

MISSIONARY

HERALD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

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TRAVELLING THROUGH THE FOREST

A seven-day trip visiting six villages near Yakusu.

See story on page 86.



MAY 1984

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We share in the work of the Church in:

Angola	Nepal
Bangladesh	Sri Lanka
Brazil	Tanzania
India	Trinidad
Jamaica	Zaire

COMMENT

THE needs of the world are overwhelming in their proportions. The hunger of millions is an offence battering hard against our Christian consciences. Our response, quite rightly, is to give help, often sacrificially, through a variety of agencies. Yet is it a sign of our materialistic age that we sometimes leave it at that? The giving of money and things is obviously an expression of our Christian love and concern, but it can never be a substitute for committed discipleship. Our Lord calls people into his service, not just their possessions.

And he needs people who are prepared to serve him overseas today. There are 25 missionary situations waiting to be filled (see *Missiontalk*), which could mean that the Society is looking for up to 50 more individuals.

Cultural pollution

This is interesting, because a frequent question is, 'Do we still need to send missionaries to other lands?' We are told that missionary work is harmful, because we are exporting western culture and destroying the way of life of people in the third world.

Yes we have made mistakes. Christianity and western culture do sometimes get mixed together. We are the people we are. We have grown up and have come to faith in the west and we can never get rid of that identification. But does it matter? The churches overseas with which we work don't seem to think so. Our missionaries are accepted as European, although they are expected to understand and to fit into the local cultural scene.

For 200 years God has used our Society and others to speak of His love, in spite of our western 'clothes'. 'Our first contact with Europeans was with sailors and traders,' an African Christian said recently. 'They cheated us. But the missionaries were different. They were such loving and caring people. To help us, many of them died of fever or were killed. Before they came we did nothing but fight each other. Our lives are better because of them.'

Have we got it wrong?

Carey had to argue the case for missionary work with those who said: 'God doesn't need our help to convert the Indian.' Do we have to fight that same battle? The words may be different, but the argument is the same: 'God doesn't need us. We are culturally tainted.' 'It is hard to believe that the churches in Brazil and the Caribbean, Zaire and Sri Lanka, Angola and Bangladesh have all got it wrong at the same time,' says Angus MacNeill. 'To have that doubt is to question the working of the Spirit of God within His Church.' Christ is still looking for people to serve Him overseas.

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We were greeted at Nagpur by the Bishop who is Moderator of the Church of North India. He personally put garlands of richly coloured marigolds round our shoulders — the first of many we were to receive during the next five weeks.

Much to encourage

Each morning Bible Study was conducted by Dr Jack Hart of the United States of America followed by the business sessions which lasted until the early evening. The agenda consisted of amendments to the Constitution, reports of the various committees and detailed accounts of the work of the Diocese. There was much to encourage particularly in the number of baptisms reported from the rural areas. Our impression was of a Church, twelve years after union, still facing many of the problems that are being discussed by the denominations in this country.

There was evidence of theological insights, realistic thinking and personal conviction. It was obvious that the Church of North India was conscious of its debt to missionary societies and was aware of its need of continuing assistance from outside to meet the challenges and opportunities of today. At the same time it was determined to move towards ever-increasing self-sufficiency.

In Nagpur we were able to see some of the work of the Industrial Service Institute of the Church. It offers support and practical help to the rickshaw-pullers, training young men as motor mechanics and enabling women and girls to earn a living by dress-making and needle-work.



Snake Charmers

For nearly ten years Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches in Derbyshire have been fostering close links with the Church of North India. Last year Arthur Bonser and his wife visited India to represent the Derbyshire churches at the CNI Synod at Nagpur.

NAMSKAR — AN INDIAN GREETING

by Arthur Bonser

The Director of the Institute, Karim David, gave us our first sight of life in the poorer villages. Poverty is so great that the loss of a buffalo is considered to be a worse disaster than the death of a child. A child can be replaced, but buffalo cost money and provide almost all that is necessary for a family's survival — milk for nourishment; dung for fertilizer, for fuel and for the repair of the walls and floor of the hut; transport for the family and pulling-power for the primitive farm implements.

We saw a recently-dug well equipped with an electric pump for irrigating the fields, and the foundations of a small new hospital in the area in which there were no medical services at all. Travelling

the rough roads between the villages we passed scores of women trudging along with great loads of grain on their heads making their way to the nearest grinding mill — twelve miles there and twelve miles back. Most pathetic of all, we met a father coming in the opposite direction and carrying his desperately ill son the same twelve miles for medical attention.

Synod over, we travelled by night-train to Calcutta and were very glad to have the company of Pansy James, the BMS missionary working in Cuttack. In Calcutta, we met Ina Gray, whom we have previously known in Leicester, and who was to assist Miss James for a limited period in Cuttack.

Orissa

The train to Cuttack gave us a wonderful vantage-point from which to view the Indian countryside and the journey, though long, was full of interest.

