

MISSIONARY

HERALD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

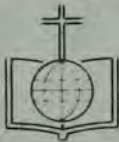
MARCH 1984 PRICE 20p

ANGOLA



The challenge
of our
partnership
with IEBA





MARCH 1984

IN THIS ISSUE

- 43 PAST AND PRESENT DANCE
TOGETHER IN THE ANGOLAN
CHURCH
by Angus MacNeill
- 44 THE STRANGER IS A GIFT
FROM GOD
Angolan pastor in Nova Scotia
by Jim Grenfell
- 47 WINGS OF THE MORNING
Continued story
by Owen Clark
- 50 A PRESIDENTIAL
'FAUX PAS'
by David Doonan
- 53 COMMENTS, QUESTIONS,
QUOTES
by Deka
- 54 MISSIONTALK
News and views from
home and abroad
- 56 TALKBACK
What our readers are thinking
- 58 CALL TO PRAYER
Guide for China, Nepal,
Parana, and Zaire
- 59 MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS
ETC

Cover pictures of the churches in Angola taken by Angus MacNeill on his recent visit.

We share in the work of the Church in:

Angola	Nepal
Bangladesh	Sri Lanka
Brazil	Tanzania
India	Trinidad
Jamaica	Zaire

COMMENT

RECENT correspondence to the *Herald* has criticized the BMS over its policy in Brazil. Well we don't mind criticism especially if it shakes us up and enables us to clarify our thinking. So perhaps it would be worthwhile to ask what we mean by 'BMS policy', and to discover just how free the Society is to pursue certain lines of action in the countries where we serve.

The missionary role has changed radically from even a few years ago. The day when missionaries could go into a country as controllers and directors has long since gone. Missions have changed into churches and national church bodies have been formed. It is no longer a question of what missionaries or the BMS can do, but of what the national churches can do with the Society's assistance:

Servants

It has never been our wish to create dependent and subservient Christian communities overseas. We rejoice then in their maturity and growth and our approach to them is one of equality and partnership. Some would even go further and say that those of us involved in overseas mission must see ourselves as 'servants'. 'Mission groups and mission workers must learn anew what it means to work within the structures of a truly independent church.'

'For missionaries, living the servant life among Christians overseas,' writes one commentator, 'will probably be even more difficult than we find it here at home. Cultural insensitivity and unconscious attitudes of superiority will always threaten this new style of relationships.' We have to recognize, and David Doonan brings this out in his article on Brazil this month, that national Christians will work out their faith according to their own patterns and ways of doing things.

Trust

This means that what we give in personnel and finance must be offered trusting that they will be used in the best way possible to advance Christ's Kingdom. We must resist the temptation to decide what is best for the church overseas.

Our missionaries go abroad at the invitation of the national churches to do specific jobs. In Brazil these have most often been pastoral and evangelistic responsibilities. But this does not mean that because they are not involved in other aspects of Christian work that these are neglected by the national church as a whole. Moreover, working as servants within the national churches makes it possible, and this is happening, to develop an understanding of the 'whole gospel for the whole man' in both its individual and social contexts. But this can only be at their pace, not ours, otherwise we shall be stepping outside the servant/partner role to become 'controllers' and 'directors'.

The Church today is a world Church. We are partners in mission with Christians of cultures other than our own. They are still asking for our help and willing to receive our people and our insights to strengthen the work of Christ where they are. Are we as willing to listen to them and to receive what they have to offer to us that the work of the Kingdom may be strengthened in our land?

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'There is still a real missionary task for our Society in Angola,' reports Angus MacNeill

Past and present dance together in the Angolan Church

ABOUT thirty of us were crowded into the pastor's house at Beu, as we sat listening to the old man speaking. 'To get there, we were right up to our necks in the water,' he said, 'but we kept going until we got to Kibokolo.' The story he was telling took some time but no one seemed in a particular hurry. Outside, people were gathering for a special stone-laying ceremony for the new Beu Church building. The Service was to take place later that morning under a very hot sun with little shade for the congregation. Inside the house, we were being transported back to 1934, when the old man and some elders had walked to Kibokolo to request a missionary to return with them to Beu. The old man was linking the present to the past in the time-honoured way of an African village elder and we all listened respectfully.

The past and the present were forever dancing before me as I travelled around northern Angola last November.

The old days

People talked to me about the 'old days' and showed me where Church activities had once flourished. I was taken around the former hospital at Mbanza-Kongo (San Salvador as it used to be). We stopped to look at the remains of the Calabata Bible School of the 1950's. We pushed the grass aside and tramped over the ruined foundations of all that had once made Kibokolo Mission Station such an attractive and busy place before the events of 1961 led to its destruction.

On the long drive up to Mbanza-Kongo from Luanda, I got accustomed to hearing the repetition of — 'and, do you see these trees over there? That used to be a village, as well, where one of our catechists lived'. In a few years' time, I suppose even the trees will not be noticed.

The present and the future

Yet, while people were ready to talk of the past, I could see that the eyes of many were fixed on the present and future. The Combattentes Church in Luanda is finding its converted shop premises too small for its large congregation and it is planning to erect a new Church Centre along with the IEBA (Evangelical Baptist Church of Angola)

Secretariat. The Petroangola Church, another Luanda congregation, hopes to move out of its converted factory shop and exploit a large site by building a Church Welcome Centre as well as a new Church building.

At Maquela, a strategic town in the North, the Church has taken on a new lease of life as it now forms its own Church Region. People there talked enthusiastically, if maybe a trifle over optimistically, of what they hope to achieve. Kibokolo has its newly opened Bible School for the training of future pastors. Damba and Nsoso are Church growth points and the challenge of evangelizing the Kwango area is firing IEBA's department of Evangelism.



Angolan shop church



Congregation in unfinished church

On reflection, I can see that a brief incident in the town of Kibokolo was a symbolic tying up of the past to the present and the present to the past. We stopped to visit old Tata Sadi and his wife. Tata Sadi was Church Secretary at Kibokolo for many years, before having to go into exile to Zaire in the 1960's. Now retired from active service within the Church, he lives in a very simple house overlooking the rolling hills around Kibokolo. We sat talking under the shade of a tree. The group was an interesting one made up of Rev. Alvaro Rodrigues, the General Secretary of IEBA, Rev Fred Drake, Tata Sadi, his wife, his daughter and myself.

Continuity in God's work

As we stood to pray before leaving, there in some way stood representatives of the past and present in both the Angolan Church and BMS — an old Angolan Church leader, a present one, a former Overseas Secretary of the BMS and the current holder of that Office. I felt humbled by a sense of continuity in the work of God, over which He watches and cares.

As Angola still struggles to find peace and stability in the face of an on-going civil war which is always threatening to escalate, it must be more than a little comfort to Angolan Christians to know that the God of their salvation, as revealed in Jesus Christ, is also the God of history. The past has proved to them that guns, destruction and exile cannot 'Gainst Christ's Church prevail'. The present turmoil of Angola, sad though it is, will be no more successful.

At each place which I visited, there was always an occasion when I met local Church leaders and it was made clear to me that the Evangelical Baptist Church of Angola still wishes BMS to maintain a strong link with Angola. For some, this may be a sentimental approach, for many more it would seem to be a realistic way of doing God's work and fostering fellowship between Christians in different lands.

Send others

At the moment, the Rev Fred and Mrs Marjorie Drake are our direct link as they complete their post-retirement spell of service. 'Why not send some others?' I was asked. 'What about our various projects that need to be underwritten and supported?' was another question, as people talked about the Carpentry School at Petroangola or the many Church building projects. I was left in no doubt about our responsibility as a Missionary Society not to withdraw from our Angolan involvement.

