMS in Bangladesh has received its Registration three and a quarter years after the application was submitted, after countless enquiries, interviews with officials at various levels, hopes being raised only to be dashed again, at last the frustrations and uncertainty are over.

Registration means that the BMS is now one of the Voluntary Organizations officially recognized by the government as working in Bangladesh, and therefore is allowed to bring in finance for its work. But most importantly it does give an assurance that we are able to have

of. A new missionary in Nepal gives us first impressions of Kathmandu:

*'how dirty and scruffy everything was, how many cows and dogs there were all over the place, and how much noise the many old cars (mostly taxis) and bicycles made with their horns and bells singing constantly! Also how many people there were trying to sell you things in the street and how much difference there was between the poverty of the poor and the relative affluence of the rich . . . but the people are very friendly and happy and although we are objects of curiosity we seem to be accepted well.'*

The other side of all this is the impression that we are making on others – how they see us. That is not a matter that we always like to contemplate.

personnel working in Bangladesh, the quota given is 30. At the moment there are 24 BMS missionaries in Bangladesh.

## New Films

Two new films are available on Brazil.

F 43 'The City that cannot stop' about Sao Paulo

F 44 'The land of tomorrow' about Rondonia.

Both these films are also available on Videotape. State whether you want VHS or BETAMAX, when ordering video copies.



# BMS

## A SUCCESSFUL PARTNER

Missionary visas may be very difficult to obtain, but there is still a vital job for the BMS to do in India according to Bishop Lingaraj Tandy. When he spoke to the BMS General Committee in November he paid tribute to the Society's partnership with the Church in Orissa.

'The BMS has not just been a funding agency like so many other societies, but is a successful partner in mission with the church in Sambalpur through the Church of North India.'

He said that there was a practical demonstration of this partnership in the one BMS missionary, Carole Whitmee, still working in his diocese.

'She works very hard, and is a great encouragement to us,' he said, 'but we need more help to build up and strengthen the leadership of our church.'

### Formerly Baptist

Bishop Tandy is in charge of the Sambalpur diocese of the Church of North India. This is an area where most of the churches were formerly Baptist. Whilst in this country he had the opportunity of visiting many of our churches, and at the BMS General Committee he expressed his gratitude for the experience.

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*THE CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA was created in 1970 when Anglicans, Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, the Church of the Brethren and the Disciples of Christ, came together to form one united Church.*



*Drought Stricken Orissa*

'I am proud to be a product of the BMS, and grateful for this visit. I am glad to have had an opportunity of visiting groups and churches in this country both to learn and to share,' he said.

### Growing in Unity

The Church of N India is now twelve years old, and its unity is growing stronger. 'Denominational barriers are breaking down, and the witness is encouraging,' Bishop Tandy told the Committee. 'Hundreds of new disciples are joining the church, and we have fixed evangelism as our priority. In our hospitals, hostels, schools, homes, agricultural work and leprosy programmes we are caring for Christians and non-Christians alike.

### Drought and Flood

Bishop Tandy told of the difficulties the church in his diocese had to meet because of natural disasters like drought and flood.

Orissa has undergone recently the worst flood in living memory. Many houses were destroyed and crops ruined. The Church of North India has started relief work, and the BMS has promised a contribution from the BMS relief fund.

The Society's relief fund is there to help in emergencies like this, but after each payment it is necessary to replenish it. Friends and churches are invited to make a donation to this fund ready for the next emergency call on its resources.



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Michael and Gill Wotton (5 Jan) are on furlough

Roy and Ann Davies (6 Jan) are on furlough

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**Rev N B McVicar** on 2 October from Dacca, Bangladesh

**Rev H F and Mrs Drake** on 8 October from Luanda, Angola

**Rev J B and Mrs Dyer** on 9 October from Vilhena, Brazil

**Mr and Mrs A Davies** on 10 October from Jumla, Nepal

**Miss G Walker** on 10 October from Jumla, Nepal

**Miss M Lacey** on 16 October from Chandraghona, Bangladesh

**Rev D and Mrs Punchard** and family on 23 October from Foz to Iguacu, Brazil

**Departures**

**Rev J Clark** on 7 October for Campo Grande, Brazil

**Miss J Wells** on 18 October for Ruhea, Bangladesh

**Miss M Stockwell** on 23 October for Mbanza Ngungu, Zaire

**Miss J Parker** on 24 October for Bolobo, Zaire

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously. (24 September-26 October 1982)

<b>General Work:</b> Anon (Evang. Trust): £150.00;	<b>Legacies</b>	£	p
Anon (Cardiff): £5.00; Anon: £1.00; Anon (Cymro): £25.00; Anon (Friend in Scotland): £20.00; Anon (To the Glory of God): £5.00; Anon: £4.00; Anon (Macedonian Trust): £5.00; Anon: £22.00; Anon (FAE - Aberdeen): £15.00; Anon: £2.00.	Mr F Ager		300.00
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Women's Project: Anon: £5.00; Anon (Poole): £1.00.	Mr H Rutter		28,408.71
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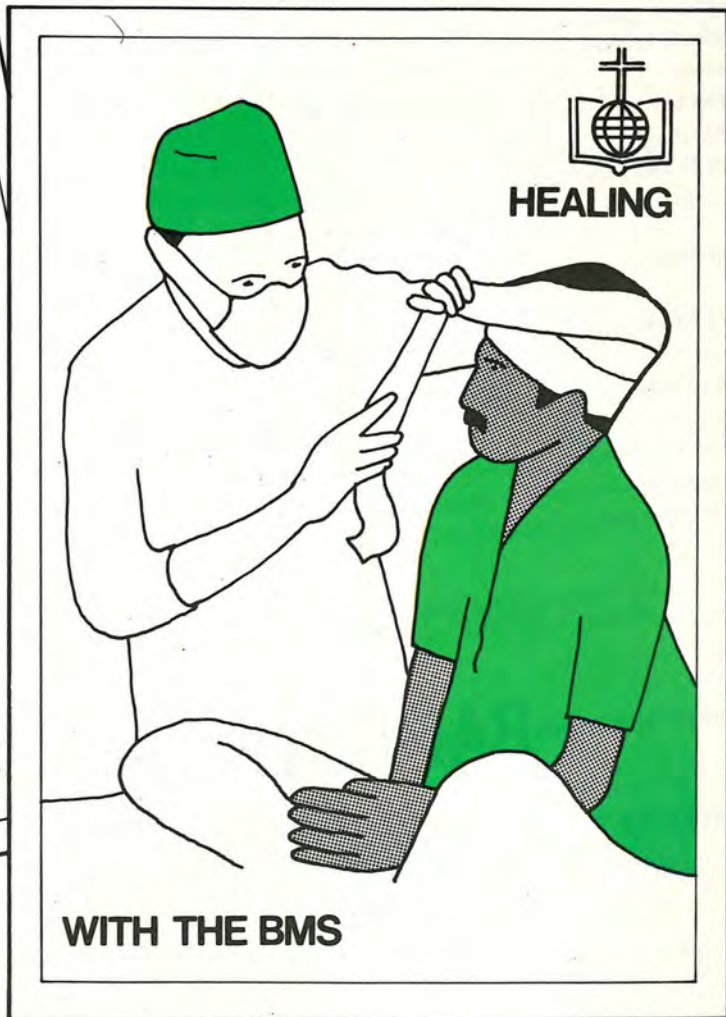
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