We were only in Cuttack long enough to visit the girls' hostel and the teachers' training college; to catch a glimpse of the Stewart School for Boys, the Bible Society Book Shop with its array of Bibles in a multitude of Indian Languages and the Baptist Church. Early the next morning the Bishop's car arrived to take us on the six-hour drive through the



Lay Leaders' Conference

Orissa countryside and up into the hill-country to Udayagiri.

At the house of Joan Sargeant, the BMS missionary in charge of the girls' hostel, we were introduced to an Indian Area Superintendent. The afternoon was spent in touring the wards of the mission hospital where excellent work is being done with a minimum of equipment, and the girls' hostel. Another six-hour drive, through the night, took us to Balangir where we were welcomed by Carole Whitmee, the BMS missionary working with Bishop Tandy at Balangir. We were there over the weekend and my wife addressed the children at the Sunday School Anniversary Service in the Balangir Church whilst the Bishop took me to one of the remote villages to share in the opening of a new church building.

Able to hear the Gospel

The Christians in the village were waiting and greeted us with drums and garlands. We went in procession through the village to the new building watched by the other villagers, mostly Hindus. I had the privilege of cutting the red ribbon stretched across the entrance before we all went inside for a simple and impressive service of dedication. There is no glass in the windows of village churches in India, and the Hindu villagers, who peered through to see what was going on, were able to hear the Gospel.

Back in Balangir we joined a large congregation, mostly children and young people, sitting on the grass outside the Church for an open-air service to mark the end of the Sunday School Anniversary. What a wonderful opportunity those young folk present!

On the Monday morning we were taken on a quick tour of the girls' hostel and the boys' school. A new science block is being built, but it will be some time before all the necessary equipment can be bought.

On the way to Diptipur we stopped to look in on a conference for Christian Leaders from the villages. We were able to join the congregation in the local Church for a delightful service of Parent Dedication. The Church of North India is very conscious of the need to train its workers and such conferences are widely held and well supported.

Young congregation

At Diptipur a large congregation, mostly of young people, was assembled in the local Church. I was able to speak to them through an interpreter. On the following day we were conducted round the experimental farm where Alan Casebow worked for so long. We also saw the excellent mission hospital with its modern facilities and up-to-date ophthalmic unit. A new building is being constructed to care for mentally and physically handicapped patients. In all these hospitals, patients must bring friends or relations to share in the task of looking after them. Nursing staff is so short.

We arrived in Calcutta early the next morning. We had certainly never experienced anything like Howrah Station. Almost before the train stopped we were accosted by beggars, many of them children. Along the platform we stepped over bodies wrapped in blankets, not quite sure if they were alive or dead. At the entrance to the station were the crowds that are such a feature

of Calcutta. We had an alarming journey by taxi convinced that we were not being taken where we had asked to go. Our driver had no idea of the location of the BMS guest house. He was cruising round the city at our expense hoping to find some clue. Finally he asked at a police station for directions.

From the moment we arrived at 44 Acharyya Bose Road we enjoyed the comfort and relaxation that Lt Col and Mrs Koshy George are so expert at providing. We were grateful to them and to John Peacock for all that they did for us during our stay.

We were invited to visit the large establishment that is the centre of Mother Theresa's work for the poor of the city, she was unwell and unable to receive us personally. The magnitude of the problem of the city's destitute is seen in the fact that, in spite of all her devotion and the resources made available to her, there were still beggars making their home on the pavement outside the gates through which we entered.

Carey

William Carey had close connections with the East Midlands and we could not be so near without going to Serampore College. Carey preached his 'Deathless Sermon' in Nottingham, and left his little cottage in Leicester on his way to India. It was a thrilling experience to be entertained to lunch by Keith and Edna Skirrow, in the very house in which Carey lived and to be able to look out on the Hooghly river from the college that he founded.

Strained relationship

We had met Bishop Lal of Amritsar and his wife when they visited Derby a few years ago. So we flew to Amritsar and spent a few days in their home. The majority of the people in Amritsar are Sikhs and we were able to visit the remarkable Golden Temple in the centre of the city. Amritsar is a city that has recently known violence associated with the Sikhs' political ambitions. The church was not directly involved though it could not remain unaffected.

Up to this point in our tour of North India we had been in areas in which the

vast majority of the population was Hindu. In fact, more than 83 percent of Indians are Hindu and seem happy enough to live alongside the Christians. In Amritsar, we were aware of a rather more strained relationship.

Amritsar appeared to be more affluent than any city we had previously visited in India. The villages, too, were different. Around Nagpur, they consisted of huts constructed of mud and wattle walls, with roofs of tiles, clustered around the central Hindu shrine. In Orissa, the huts were of mud and wattle walls with thatched roofs. In Amritsar, the huts in the villages were constructed of walls made of mud mixed with cow-dung and roofs of thatch which gave a much smoother and cleaner look to the villages.

Pressing needs

But, whatever they may look like to the visitor, the problems of those who live in the villages remain the same. The pressing needs are adequate living accommodation, health care and safe drinking water. In Amritsar, as everywhere else, the church is seeking better conditions for those in the villages and we spent an interesting afternoon sharing in a training session for Christian Leaders who were discussing ways in which the villagers could be encouraged to identify the needs of their situations and then find ways of meeting those needs by the training of members of their own communities.