I doubt if there will ever be any BMS missionaries living at Beu or at many of the other IEBA centres in Angola. A tie with the past is not the same as re-creating the past. The road to tomorrow is the one which beckons. It remains to be seen how we are going to get through to our destination — easily? or 'right up to our necks in the water?', as the old man said.

I returned from Angola convinced that there is a real missionary task in that country for our own Society, as we take on the challenge in partnership with the Angolan Evangelical Baptist Church.

By Jim Grenfell

The story of an exiled Angolan pastor ministering to fisherfolk in Nova Scotia.

THE STRANGER IS A GIFT FROM GOD

LOCKPORT on the Atlantic coast of Nova Scotia is an old fishing town. For many generations the men have gone to the Grand Banks to fish for cod, while their wives worked in the fish processing factory. It was a thriving town, but, like many similar places here in the British Isles, it has declined in recent years as the fishing industry has fallen on hard times. Fewer and fewer boats are now based at Lockport and there is a good deal of unemployment. There is a fine beach, which in the summer attracts holiday makers, but it must be a very bleak place in winter. It is probably the last place any one would expect to meet an Angolan pastor as the minister of two Baptist Churches!

During our holiday in Canada last summer we spent a few days staying with João and Nora Matwawana and their family. They are friends we have known and worked with for many years both in Angola and Zaire. João is now the pastor of the two churches of Lockport and Ragged Island and theirs is the only African family in the town and probably in the whole district. While we were with them, seeing something of the work in which they are involved, I remembered a hymn which has the theme 'The Stranger is a Gift from God'. It was a joy to hear how the people thanked God for Brother John and Sister Nora, as they called them — strangers two years ago.

When João started his ministry in Lockport he could not understand why so few men came to church. The deacons told him that deep sea fishermen didn't mind the women attending but they don't go themselves, except perhaps once a year for a memorial service for those lost at sea.

João suggested a men's meeting might be a starting point. The deacons agreed to back him if he tried to start one, but they had little hope of much response.

Breakfast meeting

A short time later João had an inspiration! He remembered talking to two retired fishermen who told him they had been ships' cooks. Would they be willing to cook a meal in the church hall for a 'Men's Breakfast Meeting'? With their reputation as cooks at stake they needed little persuasion. The first 'Men's Breakfast' was a great success. The food was good; João's talk was stimulating, as he told them about his previous work in Africa; the men enjoyed themselves and asked for more. Now there is a regular monthly 'Breakfast' when over sixty men meet to have a meal and listen to João

or one of the other speakers he persuades to join him.

In both Lockport and Ragged Island everyone seems to know Brother John and he seems to know everybody. In a small fishing town almost everyone is related, in some way, a situation not too different from the towns in Angola and Zaire which João knew when he was a theological student and a young pastor.

A caring pastor

Being a pastor in the new situation was not too different from being a pastor in the old. Visitation of one or two people quickly led to contacts with aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers, sisters, grandparents, to say nothing of in-laws and the in-laws of in-laws. An African pastor, who loves his people like João does, soon knew them all, visited them all and won



Matwawana receiving his Master's Degree

their confidence and their love. And the result? Some who had not been near the church for years came back into the fellowship! In the jargon of some who teach mission strategy and tactics this is called 'networking'. But in João's case it was neither strategy nor tactic, it was the natural activity of a good pastor who cares about his people.

During the Sunday Service at Lockport, while we were there, a very happy woman was received back into fellowship after over ten years. João had visited her and met the man she was living with. He got them to send their children to Sunday School and persuaded them to come to church themselves as an example to the children. Soon they asked him to marry them and João used his own English translation of the KiKongo 'Lusamisu Service'. (Lit. The Service for the putting right in the sight of God a common law partnership.) She now sings in the choir on Sundays, while her husband sits in the congregation with their children. He is in the enquirers' class and is to be baptized shortly, having found faith in Christ. The congregations are growing, the strangers have proved to be gifts from God.

Of course there have been difficulties. It's not easy to bring up a family and find good schooling for their six children in a strange land. But then life has never been easy for the Matwawana family. They were forced to become refugees twice, first in 1961 and again in 1976. During their first period of exile from 1961-1975, João studied to become a pastor and then served as hospital chaplain at IME hospital Kimpese, Zaire, for a number of years. He had a fine ministry and became well known and respected by people from many parts of Angola and Zaire as well as missionaries from many lands.

Sacrifices

When Angola became independent João said '... Now is the time to make sacrifices ...' and so he gave up his secure job in Kimpese to go back home to help rebuild the church of North Angola. But because of the civil war, after a few months João and Nora were forced to become refugees again and for a few months João worked with a small team of missionaries who set up the church sponsored refugee aid project in

**LOCKPORT
UNITED BAPTIST
CHURCH**

SUNDAY SCHOOL 10.AM

WORSHIP SERVICE 7.PM

MUSIC FESTIVAL 8.15

MAY 9TH 1982

REV. J.S. MATWAWANA

Notice board at Matwawana's church in Nova Scotia

Bas Zaire.

While João had been chaplain at IME he had helped sick and poor people regardless of their political views or tribal background and back in Angola during the civil war period he and other church leaders had emphasized the need to pray and work for reconciliation. A courageous attitude when many people wanted a religion which would benefit their own political group interests regardless of others. During this period his life was threatened on a number of occasions.

During 1978 he went to Canada for he had been given the opportunity to study at Acadia University, Nova Scotia on a scholarship provided by the Canadian Baptist Overseas Mission Board (CBOMB). The following year Nora and the family, except for the two older boys who stayed in Zaire, joined him in Acadia. In

the University he worked hard and at the end of his course he was awarded his Master's Degree in Theological and Pastoral Studies.

The time had come for their return to Africa, the way back to Angola was apparently blocked by his refugee status at that time. CBOMB invited him to become a member of a team, to be involved in the imaginative and exciting partnership project with the churches in the Kivu Province of Zaire. João and Nora accepted the invitation and so in the Autumn of 1981 the family flew to Kenya where they were to learn Swahili before going on to Kivu.

Sent back

They landed at Nairobi but the Kenyan authorities refused to allow them to leave the airport. They seem to have suspected João of being either a criminal or a political agitator, and acted accordingly. They insisted on sending them back to Canada immediately. They were travelling non-stop for three days and for part of that time João was separated from the others and they were not told what had happened to him.

Stranded in Canada without adequate documentation to travel and no possibility of a speedy change in their status, they spent two or three trying months living out of suitcases in the homes of Canadian friends. Then one of the tutors at Acadia remembered that the Lockport church was without a minister and perhaps they would be willing for the Matwawanas to live in the manse and for João to conduct some of the services. So after negotiations, it was arranged, with João being asked to be their minister. There were difficulties as one or two church members were opposed to the idea of having an unknown African as their pastor. Not surprisingly in the end some of those who were in opposition are João's keenest supporters.

That is how the Angolan stranger became Brother John of the Lockport and Ragged Island Baptist Churches. João's heart is still in Africa and one day he hopes to return. Meanwhile his ministry to those Nova Scotia fishermen and their families is proving that a stranger can be a gift from God.

Continuing Owen Clark's account of the building of an airstrip in Zaire

WINGS OF THE MORNING

WE WOKE early to the sound of light rain, and Don and I were soon away to collect the Yamaha. Once mounted we went to the nearest beach, but, apart from a few boys, there was little sign of life. Further down the shore, however, we were surprised by the sight of Mbonkumu and the *Commissaire* negotiating the services of a boatman, who has a large, covered, flat-bottomed canoe with a powerful out-board motor. In no time the motorbike was being lifted into the boat, and Don and I were soon heading across the now calm surface of the lake. Some fifty minutes later eager hands lifted the bike on to the opposite shore, where the boatman agreed to await Don's return. We mounted and left the beach, and as we came on to the sandy road which headed westwards, were reassured by a roughly painted signpost, which read, simply, 'BOLOBO 356 kms'. Fortunately we were not going that far.