On the Sunday evening we accompanied the Bishop to a service in one of the remoter villages, when sixteen young people were confirmed. They are eager to make their witness in the place in which they live, and are aware of the responsibility that rests on them in a village in which there is little privacy and in which individual lives are always open to scrutiny. The Bishop is promoting a project, supported by public funds, aimed at creating work for women and girls from such villages by the setting up of a small knitting factory.

The Diocese of Amritsar extends to Kashmir, so Bishop Lal arranged for us to spend a short time with the pastor of Srinagar. They were charming people who came originally from Tibet. Here, the population is Muslim and the

position of the Christians in Kashmir is far from easy. The Church is small but is maintaining a positive Christian witness in a very isolated situation. The Church is also responsible for a large school which has a reputation for excellence. It was a real pleasure to meet these staunch Christian folk and we hoped that our brief time with them gave them some encouragement.

Our last few days were spent in Nepal. The journey by air to Kathmandu was memorable for the magnificent views we had of the Himalayas, including a glimpse of Mount Everest. What a remarkable city Kathmandu is! We shall never forget the sight of Durbar Square with its temples and colourful market.

The situation here is unusual for it is illegal to change the religion into which you were born and it is a more serious crime to persuade any one to do so. In spite of these legal restrictions, the church is a lively and active community and we were able to join the congregation of the Kathmandu Church for morning service on the Saturday — the day for worship in the city. The building was full and the singing enthusiastic. The pastor gave a summary of the sermon in English before preaching in the local language. By our standards the service was lengthy and we had to leave before it was concluded.

We were given the opportunity of touring the modern Patan hospital in Kathmandu, and were told of the efforts being made to improve the medical facilities in the villages of the hill-country.

We were also able to talk with all the officers of the United Mission to Nepal. There are several Baptists on the UNM staff.

We shall always be grateful to all those who made this 'journey of a life-time' possible for us. When the link between the Churches of North India was established, it was intended to be a genuine partnership in which each would benefit equally. We now realize just how much we each have to contribute to the other.

In greeting one another, Indians put their hands together and bowing slightly, use the word of greeting: 'Namskar'. It does occur to me that this could be interpreted as the outward sign of friendship in which there is no actual contact. The symbol of the partnership between the Churches in Derbyshire and the Church of North India is a design showing two hands firmly clasped in a warm hand-shake. It is such personal contact that we need to foster if we are to understand each other and work effectively in partnership in the service of the Christ.



Mrs Ina Gray and Mrs Eileen Bonser at Girls' Hostel — Udayagiri



Well-used roads?

Extracts From a Missionary Diary

THESE extracts are from a diary kept on one of our regular bi-monthly dispensary trips. On this seven day trip around six different village centres, covering 650 kilometres were husband Lyn a doctor, June Spreng a final year medical student here on a three month Elective, Babulaka our leprosy nurse and co-worker, Joseph our driver and four year old son Mark. My diary was rather long winded so for the purpose of publication I have 'edited' it.

By Carol Bulkeley

JOIN us now as we set off in the Landrover heavily loaded with medicines, fuel, Christian books, personal bags and cases, hurricane lamp, guitar, camp beds, and so on. Our departure from Yakusu was delayed until 1 pm by rain but just after dark at 7 pm we arrived at Yatolema.

MONDAY

10 pm. The place is under new management with Pastor Liotho at the helm. Everything is very organized. We're staying with the pastor in his local style house . . . our room just takes three camp beds, as long as the door is shut! Lyn is discussing the new tariffs next door. June and I are off to bed. Do so pray the Lord will give us opportunities to share our faith, whether in 'incidental' conversations or more openly. The journey began with so many set backs and delays that I wonder whether there won't be great victories for the Lord this week.

TUESDAY

Many patients are waiting outside the Dispensary, some crowding round the Landrover to buy books. After a while we plucked up the courage to get the guitar and start singing hymns. We always feel so stupid initially, but once we get going confidence grows. We ended with the reading of Jesus' calming the storm and a short 'word'. Then June went to see patients and Mark and I along with two of his new found friends, went for a nice walk through the coffee plantation to the stream from where they have to fetch all their water. We came across loads of soldier ants those which bite and leave their pincers in your feet!

9 pm. We left Yatolema at 2 pm. It was almost dark on arrival here at Yatanda so most of the patients had gone home. Lyn and June saw the few that remained, while Babulaka started counting up medicines, Joseph sold books on the bonnet of the Landrover and I organized camp beds and then went to chat with

the women as they cooked supper. Lots of folk asked whether we'd brought the guitar and would we sing . . . how's that for having the ground prepared for us? It was a lovely time of fellowship singing by the torchlight while the women cooked over two wood fires. We read the story of Nicodemus; 'Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' Joseph closed in prayer for us. Mark scrounged a piece of manioc off the women which he munched sitting on Joseph's lap while we sang. He's asleep now. Supper for him consisted of flapjack, peanuts, water and a stick of manioc! Presumably ours is still tenderising in the pot. More anon — just off to help count up the money. . . .

11 pm. We ate a lovely meal of chicken and rice. 10.15 pm. Very tasty even if I was half asleep. Lyn was still disgustingly full of energy!

WEDNESDAY

I'm writing this in the canoe on our way to Irema. Have just eaten *en lituma* (a manioc preparation) and monkey with our fingers as we float downriver. Joseph's relatives kindly prepared it at Yatanda. Very tasty but what a lot of hot peppers! Mark couldn't take it so he resorted to bananas, peanuts and the emergency rations of flapjack again! The boat leaks. June, Lyn and Mark are busy baling us out! We left the Landrover at Yate to reach Irema by river as the ferry isn't working. Even if it were the road on the other side is impassable (insecure bridge). We sold lots of books and a Bible while the others were loading up the dug-out canoe.

10 pm. Here we are at Irema. Following welcomes and chit-chat we all went for a swim and wash. We washed hair and clothes as well. I'm writing this by candlelight in our room which sports a table, proper beds and grass mattresses. The latter are the height of luxury, providing they have no additional livestock within! The folks here have been so kind, providing meals at 5 pm and 9 pm, which meant Mark could have a proper meal and get to bed at a respectable hour. He and I sold books together in the dispensary while Lyn and June saw patients. He found two hours in the canoe rather a trial though enjoyed baling us out.

Pastor Atchollo works here. He should have been in Europe to study for a year, but for various reasons it didn't work out. He hopes to go next year. His mother is very ill and dying of cancer, and the youngest grandchild sick with whooping cough so Mama at any rate is very relieved to have him back. All things work together for good. Lyn went to see granny earlier to try and relieve her suffering a little, and June and I went this evening. There wasn't much to say so for the most part we just held hands silently and then offered to sing hymns. This we did by the light of a hurricane on a grass mat on the ground outside her tiny hut, at first just two with others gradually joining us. We ended with the reading of Psalm 91 and prayer. She was touchingly appreciative.

THURSDAY

This has been the most wonderfully restful day! We should have left early this morning but it rained until 3 pm by which time it was too late. The folks have been so kind, accepting so cheerfully having another five mouths to feed. We had caterpillars for lunch? June amused the pastor's kids and Mark by making paper boats from any scrap paper we could find — mostly old letters

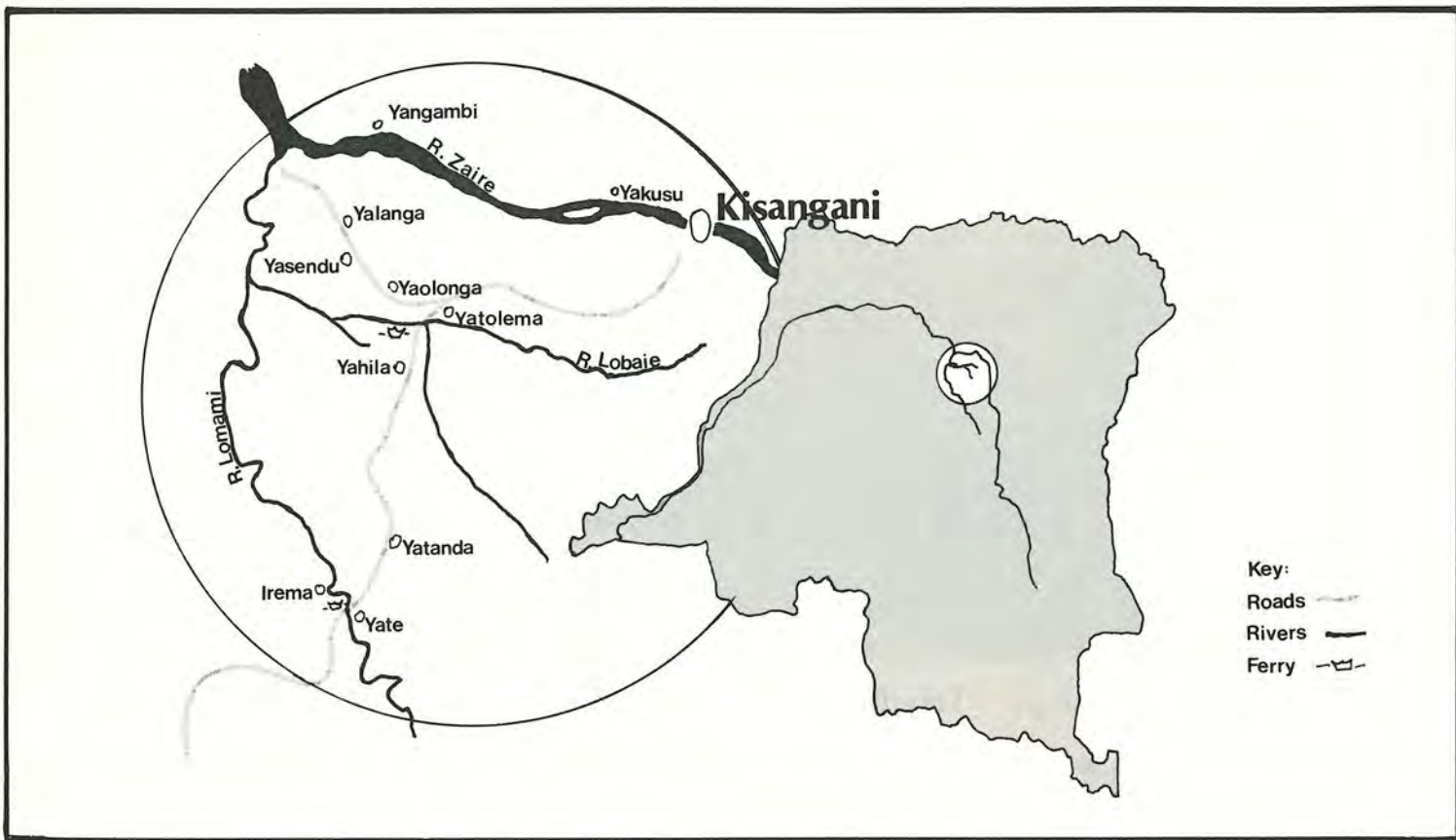
and a church newsletter. I have been talking to Mama Pastor who suffers from chronic back ache. She needs to rest more but their life style just doesn't allow it — going to the forest to cut firewood, or dig up manioc, all of which has to be carried back on her head or her back. Everything is heavy manual work. No running water either. And we sometimes think we don't have enough time off! Everything is relative.