Not having ridden pillion for many years, the ride to Ngongo-Basengele was not without its moments of exhilaration on straight, smooth stretches of road through

the forest. In areas of open grassland, however, our progress was slowed by large puddles of unknown depth in the road, from which we emerged spattered with mud, in spite of circumnavigating them with care. A number of small streams had to be crossed, the bridges consisting of large, flattened tree trunks, but as long as Don was prepared to ride across I stayed on the pillion, clutching my Lingala Bible. In the event, no mishap marred our journey. In each village our passage created a minor sensation, with goats and hens scattering before us, and sometimes a yapping dog taking up the challenge, but those villagers that caught sight of us waved a friendly greeting.

It seemed surprisingly far by road, and almost an hour had gone by before we came into a very extensive village and realised that we had reached Ngongo-Basengele. Some distance ahead we espied the large church and people already gathering. As we approached they smiled delightedly and pointed to a nearby house, where the pastor and deacons were preparing for the morning service. Pastor

Lombe, whom we had known as an able pastor in Kinshasa, greeted us warmly and said how disappointed everyone had been that we had not landed the previous day. When we explained the present plan, however, they directed us to a road leading out of the village, through some forest, to the airstrip. We would come upon it some two kilometres away, they called, as we rode away.

The surface was firm

On the ground the airstrip appeared much larger. Don's first concern being to measure its length, he made for the nearest extremity. With a glance at his speedometer he set off straight down the middle at a good speed, and only slowed at the far end. It was the smoothest ride that we had enjoyed that morning, and Don was satisfied that we had clocked a thousand metres. Next we returned at a more leisurely pace, surveying the surface to right and left, looking for pronounced mounds or dips. At one point a slight mound betrayed where a termite hill had been



Mbonkumu and the Commissaire negotiating the services of a boatman



'... eager hands lifted the bike'

imperfectly cleared, but the surface was firm the whole length, and all tree stumps had been removed from the grass at the edges. Don would still want the tall grass cut back another metre on either side and a circular turning area cut out at each end, but these improvements could be made later. For the time being, he declared, he was ready to make this handmade runway operational.

By the time that we had regained the village Pastor Lombe and his congregation were already in the church. I made for the nearest door and waved Don on his way back towards the lake, hoping to see him again in a few hours' time. A place had been reserved for me on the platform and, in answer to the pastor's query, I whispered that I had come prepared to preach the sermon. Characteristically the service was enlivened by some good singing, both by

different choirs and by the large congregation of all ages. My message from the Word of God was simple and couched in somewhat rudimentary Lingala, but the congregation listened attentively, I thought. Or did they have one ear cocked in the direction of the lake, from whence, at some point, a small aircraft would appear?

For my own part I had mentally estimated how long it would take Don to reach the lake and cross it, to return the motorbike, to round up his passengers from where they had been worshipping and get them, with their baggage, to the airfield. Once airborne it would take less than half-an-hour to fly from Inongo to Ngongo-Basengele. I felt that we had a good chance of finishing worship before their arrival brought an untimely interruption. That was before I realised that there was to be a Communion service.

As custom would have it the congregation went out at the end of the main service, and only the members in good standing returned for Communion. To begin with, some former members, who had been under church discipline, were readmitted into full membership, with evident rejoicing on both sides. Then the service followed the customary pattern. There being about two hundred communicants present, it took time to distribute the bread and eat it together. Likewise, the cup. Being, myself, in the circumstances, acutely conscious of the passage of time, I had occasion to admire my Zairian friends' capacity to be totally absorbed in the matter in hand. No hint of pressure, nor trace of hurry marred the solemn act of remembrance. At that moment it was the only thing that mattered, as we drank together in obedience to our Lord's desire. With some gratitude I realised that the cups were being collected up.

Closed doors

While the deacons were completing their task a cry from somewhere outside alerted the worshippers to a distant drone that was becoming more and more audible. As a surge of excited comment ran through the church, the younger ones got to their feet and began to move. A nod from the pastor, and the stewards quickly closed the doors and window, preventing the premature departure of all but the more agile. As soon as sufficient order had been restored Pastor Lombe pronounced the benediction and dismissed his flock. They needed no second bidding, and the building emptied in record time. All formality having disappeared, I followed the pastor outside, where everyone was scurrying in the same direction.

It took Pastor Lombe no time to commandeer two bicycles, for his own use and mine, and we were soon threading our way up the sandy road amongst the chattering villagers. We were with the latecomers, however, and unlikely to witness the historic touchdown. This quickly proved to be the case, for, rounding a curve, a slackening of pace and an excited hubbub warned us that a more substantial crowd was coming in the opposite direction. Our party could be discerned at its head, preceded by a warrior in traditional dress. He carried a number of small spears, and made threatening gestures to all who stood in the path of his approaching chief. Resplendent, but stern behind his orange mask, the chief processed with fitting dignity, while his people noisily greeted his return. Beside him, as the honoured guest, unmistakably American in his peaked cap and with his camera at the ready, Don appeared pleased. Behind came Deanna and Mbonkumu, radiating his huge delight, and enthusiastically greeting one and another. His wife was surrounded by relatives, one of whom was proudly carrying the child.



Leaving the beach

Only reluctantly had Don agreed to walk into the village, Deanna told me, fearing too much loss of time. His main mission accomplished, he was concerned to complete the journey. He had arranged to call at Bolobo to pick up Andrew North, and to return to Kinshasa from there. The round trip would take nearly three hours, which left little margin for reaching Kinshasa by sundown at six o'clock. He had finally accepted to visit the village for one hour, but made it clear that he would take off again soon after two o'clock, with or without his passengers.

Speeches and displays

As the procession entered the village in triumph it paused a moment while Pastor Lombe gave a short, formal greeting to the visitors. We were then led to a temporary grandstand, made of palm branches, and invited to occupy the armchairs which had been borrowed for the occasion. The chief's five wives filed past to greet him, and politely shook our hands. A duplicated programme distributed by the pastor included speeches, choral items and displays by school children. It had been prepared for the previous day, when we had been expected to arrive before midday, the pastor explained. It would have continued all afternoon and terminated with a feast, for goats and chickens had been donated for the purpose. He now understood that we would not be able to stay the night, and he would curtail the programme accordingly.

After calling for order Pastor Lombe launched into his official speech of welcome, thanking Mbonkumu, the pilot and the passengers for making this inaugural flight. In his reply Mbonkumu explained the reasons for our delay and congratulated the people on the work they had put into preparing the airstrip. For his



The warrior and our party

part, the chief thanked the Christian community for their contribution to the general welfare of the people, providing a new means of dealing with medical and other emergencies. In turn I gave a word of encouragement to the local church on behalf of the General Secretary and the wider family of the CBFZ.

Every speech evoked enthusiastic response from the crowd, who would happily have prolonged the event. At last Pastor Lombe announced that the visitors were obliged to return to Kinshasa, but invited them first to accept a little refreshment. Soft drinks were ready in the small house behind, and chicken, rice and plantains were served. During a hurried meal the District treasurer showed me how

he kept his accounts. Deanna passed on some booklets to the pastor and enquired about his Christian Education activities. There being no time to visit, the pastor described the church schools and their work. He also spoke about the dispensary which they had built, and emphasized their need of a trained nurse to run it, the nearest hospital being at Inongo.