FRIDAY

If yesterday was 'wonderful', today has been that and incredible as well! I write now at 11.30 pm at Yahila sitting on the end of my camp bed with the rain beating down on the thatch roof. The roof leaks! We were an hour later than intended in leaving Irema. The boat was leaking badly and needed more clay to bung up the holes. It was a beautiful journey (four hours) back up river to rejoin the Landrover at Yate. How fortunate we are to be called to work in such lovely surroundings. To see water lilies in all their splendour against the dark waters on the Lomami was indeed inspiring. The first hour was misty, thereafter it was hot and we now all look as though we've had a week on the Riviera!



Having a shave



At Yate various members of the church came to greet us and see if we had any more Bibles, hymnbooks or spectacles for them — which we didn't! However, Lyn was able to test their eyes and measure them up for specs, so hopefully in the stock left at Yakusu their size and strength will be available for us to bring next time. The church at Yate has no pastor, but would appear to be thriving under the leadership of the *Surveillant* there. We have been invited to meet with their church folk next time we are passing through. They presented us with a chicken so grateful were they to have been able to buy books and a Bible between them — so generous especially in the current economic climate.

Soon after leaving Yate we stopped the Landrover by a forest stream for a picnic lunch of *kwanga* (another manioc preparation) and pilchards and then had the most delectable swim in the dark cool water to cool off. A little further along the road one of our ex-student nurses, now working in a state dispensary, flagged us down wanting us to stay for a meal already prepared. How they know when we're coming is a mystery — presumably food is cooked in the morning so that whatever time of the day or night we pass it's ready. As though that wasn't enough they then also presented us with a huge pineapple.

A further two hours along the road we came to an ungainly halt. It had rained and the clay mud road had turned into a quagmire and skating rink. That combined with the deep ravines made by the rain had us crawling along and eventually skidding right round until we stopped at 90° to the road! We could (and did) praise the Lord that it was still daylight (5 pm) and that we were near a village so there was no shortage of people to help.

We eventually arrived here 9 pm. Mark was asleep so we put him straight on to his camp bed and got stuck into the work of counting medicines, replenishing stocks, administration and financial control. It's now midnight, so to bed.

SATURDAY

An interesting night. We went to sleep with the symphony of raindrops, those on the roof combined with those falling



'If we move it this way . . . ' — stuck again

into, for the most part, receptacles in our room. We woke to a beautiful morning and a queue of patients. Lyn saw the 'general', June and I the 'gynae' using June's knowledge and my language! Most of their problems are infertility which causes so much sadness here. Child bearing forms such a major part of their lives.

We left Yahila late morning and then waited over an hour at the isolated Lobai ferry. It was so beautiful – a real tropical paradise. The only snag is the abundance of tiny black flies that bite and have you itching like mad for several days afterwards. They also transmit river blindness, but we'll not dwell on that! We redeemed the time very usefully – Lyn shaved, June and I washed our hair and a few clothes and draped them over the ferry to dry. Mark had fun splashing around.

11.10 pm. These night entries are becoming a habit! I feel shattered and nearly fell asleep counting the money. We arrived back at Yasendu at 10 pm having first been to Yalanga dispensary down the road and made a rushed visit there from 4-9 pm. There were problems because the nurse had mismanaged his stocks, all of which took time for Lyn to sort out with the nurse and church leaders.

Mark fell asleep on the journey – happily we'd eaten at the last place. On these trips there's no such thing as routine for Mark so we go completely African and he sleeps when he wants to rather than when I say so! The idea here is to finish all the administration tonight, see patients early tomorrow morning and then leave in time for church en route to Yakusu.

SUNDAY

Would you believe we ended up selling books and Bibles until midnight last night! It was a short night. At 4.30 am at first cook-crow there was an audible discussion next door as to whether it was time to get up and thereafter the household could be described as restless.

7 am. Lyn and June seeing patients. Breakfast or manioc and monkey is cooking out the back. Mark is making mud pies with his mates.



Market at Yakusu

8 pm. We are back at Yakusu, much to our surprise! We had resigned ourselves to an extra night on the ferry at Kisangani. However the Lord had arranged otherwise and both that and the Lindi ferry near Yakusu were on their way over as we drove up. We all enjoyed the church service at Yaolanga.

We sensed the presence of the Lord and it came as a fitting climax to our week away. With typical generosity they fed us a lovely meal of Lituma and chicken to send us on our way home.

It's been a week of great fun, but more than that it's been very worthwhile. It's exciting to have something to share,

whether it be our Faith, or medical skills, or Christian literature or even just friendship. We were so aware of God! The scenery alone was a constant reminder of our Creator as we drove through mile after mile of sun dappled forest. He was in every part of that journey, guiding decisions and conversations, providing opportunities for sharing and mutual encouragement, giving wisdom in difficult situations and keeping us safe in our journeyings by road and river. We can only say 'Thank you Lord' and pray that those whom we visited in His Name may have been similarly blessed and know His refreshing and encouragement in their own particular situations.



Cooking at a hospital



A centre of exc

Before David and Janet Kerrigan left, in March, for Bangladesh, they studied at St Andrew's Hall. Here David gives his impressions

St Andrew's Hall – what does it mean to you? To some no doubt the college is automatically linked with the work of the BMS. To others it is probably a place they have heard of from time to time or they have seen it mentioned in the *Prayer Guide*, yet it remains something of an unknown quantity. To the majority reading this I have a feeling that St Andrew's conjures up a blank expression and so it is my intention to lift the lid, so to speak, on the college, that we may see the role it plays in the training of our BMS missionaries today and that by being better informed we may be able to pray more intelligently for the work carried out there.

History has never held my attention for very long so I won't dwell on the origins of the college. Suffice it to say that St Andrew's Hall has its roots in 'Carey Hall', founded on the same site in 1912 for the training of women entering missionary service, and also in 'St Andrew's College' founded in 1946, a training college for men. The two colleges amalgamated in 1966 and were given the name St Andrew's Hall Missionary College. It is not solely a Baptist venture, it never has been. Today the college still draws its support from the United Reformed Church, the Council for World Mission as well as the BMS.

To understand anything about St Andrew's you have to appreciate the role it plays within the Selly Oak Colleges Federation. St Andrew's is only one of nine colleges that together comprise the SOC Federation, the other colleges representing many of the mainline Christian churches in Britain today.

Cross cultural

One of the departments within the Federation is the Mission Department and it is in this department that our BMS candidates participate. The department can have fifty or sixty students gathered not only from the various colleges, but also representing an amazing cross-section of nationalities. In our short time here, we have studied with students from Uganda, India, Zambia, Ghana, Sri-Lanka, Fiji, Samoa, United States, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Germany, Guyana, West Indies, Burma and many more. The value of this cross-cultural aspect of the course cannot be underestimated.

Missionary activity in the past has been accused of propagating not only the Gospel but also a western way of life and our western culture. With the insights of our colleagues from these countries we can begin to distinguish between the essence of the Christian Gospel and the cultural appendages it

has acquired over the centuries. By doing so we enable the indigenous church to express the gospel in the culture of the people, whether that be in Asian music or African dance.

Biblical training

I have strayed into the area of the work of the mission department so let me expand on it. An essential part of the course is its biblical training, both in terms of Biblical exegesis and Christian doctrine. I have already mentioned that the students for the mission department are drawn from the various colleges and this too applies to the lecturers. This undoubtedly has many important advantages, but it also presents a problem, as it must be said that the Doctrinal teaching does not always concur with Baptist principles and practice, indeed at times it clashes sharply.

For ourselves, having spent six months prior to our stay at St Andrew's at Spurgeon's College in London, and because of our church background we felt able to cope with teaching that was plainly contrary to our beliefs, and we often found ourselves putting forward a more conservative viewpoint to that being expressed. The appointment of a conservative evangelical lecturer in such

excellence in missionary training

an area would be most welcome. We say this not only from a Baptist point of view, but also in as much as it would better reflect the views of what is numerically the largest group of Christians engaged in missionary endeavour today, namely conservative evangelicals. (Source: *Time Magazine* – December 1982.) This feeling is certainly held within St Andrew's and it has its supporters elsewhere in the Federation. BMS would do well to add its voice also.