More work to do

By now Don had borrowed a bicycle to return to the airstrip, and asked us to rejoin him there within fifteen minutes. A messenger was sent in search of Mbonkumu and his wife, who had gone to visit relatives, while, accompanied by the pastor and a joyful throng, we retraced our steps up the sandy road. At the airstrip Don took time to show the pastor what work still needed to be done, and emphasized the need to maintain it in good condition. A radio transceiver would also be needed to arrange flights and report on weather conditions. Fortunately Mbonkumu and his family arrived in time to be strapped into their seats as farewells were exchanged all round. The little Cessna nosed its way to the end of the runway, turned and roared into life. Our final glance out of the windows revealed the wildly waving villagers, obviously shrieking their 'au revoirs', as we sped by them and up and away.

As we settled on a steady course westwards, Mbonkumu was recounting events, and wishing that we had spent more time at Ngongo-Basengele. He also confided to me his regrets at leaving two goats behind, as though the pilot had been unreasonable.



Pastor Lombe giving formal greeting



Don showing the pastor what work needs to be done

'They were given for us to eat,' he said, and I knew how much they would be appreciated in Kinshasa, where food was expensive to buy.

'Anyway, I asked them to send them by truck,' he added, content that he still had a card up his sleeve.

With a limitless, blue sky above and dark green forest stretching endlessly in every direction below, we droned on. An hour went by, and only the distant sight of the sun shining on the broad Zaire river betrayed that we had made any progress. Little excitement in that kind of flying, I thought. A MAF pilot's job was not all glamour. His aircraft had its limitations, and the clock, his charts and the weather imposed their constraints upon him, with safety margins to be allowed. These factors being only partially appreciated by the passengers that he served, it was often a hassle to obtain their co-operation. At least we were turning away from the river and circling over the Bolobo airstrip. At one end a group of missionaries could be seen standing near a landrover, while halfway along a small herd of black and white goats grazed contentedly, only scattering when the noisy intruder descended towards them.

Airborne again

With time for only a brief exchange of greetings and news, we left mail for our Bolobo friends, and Andrew took his place on board. Airborne again, we began to follow the Zaire river homewards to Kinshasa, knowing that we could barely make it before nightfall. An occasional cargo boat disturbed the smooth surface of

the river, and in places the canoes of riverside villages hugged the bank. Across an invisible frontier the Republic of Congo, on the far side, gave little sign of human occupation. A bird's eye view of Tshumbiri, one of our district centres, aroused our interest, as did the small town of Kwamouth, where the river Kwa swept water of a different shade into the main stream. Forest gave way to grassland, the nearer we got to Kinshasa. By the time we were crossing the sandbanks of Malebo (Stanley) Pool the sun was low enough to tinge Kinshasa's buildings with an orange glow. Coming in low over the small boatyards and across the railway line, we touched down almost immediately on the tarmac of Ndolo airport, knowing that within half-an-hour the unlit runway would be in total darkness.

Don taxied first to the airport building to release his passengers and their baggage, and we thanked him warmly for a safe trip. It hardly seemed possible that we had been away less than two days. In that short time not all of the aspirations of the various participants had been satisfied, but the essential had been accomplished. An airstrip had been opened at Ngongo-Basengele. A new transport facility had been brought to a relatively inaccessible area. The hopes of the villagers who had provided the necessary labour had been vindicated. Mbonkumu had demonstrated to his people that, although he had long since moved to the relative comfort of Kinshasa, he had not forgotten his obligations towards them. Not least, Christians who had begun to feel a little cut off from the wider church had been encouraged by the reminder that they belonged to a worldwide Christian family, which prayed and cared for them.

by D

A



Bandeirante

David Doonan

Presidential 'faux pas'

QUESTION — What has Lagos, the Nigerian capital, to do with the election of the next President of the United States of Brazil? Answer — On the afternoon of Wednesday, 16th November 1983, the actual President, João Figueiredo, on a State visit to Nigeria, pronounced himself in favour of a free and popular election for his successor in 1985.

The news of this statement, even though given in ambiguous terms, fell like a bombshell into the fermenting political arena here in Brazil. The present majority party, of which the President is a member, has a political mandate to nominate the next President, and for several months a few names have been jockeying for position in the Presidential race. However, all opposition parties and, it would appear, the vast majority of the people of Brazil, are pressing for an open election. So much so, that some of the members of the government have begun to admit the possibility of such a vote. And now the President himself has come out in agreement.

For the moment, this news has even taken the lead over the constant preoccupation with the economic crisis. The media are almost obsessed with the question of succession. No doubt there are party interests behind all this and the government finds itself under more and more pressure to open up a complete democratic process. It would seem improbable that there will be a sudden reversal to military domination, for the President, himself a military man, has, up

until now, shown himself faithful to his promise to press forward with complete democratisation. It is difficult to imagine the clock being put back almost twenty years to the last revolution!

The poor continue with us

But certainly Brazil's difficulties are great and, in the present political and social climate, it is impossible for the government to gloss over them. Journalists, humorists, political commentators are using their newly granted liberty to attack government

dependence on the meagre generosity of others. To be unemployed in Brazil is to receive nothing, for there is no state aid to those who do not or cannot work. The first move of every firm in crisis is to cut back on staff and in Brazil when you are told to go you have to go, although all registered firms are legally obliged to pay compensation based upon the time of service given.

Yes, there remain many injustices; some are being removed and others are under attack. But Brazil is a large country to keep your eye on and the underlying cultural basis is quite a long way from policies and even leading politicians. One national weekly recently majored on the demand to 'have Delfin's head', openly calling for the dismissal of our equivalent of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who spends a great deal of his time travelling the world to raise loans to pay back the interest on other loans! In reality, no one can offer a solution to the spiralling economic crisis. The humorist's solution is to sell all of Brazil's tourist spots to the USA!

Yet the shops are full and the TV adverts encourage all to come and spend. Everywhere is an abundance of food and manufactured goods, everywhere that is other than in the disaster areas of the North East. But this year there will be fewer people able to purchase the abundance they see. Economic crisis always hits the poor hardest and Brazil has more than its fair share of those who suffer hunger and live in daily

the 'old fashioned' protestant work ethic. There is still overt admiration for the 'go-getter', the modern counterpart of the 'bandeirante', and the law is quite popularly considered as one of those inconveniences to be acknowledged only as necessary! A Brazilian does not think like a Britisher (how hard for a foreign missionary to learn!).

'if God wills'

And so, Brazil is spawning violence in frightening proportions and the news of its activities is brought to every home via TV. The student world is talking and agitating and in some areas activists are at work. Police reactions are more primitive, more violent — another subject for TV coverage and press criticism.

What is the solution? Change the government? Well, that is now a possibility although the majority of Brazilians seem to have little hope that any of today's politicians will work the miracle. Perhaps the saddest thing is that nobody really expects that others will act with any other motive than self interest. What keeps us going is the eternal optimism of the Brazilian people, who know that they have a great country and believe that, 'if God wills' the most repeated phrase in Brazilian vocabulary after 'thanks be to God', things will one day get better.

The Roman Catholic Church

Bringing the name of God into the situation obviously raises the question of what part the churches play in all this. I believe that the only church which consistently shows political interest is the Roman Catholic Church, although the political and social aspirations within her are by no means consistent! Traditionally linked with authority as the state church, the Church of Rome is present on all official occasions and predominantly present in the mind of the Brazilian people. As one Brazilian said to me — 'For me to leave the Catholic Church would be to cease to be Brazilian'. Yet the very tradition of the Roman Catholic Church has led to a spirit of submission, obedience and even fatalism which has kept the mass of the population from aspiring to better things.

However, as Peter Hebblethwaite demonstrates in *The Runaway Church*, the post Vatican II Roman community is rapidly becoming quite a new and diverse one, and all the developments he traces in his book are to be seen here in Brazil. There are priests working within the local communities seeking for social reform, and often from differing political bases. There are the areas of charismatic renewal, seeking spiritual change and reality. There are the traditional orders serving in hospitals and schools, penetrating to all levels of society. If there is a church which has the power in a political sense to change social structures in Brazil, it is the Roman Catholic Church. However, there is no sign at the moment that she is preparing to jettison her traditional conservative role to launch an attack on Brazil's ills.

One of the main reasons for the lack of moral and spiritual force within the Roman church is that a high proportion of her members are more realistically attached to Spiritism than to Christ. What really shapes their lives and guides their destiny is not the knowledge of the Lord of the Church but witches and mediums, specialists in the occult, prognosticators of the future, trances and sessions in the night, spells and revelations from the dead. This is the folk religion of Brazil somehow intertwined with the traditional language of Christianity and making this a people with a religion of escapism with almost no moral or social demands. It is a religion of emotion, sentimentalism, tears and vows, but practically divorced from the hard world of politics and business where the devil takes the hindermost.

The Evangelical Churches

The evangelical churches are for the most part apolitical. There are moves within the Methodist Church, some areas of Presbyterianism, and other lone voices who seek to stir the sleeping political and social conscience of the evangelicals, but tradition and caution are strong guardians to shake! We make the following observations:

1) The majority of evangelical Christians in Brazil are of humble origin. Paul's words to the Corinthian church about 'few nobles' are an apt description of our churches here. This means that knowledge of church history, of

A wind of concern is probing the mind of Brazilian Baptists

theological discussions, of philosophical thought, is not widely distributed! Also, in a more practical sense, it means that there is very little economic or political clout. The evangelicals are courted by the politicians on the run up to the elections (our state governor even went forward at the appeal in the Assemblies of God Church!) and then conveniently forgotten!

- 2) Unfortunately, the more 'noble' members of the evangelical churches are nearly all — as far as an outsider can see — involved in masonry. Without entering into all the pros and cons of this society, it would appear to be one of the most important influences in maintaining the status quo, in helping the haves over the have nots.
- 3) But things are changing! One of the subjects to be discussed at the National Convention of the Brazilian Baptist Churches in 1984 will be the creation of a department of 'Social Action'. No, it's nothing to excite the 'liberation theology' department, but it is the first breath of the wind of concern probing the minds of the Brazilian Baptists. Just as the

evangelical awareness of social issues is not such an aged adult in Europe so time must be given to allow the ideas of a new generation to come to birth. We do wrong to try to impose from the outside what must be the result of thought and debate from the inside. We, who have the privilege of living within the ferment of ideas which is modern Brazil, see our small part as opening up windows of light coming from other directions, not as forcers of doors, demanding the right of entrance for all ideas which appear good to us.

- 4) The spiritual store of the good news in Christ is still the most important treasure which His church is called to share with others. The appeal to seek in Christ a new heart and a new spirit remains the unique way to a new life, a new home and a new community. Time after time man's dramatic political visions end in shipwreck on the rocks of human pride and selfishness. As long ago as Isaiah, the need for a new 'president' led the prophet to declare that only in the One sent from God was there any possibility that 'He will bring true justice and peace to all the nations of the world' (Is. 9:6, 7).



Open air preaching

COMMENTS QUESTIONS QUOTES

By DEKA

'ANYONE moving into another culture and climate is under stress, as we ourselves have experienced' — the words of a missionary couple in their first term of service. Perhaps we are aware of this, to a certain extent, in regard to our missionaries, it is so true, and they do need our loving, prayerful support as they seek to settle and adjust to different foods, standards of living, customs, behaviour patterns, social life and much else.

But those words that I quoted actually referred to a national pastor who had been abroad for further studies. Do we realize that the stresses are just as great for members of other ethnic groups, and countries, living here in our homeland? There are many adjustments for them to make also — for some it may mean the lack of support of the extended family; it may even mean leaving wife and children behind; it may mean a higher standard of living, more goods in the shops, and all the temptations of Western Society. It can often mean loneliness, disillusionment and so on. And the result of all this may have tragic consequences.

Our missionaries are very appreciative of all the help they receive from nationals — patience with their attempts to adapt, great understanding with fumbling efforts to speak another language, and forgiveness for unwilling mistakes and hurts caused.

Do we show similar understanding to our non-British visitors and residents? How can we help?

Q Q Q Q Q

How many books have you got in your house? I am sure that a great many of us have no idea how many we possess.

A Zairian pastor came to the West for further study, and on his return one of the things he commented on with appreciation was the library facilities in the college, and the comment from missionary colleagues:

'It made us realize how few books Zairian pastors like him possess and how much we take our shelves full of books for granted.'

Q Q Q Q Q

'Life is now a fight for survival' — a quote in a letter from Zaire, but as the writer of it recognized, it has meaning in other places as well. With inflation rising alarmingly in many countries — just imagine the effect of a 500% devaluation, and the result this has on all prices, and the growing inadequacy of wages — and the knock-on effect this has on many aspects of life, food, transport, medical expenses, and school fees. The list is endless.

Do any of us know what it is really like to have to struggle for life on the

physical level because of inflation, when money is just not sufficient to meet basic requirements? I don't mean anything but the basics, not the occasional meal out, or the special treat, but just not being able to afford to buy the food your child needs, or daring to go to the clinic or hospital because there is not even money for a token charge for treatment. But this is the daily headache, and heartache, for many in Brazil, Zaire, Bangladesh and other countries.

What would we do in that situation? Can we just sit back? Look at what the International Protestant Church in Kinshasa is doing:

We have decided to increase the proportion of our budget set aside for outreach and aid. Working with the French congregation who share our premises, we have set up a programme to give assistance to the poor and desperate people who come to us for help. It is little enough that we can do in the face of the great need, but 'it is better to light a candle than curse the dark'.

What is the little that we ought to be doing?

BMS STAMP BUREAU DO YOU COLLECT STAMPS FOR THE BMS

As an individual or as a church, do you collect the stamps off your mail for the BMS? If not, why not start now? Carefully cut round the stamps without damaging the perforations. At church, a suitable box labelled up and put in the porch will bring in supplies.

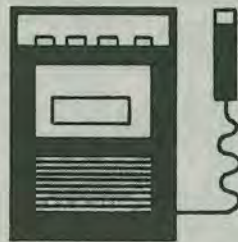
Even common stamps can be sold in bulk.

When you have enough, please parcel and send to:

Rev. Roy Cave .
77 Hurst Park Avenue
Cambridge CB4 2AB

Collect Stamps for BMS at your Work, Office, School, etc

MISSIONTALK



NEWS AND VIEWS
FROM HOME
AND ABROAD

Worm in a bottle

JANUARY 8 was an important day in the life of Kin and Sue Liu and the church at Newbridge, Birmingham. They originally came from Hong Kong, but on that Sunday they were commissioned for service in Nepal.

John Watterson, the minister, conducted the service in which Kin told of the work he will be doing as a laboratory technician. He invited the children present to look through a microscope and showed the congregation an ascarius worm in a bottle.

In Nepal Kin will be helping to improve health standards by getting rid of internal parasites. His wife, Sue, is a nurse and they have two children, Tin-yue and Cherk-Yun. Kin and Sue have been in membership at Newbridge for four years and it was during a meeting for Bible study at the church that they heard God's renewed call to missionary service.

Marjorie Thompson, the church's missionary secretary, spoke on behalf of members when she thanked the couple for the contribution they had made to the fellowship, and pledged prayer and financial

support to them during their service in Nepal.

Other members stood in their places and wished the family God's speed and greetings were also brought from the Bordesley Green Church. The Rev A Betteridge of the Bible Society, the Rev J Grenfell, tutor at St Andrew's Hall and Mr P Briggs, BMS West Midland Area Representative were present and took part in the commissioning service.