Outstanding resources

A large part of the mission course is concerned with the cross-cultural dimension of missionary activity. Here the experience of the tutors is invaluable, all having worked overseas in missionary situations. Again, the UK tutors have worked in Zaire, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, India, Taiwan, Papua New Guinea and others, whilst there are also tutors from the United States, Uganda and Germany. With these outstanding resources available, each missionary is able to attend specific 'Area Studies', a seminar on that part of the world to which he or she is going, the politics and history of the country, its culture and customs. Specific studies of Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, on 'Primal World Views' concentrating here on Animistic Religions found still today in many of the BMS fields of service.

A study of the Theology of Mission aims to help the missionary to see the place of his calling in the total revelation of God to His people through Our Lord Jesus Christ, how Jesus's mission relates to the Christian Mission today and how our understanding of mission relates to our understanding of 'Church' and so on.

Community life

There are many other dimensions to the

mission department at Selly Oak, and any article of this length cannot do justice to all of them. I must comment however on the community life at St Andrew's which is a learning experience in itself.

It will come as no surprise to those who have persevered thus far through the article to hear that again there are many countries represented within the life of the college. About half of the college is involved in the mission department. The rest study other courses, but the atmosphere of love and fellowship that exists between the members of the community is a lovely experience of living and working with Christians of varying countries and traditions. This in itself is a part of the learning as much as lectures and seminars.

Please pray for the work of the college, particularly the staff there. The Principal is

the Rev Dan Beeby, a 'veteran' of some three years in China and twenty-two years service in Taiwan. The Rev Jim Grenfell, serving with the BMS since 1953 in Angola and Zaire is now lecturing in the cross-cultural aspects of mission as well as having pastoral oversight of BMS candidates. Miss Kristen Ofstad is a Norwegian brought up in Ethiopia, where her parents were Missionaries. She served for a time in Papua New Guinea, and is now a tutor and librarian at St Andrew's.

One year of training has been invaluable to us, and St Andrew's has played a significant part in it. It is undoubtedly a centre of excellence in the field of specific missionary training. It has long served the needs of the BMS and continues to do so. As such it deserves the support of all those who regularly pray that the work of the Society may continue to advance in these days.



Overseas students entertaining



Janette and Jim Watson

FOLLOWING THE CONVENTION

By Jim Watson

HAVE you ever returned from Keswick or Filey, uplifted spiritually, to find yourself at home confronted with a number of problems? This was our experience here in Barisal, Bangladesh, when we returned from the annual Dhaka Convention very recently.

We encountered our first problem when we gave a lift to a Bengali Pastor at a ferry crossing. False teaching from an outside body had come to a local village church and had caused dissension. Following two visits to the village

concerned, some Biblical instruction on the points at issue; a visitation of a number of *baris* (homes); contact with the leaders of the other group and a Lay Preachers' Conference (all within the space of a few days), the problem has almost been resolved, praise the Lord.

Future healers?

During the same time, another situation arose, as I was sitting with a village patient in the big local State Hospital. A young man was brought in by others, apparently in a bad way. To my question, 'A serious case?' the reply was, 'Oh no, the medical students have been fighting among themselves.' Some minutes later, a slogan-shouting procession came through the hospital corridors and just after we arrived back at the compound, we heard a bomb go off in the hospital grounds. The thought came to me, are these really the agents of healing for the future in this land?

Oh, I forgot. Whilst I was at the hospital, a man from the Police Investigation Department, asked me to give my signature and nationality — I have *his* signature in our Visitors-cum-Prayer Book, so I guess fair's fair! Eventually as I was leaving the hospital, I was requested to call at the home of a member of the local Christian community. He has been quite ill and asked me whether or not whisky would be helpful to his condition. I had to tell him that the 'worst export from Scotland is whisky and the best export is men'. No, we have enough problems here without introducing alcohol!

Panic

The following day, this was the scene in our garden. The local Women's Meeting were preparing their curry meal over open fires; downstairs in his house, the young pastor was packing-up to move to his new ministry in Rangpur; we were preparing upstairs for a memorial prayer meeting; suddenly there was a scream from outside — a little girl had been bitten by one of the dogs! Panic, concern, questions — rabies? injections? The reason for the dog's reaction we knew was the heat, the crowd and the fact she was expecting pups (five born last night, under the stair!). But how to explain to excited Bengalis!

Praise God there was another side to these few days! Our Gospel Bookstall at the local Industrial Exhibition had been continuing to see an outflow of literature mainly to Muslims. The arranged 'Jesus' film was seen in the open-air at the Exhibition by a very big crowd. I had the privilege of leading a Muslim young man to a profession of faith in Christ, in our home. A Hindu man (at the village referred to earlier) had expressed a desire to become a Christian and we prayed with him.

Moreover, we had encouraging news from our lads in Hebron School, South India (2,000 miles away). Paul was challenged by the potential when he was involved in a witness team of one teacher and fellow prefects from the school to another boarding school in the hills. Timothy and Peter (the twins) have been able to have their Quiet Times in the midst of a very active school life.