Ruth Turner, the church secretary, who works in the West Midland Baptist Association office, said, 'I would not give a thank you if given Kin's worm'. But she was pleased to give Kin and Sue the gift of a Nepali Bible. Another copy was given in the name of the Bible Society. After thanking the church for its support, Kin gave the Newbridge fellowship an information and guide book of Nepal.

As this Birmingham congregation listened to Kin as he told of his call and his new work everyone knew that a new link was being forged in the chain of partnership between churches in Nepal and Newbridge.



VALERIE WATKINS is the first missionary candidate from the Welsh churches for 25 years, and she is the first lady candidate brought up in the Baptist churches of West Glamorgan for over 50 years. So her valedictory service was a time for great rejoicing and the large chapel at Rehoboth, Briton Ferry was filled for the afternoon service on January 7.

Valerie's parents have been members of that church since she was born, and three former ministers, who know the family well, were present. One of them the Rev Islwyn Davies, now Secretary of the Baptist Union of Wales presided at the service and gave the address. Two young people, friends of Valerie, led the devotions be-

fore she spoke of her call to missionary service.

The BMS was represented by Welsh Representative, the Rev Carey Garnon. He pledged the support of the Society, and appealed to the congregation to back the first missionary candidate from Welsh churches in a quarter of a century.

Valerie will be serving as a teacher at Upoto, Zaire and will be sharing a house with Alison Isaacs of Swansea. Alison was present at the service and was amongst those who brought their greetings and good wishes.

Greetings were also given by Mr Arthur Phillips, the church secretary, the Rev M J Williams, President of West Glamorgan Baptist Association; Mr Ronald Lewis President of the Neath Baptist District Meeting, The Mayor of Neath, the Chairman of the West Glamorgan Education Authority, and former ministers the Rev D G Hutchinson and the Rev Robert Bawden.

Valerie Watkins was trained at the Cardiff College of Education. She taught at various junior and primary schools in West Glamorgan before going to St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak and Belgium for her missionary training.



Make a joyful noise!

PRAYER meetings have their lighter side especially in Brazil, so it seems. A few weeks ago, in the absence of the BMS missionary pastor, a dear old lady prayed:

'O Lord, send us someone gifted with music. Lord you know our pastor cannot sing, and his wife is hardly any better. We need so much a musician.'

A note of realism has just been sounded nearer to home. A member of Mission House staff was recently invited to lead prayers at the YMCA.

'We have readings, prayers and an address,' he was told. 'We don't sing. We think the Lord has enough to put up with!'

SOS North-East

IN BRAZIL, reports BMS missionary John Clark, from Camp Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul, inflation has risen from 120 percent to 211 percent, and Brazil's economic crisis has been world news. The International Monetary Fund has become a household word, and the effects of its economic medicine are very apparent. The country is entering its worst ever recession. Unemployment is causing great social hardship, with no social security benefit to protect those out of work.



A typical case is Juan and Janette. Juan, who is a Chilean, was converted in Cascavel on the night he was contemplating suicide. He became president of the young people and treasurer of the church. His presence in Brazil was legalized and he did a mathematics degree at the University there. He is now married with three young children.

In the last year he has had four months' work. As so often, unemployment affects immigrants first. He is behind on his rent. The family have had to sell or pawn belongings to keep going. Janette said, with tears in her eyes, 'I pawned my engage-

ment ring to pay last month's bills. What can we do this month?' They are among the fortunate. The church has been helping, and Janette's father sends help when he can. Thousands are worse off.

It is perhaps hard to imagine what 230 percent inflation means. Remember when inflation in England went over 20 percent a few years back? Think of that kind of inflation each month! In order to get people to save, the banks have to offer daily, weekly and monthly interest rates. It becomes almost impossible to work out what is a good price for an article. Brazil has just

done away with its equivalent of pennies. They had become completely worthless.

Most Brazilians have had their salaries adjusted by a maximum of 100 percent, which means they have been halved. This is happening at a time when Brazil is trying to re-democratize. There is a theory that no democracy can withstand an inflation above 180 percent, so Brazil's economic woes have strong political and social undertones

Brazilian Baptists have been putting more emphasis on social action to go with their long standing emphasis on evangelism. The drought stricken north-east is in a desperate situation. Our state convention has adopted the state of Alagoas. In May we shall be sending up lorry loads of food, medicines and clothing. The churches are becoming collecting centres. The slogan for the campaign is: 'SOS North-East - Christ the only solution.' Our college will be sending up a team of students to help with the distribution and to take the 'words of life' to those in desperate spiritual as well as social plight.

We didn't even pray for it!

BRAZILIAN Baptist evangelist, Dr Nilson do Amaral Fanini, often called the Billy Graham of Brazil, can hardly believe what has happened to his organization, Television Ebenezer Limited.

'We received something we had not even prayed for,' he states, referring to an inactive television station in Rio de Janeiro, which was formerly operated by the Roman Catholic Church. Brazilian President, João Figueiredo signed over this station with its broadcasting licence worth \$1.5 million to Fanini's company. He now has two years to raise \$5 million to equip the defunct station and bring it up to modern standards.

'I'm excited at what this station will do for the more than 40 million viewers we will be reaching,' he says. Presently he has a weekly broadcast which is syndicated to 152 television and radio stations.

We have lost a great leader

MESSAGES have been received from all round the world following the death of Alberic Clement, Chairman of the BMS and for 20 years its General Home Secretary. The following extracts from some of the communications reveal just how highly he was regarded throughout the world.

'Alberic was such a brilliant leader and at the same time a very warm-hearted and humorous man. His comments were always listened to with great respect because of his great insight and sound judgement. He was much appreciated for all his contributions and we shall miss him in very many ways.'

*Knud Wumpelmann,
Secretary of the
European Baptist Federation.*

'I have had the privilege of sharing fellowship with Alberic for about 20 years and we have been together for meetings of

EBF and BWA. I have appreciated him for the way he has shown brotherly love and concern.'

*Sven Ohm, Chairman of the
International Missionary
Secretaries' Conference.*

'Baptists all over the world have lost a great leader.'

*Gerhard Claas,
General Secretary of BWA.*

'We people in the Baptist Union of North India value and remember Mr Clement's services which he rendered for the cause of the Baptists in India. We remember him as a champion of the Baptists' interest.'

John Masih, Secretary BUNI.

'It has been a privilege to serve with him. . . . His great insight meant much to the BWA. His sense of right and wrong and fair play endeared him to many. He easily saw the funny side of some issues and was able to relieve the tension of debates

when needed.'

Archie Goldie, BWA.

'The news of the death of Mr Clement came as a great shock. He was a faithful Christian and a likeable person who had been working devotedly for his country and the BMS even in retirement. We shall miss his good humour, his immense experience and ability to get things done.'

*Koli Mandole Molima,
General Secretary of the
Baptist Community of the
River Zaire.*

'He has given so much to the cause of world mission, and to that drawing together of evangelical and ecumenical which is our own deep concern.'

Simon Barrington-Ward, CMS.

Mrs Joan Clement has appreciated all the letters and prayers of support over the past few weeks. She wishes to thank all those who have shown their love and concern in any way.

The President's action in giving the station to a Baptist organization has stirred up criticism among Catholic citizens and organizations. But Fanini is in good heart. 'In 1982 when Brazilian Baptists celebrated their centenary,' he says, 'President Figueiredo praised Baptists and called the Christian gospel the solution to Brazil's difficulties. We will proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ from this station.'

Baptists too have criticized the awarding of Channel 13 to Fanini. They are worried about Baptist involvement in a station which will be broadcasting a wide variety of secular as well as religious programmes. However Fanini has indicated that the channel will not carry advertising for alcohol, cigarettes or lotteries, and will not show soap operas and films of doubtful morals or violence.

Dr Nilson Fanini is President of the Baptist Convention of Brazil, which has 580,000 members in 3,060 churches.

TALKBACK



WHAT OUR
READERS ARE
THINKING

'Cosmetic' Changes Only

From Rev Neil Riches

IT GIVES me no joy to write in support of the letter from Rev Andrew Mawson which appeared in the *Herald* for December 1983, but in the main he is absolutely right. I daresay that his letter will spark off a storm of controversy, but it is about time that we faced facts and his letter encourages us to do it. He claims that the BMS is concerned mainly with 'privatized spirituality' and I have to agree that this is the image of the Society which is projected in its literature and so on. We hear and read a lot about 'personal encounters' and 'local situations' — and very little about the wider economic and social and political factors present in the countries where the BMS is

active. Clearly, there has to be an awareness of these wider issues within the Society, but it is not an awareness which filters down to the membership of our churches.

Mr Mawson argues that there is a real danger that the activities of the BMS will be dismissed as 'dated and out of touch with reality'. His fears are not empty fears. If the BMS does take account of the wider realities of the 'social-political world' — and I assume that it must, although I suspect that Mr Mawson does not believe this — then it does little to convince its supporters that it understands what it is doing and why it is doing it. Recent changes in the presentation of the work of the Society have been

'cosmetic' changes only.

I feel that inadequacies relating to the presentation of the work of the BMS are reflected also in G M Robinson's letter on 'deputations' which appeared in the same issue of the *Herald*. The heading given to this letter — 'Let's be more adventurous' — reflects the thinking of a large number of people; for many church members, unimaginative and uninformative written and visual material on the BMS is supplemented only by an unimaginative traditional deputation.

I have said already that Mr Mawson's fears regarding the future of the Society are not empty fears: I am sure that

some churches support the BMS out of traditional loyalties only; other churches are turning to other missionary agencies whose approach is more dynamic and whose 'home' presentation reflects a fuller understanding of the issues involved.

I am a younger minister — and know other young ministers — and we find it difficult to build up enthusiasm for, or a complete picture of the BMS within our churches. It is sad to find that the pioneer of modern missionary societies so often seems to be the 'poor neighbour' of other, more recent societies.

REV NEIL RICHES
Summerhill Baptist Church

Newport

From Rev Leslie Wenger

I SHARE some of the criticisms that the Rev Andrew Mawson made of the film, *The Spreading Flame*. Its theme picture roused my conservationist hackles. It gave only one aspect of BMS work, but, what more can one short film do?

Andrew Mawson recognizes the wider range of BMS activities, but the implication he draws is that, because some see a presentation of one aspect only of the BMS, which they happen to dislike, 'many will dismiss its activities as out of date . . .'. This may be so, but what a distressing indictment of those who call themselves Christian!

It is hinted that some people may, as a result, switch their giving to Tear Fund and Christian Aid. Fine! If they did, they would still be assisting some aspects of BMS work,

for both these organizations administer much of their resources through BMS and other missions and the related churches, who are grateful for such assistance. These organizations in fact are engaged almost entirely in work which missionary societies pioneered and are still carrying on: medical, educational, agricultural, industrial training, community renewal and so on. BMS missionaries work in all these areas — and more! Third world agencies aim to 'help people to help themselves'. The BMS in its evangelistic work aims to give the spiritual motivation that 'helps people to help others'.

Years ago I was told that an erstwhile supporter of the BMS would no longer support the Society, because it spent its money on bank interest. (This was when the BMS had no reserves to carry it through the early lean months of the

financial year.) Unfortunately I was unable to meet the lady. I wanted to suggest to her that instead of giving the one pound she had given in the past, she could give 19s 9d and I would gladly give the 3d towards the proportionate amount of bank interest.

Recently in the *Herald* a friend of mine suggested that the BMS reputation would suffer because, in an earlier article in the *Herald* my sister used (in translation, for the sake of those whose French is not very good) the Zairian term of endearment for their children, namely '*petit chocolat*'.

A very respected minister told me that if the Society sent his church another retired missionary for 'deputation' they would refuse to have him. A 'real-live-missionary' can tell of what is happening now. But those of us who are mere 'no-longer-real-live-missionaries' can tell of

'acorns' planted a generation ago, and also show the increase that God has given with up-to-date news from the field. Is that not a story worth telling? It is indeed a pity when one aspect of work which is disliked is allowed to obscure the whole.

One implication of Mr Mawson's article is that missionaries should be engaged in matters of social concern. It needs to be remembered that the BMS works by invitation of the national churches. In fact, BMS staff have awakened the national church to social concerns: Frank Gouthwaite in agricultural development, Frank Vaughan in the *favelas* of urban overcrowding, Gerry Myhill in planning a team with doctor, dentist as well as evangelist to serve isolated communities.

In Nepal it is the other way round. Missionaries are not

Brazilian Reality

From Stuart Christine

I was both saddened and surprised by Rev Mawson's recently published letter 'Postman Pat's view of Brazil'.

I was saddened that the Reverend Mawson should be able to use adjectives such as 'romantic' (by inference), and 'sentimental' (directly), to describe our task of helping individual Brazilians, rich or poor, to come to a personal relationship with God, through Jesus Christ. Did the film give him the impression that this was and is our principal aim? If so I'm glad and would assure him that it is indeed and that I feel none of the sense of 'injustice' that he would evidently have me labouring under. Should this concern (with which the Brazilian Baptist church would most vigorously associate itself), be held to have '... nothing to do, ...' with Mr Mawson's 'incarnational theology' then let the emphases of our Lord's own words and actions judge the merits of each position. To be occasionally saddened by another's theological position is perhaps not

surprising. What did surprise me however was that Mr Mawson should feel qualified to make such a wide ranging critique of 'the Brazilian reality and the work of the BMS there'. To which Brazilian reality does our critic refer? The reality of industrialized São Paulo or the drought stricken North-East; the established agricultural centres of the South or the pioneer townships of the Mato Grosso? The *Spreading Flame* limited itself to our work in the latter region and did not, as Mr Mawson asserts seek to depict, 'the work of the BMS in Brazil'.

Having lived in Mato Grosso since 1978 I certainly wouldn't presume to judge the merits or demerits of a colleague's methods in, for example, São Paulo. I'm simply not familiar with the socio-political realities there. Does Mr Mawson have first hand experience of the 'Reality' within which he would have us work out his incarnational theology? The economic crisis he mentions has one face in São Paulo and quite another here in Mato Grosso.

allowed to evangelize or engage in church-planting. Here their Christian witness is expressed in caring services, which provide a kind of infrastructure for the personal evangelism carried on by nationals. They do the church-planting: often under great persecution.

Different situations call for different approaches: it is a pity when people see only the approach that does not appeal to them.

The implication in Mr Mawson's article goes further. Missionaries should have a political concern. The concern is certainly there: but while it is easy for us in Britain to express openly such concern for people in other countries at no risk to ourselves, and engage (as I do) in activities such as letter-writing for Amnesty International, a foreign missionary on the spot has a tight-rope to walk. Is it

better for a missionary to be out-spoken and have his visa cancelled, and endanger the nationals with whom he works: or continue quietly to give personal and moral support to those who suffer? Is it better for nationals of that country to be outspoken and be murdered (as Archbishop Romero) or be exiled (as Martha Benavides), or remain to share the suffering of the r people? Some are more courageous: maybe I, and others, were too timid.

The staff of the BMS are after all, mere human beings with human frailties. We are thus open to criticism on every side. But many people continue to support the BMS because they love the BMS warts and all.

LESLIE WENGER

Norwich

The 'reality' of the Roman Catholic Church in the UK should by no means be equated with the religious inheritance of the 'average Brazilian'. And perhaps our ecologically concerned consciences would be a little less sensitive to the conversion of scrub-land to grain production if, like so many Brazilians, we couldn't afford the rice to give to our children.

Regarding the confusion of metaphors in the last sentence of his saddening and surprising letter . . . words fail me. Perhaps it would have been better had they failed Mr Mawson also, at least until his understanding of Brazilian realities becomes a little more realistic.

STUART CHRISTINE

Mato Grosso, Brazil

Are We Interested?

From Dr A D Hopkins

DECEMBER'S *Missionary Herald* actually inspires me to write. Usually it inspires little reaction, but there were several articles that had special significance for me as a missionary on furlough.

The article by Irene Masters and Owen Clark show some of the problems of being amongst the rich in Zaire although poor by our standards. However, the preoccupation with material things and pleasure even amongst Christians at home makes a missionary, who is concerned with the spiritually and materially deprived, feel even more of a misfit. Thank you for those statistics in the 'Comment' pointing out that 1/3 of the world is Christian and they receive 2/3 of the world's income spending 97% of it on themselves. What missionaries could do if that wealth were spread around.

Let's be more adventurous about deputation! Most missionaries are not interested in mere pulpit supply and if the minister cannot be present there should not be a deputation. I would rather be sitting in the pew catching up on two years' lack of good sermons and teaching in my native tongue. If however, I'm going to speak to an informed and prepared congregation that's a different matter. What's wrong with midweek? Two to three days of well organized coffee mornings, house group meetings, working lunches and we could reach most members of the congregation in a much more meaningful way even if the missionary's sleep and

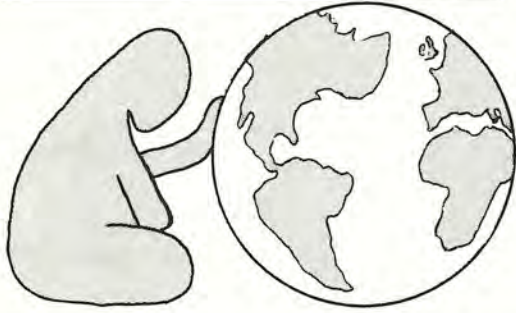
waistline suffer.

As for 'Postman Pat' BMS publicity is at times an embarrassment both in detail (eg. the photographer's haircut of Irene Masters in the December issue) and also in content. Much of the information is of necessity a particular missionary's interpretation and most of us are appointed for other technical tasks than publicity. However, it is good to discuss publicity and how many people in the churches seem to forget that there is a means to express their views through their association delegates to the General Committee.

Like a doctor using vocabulary meaningful to himself, but often not the patient, Mr Mawson has used jargon I'm not sure that I understand, and therefore that I am in agreement with. I am convinced, however, that the first step to changing the world is to change people, which must involve a personal faith, and this must concern those of us who are missionaries whether in the UK, or Zaire, or wherever. That faith however, if real, must produce action at both a spiritual and a practical level and a concern for the proclamation of the gospel in all its aspects — which brings us back to the 'Comment' at the beginning. Are we in the 'home churches' really interested in the effective prosecution of the Christian World Mission? Sometimes I get the feeling we are not.

DR A D HOPKINS

Pimu, Zaire



CALL TO

PRAYER

1784 - 1984

China & Hong Kong

4-10 March

THIRTY years ago, when our missionaries had to leave China, there were about 800,000 members of the Protestant churches. In spite of the opposition to the church, especially during the Cultural Revolution, those numbers have not decreased. A conservative estimate of the number of Protestant Christians today is three million, but most folk believe the figure to be much higher.

Today theological seminaries are opening and are full of students. Churches are growing and services in church buildings and in houses are full to overflowing. The church in China has known a resurrection experience in a very real way.

In Hong Kong too the church is alive. It is concerned about the future of the Colony and is watching apprehensively the negotiations which are taking place with the Chinese Government. They believe that the churches have to prepare now for the day when Hong Kong becomes part of mainland China.

The United Mission To Nepal

11-17 March

IN Nepal, the BMS works in partnership with 38 missionary societies within the United Mission to Nepal. It is in no way traditional missionary work for the law states that it is forbidden to seek to persuade a person to change his religion. Nepal is said to be the fourth poorest country in the world and much time and effort are being expended in encouraging development. The UMN has been invited by the Government to share this process. UMN work is organised under three Boards – Education, Development and Health – and the 18 BMS missionaries working in Nepal are involved in all these aspects and showing the love of Christ in practical service.

The Church in Nepal is small, about 15,000 members. In spite of the many difficulties and handicaps in its way it is a courageous church and manages to make known the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ. They and our missionaries are forever conscious that they live in a Hindu Society.

Brazil - Parana: Curitiba

18-24 March

CURITIBA, the capital city of Paraná, now has a population of more than a million. The continuing migration to the city from the countryside has seen the expansion of the suburbs and the mushrooming of squalid shanty towns. This means that, in spite of a large number of Baptist churches and congregations, it is hard for them to keep up with the needs of the area in terms of pastoral care and outreach.

David Grainger is acting principal of the Paraná Baptist Theological College. His many duties are keeping him fully occupied. Michael Wotton, also teaching at the College speaks of the dedication and commitment of the students who work full-time to support themselves and come to lectures in the evening. Other BMS missionaries, caring for churches in the area, are Avelino and Ano Ferreira, and David and Patricia Holmwood who have been involved in the work to help victims of the floods.

Zaire - Mbanza-Ngungu & The Lower River 25-31 March

MBANZA-NGUNGU is a growing town with a population of about 100,000. It is a military centre bringing together soldiers, many of them Christian, from all over Zaire. This new 'mix' of the population brings its challenges and problems to the churches which are being exposed to new ideas and different traditions and emphases, many of them decidedly 'off centre'. The church has recently expanded its dispensary work and not so long ago opened a new centre at Loma without outside help.

There are five districts in the Lower River region of the CBFZ, but most BMS missionaries are centred on Mbanza-Ngungu doing teaching and literature work. Most Zairian pastors only have three or four books in their own language, so Phyl Gilbert is engaged in preparing material in the Kikongo language. The pastor responsible for the Mbanza-Ngungu district is the Rev Nkwansambu who is also Regional Secretary for the five districts of the Lower River.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Departures

Mrs R Clinch on 9 January to Kinshasa, Zaire
Miss V Campbell on 16 January to Dhaka, Bangladesh
Mr & Mrs I Morris & family on 22 January to Tondo, Zaire
Mr & Mrs D Knight on 22 January to Tondo, Zaire
Dr I & Mrs Smith on 24 January to Kathmandu, Nepal
Mr & Mrs Wai-Kin Liu & family on 24 January to Kathmandu, Nepal

Mr & Mrs T King on 18 January from Kathmandu, Nepal

Deaths

On 19 January, **Dr Ellen Clow** (China 1928-1948; BMS Assoc. Foreign Secretary 1948-1959; Hong Kong 1960-1969), aged 83.

Legacies

	£	p
Mrs M H Andrews	500.00	
Miss G V Casselli	53.00	
Miss N Evans	4,174.54	
Miss G Milton	4,193.54	
Miss E S Philpot	13,000.00	

General Work

Anon: £10.00; Anon (Cymro): £35.00; Anon (GL): £100.00; Anon: £10.00; Anon: £15.00; Anon (X): £5.00; Anon: £10.00; Anon (FAE-Aberdeen): £15.00.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Home

Miss M Hitchings on 17 January from Tondo, Zaire

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously. (15 December 1983-5 January 1984)

Gift and Self Denial

Anon: £5.00; Anon: £1.90; Anon: £3.00.

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4-13 September

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