COMMENTS QUESTIONS QUOTES

By DEKA

PERSPECTIVE – Why is it so hard to hold things in the right perspective? Usually, it seems, it is only when we allow ourselves to stand back that we are able to get a situation into proper perspective. Often, in the midst of a situation, we think that we are reading it right, but later we find this is not so. There is the temptation to paint too dark a picture, or the opposite one of looking at everything through rose-tinted spectacles. I know how I have been guilty of both of these. Overseas the problems can loom very large and oppressive, and thoughts turn to the home country which assumes a rosy hue. Then you come home. Illusions are shattered. The same or similar problems, tensions in the churches, that you thought were peculiar to the country where you had been working, are there as well. Humbling, depressing, encouraging? – all three I think.

Q Q Q Q Q

'The surroundings may, by some, have been regarded as sparse, no curtains on the windows or water in the taps but such problems were diminished and overcome by the love of our hosts. Better, in such circumstances to live in Africa Hall than in a five star hotel.'

Another way of getting things in their right perspective. It reminded me of a conversation I had recently regarding the suitability or otherwise of various venues for a conference. Certainly all the places

we were talking about would have had curtains at the windows, and water in the taps, but what more were we looking for?

I am sure that all of us at some time have experienced going into a home, or meeting place, or church, and becoming conscious of the warm open friendly atmosphere that seemed to meet us. A warmth generated by genuine, caring love, and when that is present one forgets the surroundings. The drabness or inconvenience fade into insignificance compared with the reality of the love.

Q Q Q Q Q

'True humility and real concern for others and for the kingdom of God, are notable by their absence.'

That was actually written by one of our missionaries about a church situation overseas. But is that not echoed in many of the articles written about church life in the UK? Where are we going wrong? Do we enjoy salvation for ourselves without much concern for others? Is humility a debased virtue in our eyes? If so, why?

Q Q Q Q Q

R E O White wrote about one of the qualities needed by evangelists – 'Love

them first, convert them afterwards.' 'See how these Christians love one another.' 'By love shall all men know that you are my disciples.' What sort of impression do we make on others? Is Christian love the mark of our lives and service?

Have you ever wondered what or who exactly you were going to find in a certain place, or at a certain conference? And afterwards what is it that you come away remembering? After that conference in Africa Hall, the writer came away and wrote:

'Christ met me there and sent me there to be feasted with His love.'

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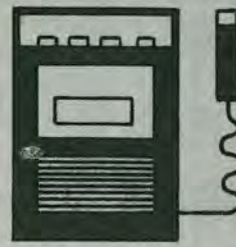
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We Need People

PEOPLE rather than things was the theme of a report on candidates given to the General Committee in March by Overseas Secretary Angus MacNeill.

'Everywhere I go the same question is put to me; will you be sending any more people to help us?' he said. Mr MacNeill has been on recent visits both to Angola and the Caribbean and he reported to the committee that the Society has the privilege of channelling special help to many areas to support a wide variety of evangelistic and compassionate ministries.

'This is highly valued, and sometimes essential,' he said, 'but still the call comes to us for people.'

'It would be wrong to respond to every request for missionaries. There may be times when a church overseas has not thought through what it means to have a European missionary

doing a particular job. But the fact remains that the society finds itself under constant pressure to find more missionaries — some to provide continuity in the work we have supported over many years, and some to pick up new challenges.'

When Fred and Marjorie Drake return home from Angola this summer there will once again be no BMS missionaries there. 'We still need a builder, as we requested two years ago, and we need a pastor to teach in the Kibokolo Bible School,' the Angolans are saying.

'In Trinidad I was asked in public at the Baptist Union Assembly there, "Why has the BMS not found the person we requested to help us in our lay-training programme?" Maybe we have found that person now, but our Trinidadian friends could not understand why we had taken so long over it.'

'In Zaire the CBFZ reminds us constantly that they wish our partnership to be expressed in people.'

Mr MacNeill said that none of the churches with which the BMS is in partnership wishes to be swamped by missionaries. 'But all see the valuable, limited role which a missionary from the UK can still play in Asia, Africa, or South America.'

'The calling which God has given to us to be a missionary society, involved in the sending

of people, is still being confirmed by the churches overseas. Partnership in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is still being valued when it finds its expression in the response of sending people to live and work and serve alongside Christians in other countries.'

'At present we need people to fill 25 missionary situations. This is a tremendous opportunity to serve in the forward of witness to Christ in our world through our partners overseas.'

Whistle-Stop Tour

NINETY people were taken on a lightning world tour recently, taking off from Wolverhampton, and returning within ninety minutes. The travellers were attending the midweek prayer and praise meeting at Tabernacle Baptist Church, the courier was Peter Briggs, West Midland representative of the BMS, and the tour was done without leaving the hall.

The first stop was at Hong Kong, and the second China, scene of so much work by the society until 1949, and now seeing great growth of Christian work and witness under the more relaxed local regime of the 80's.

Next came Nepal, then Bangladesh, where BMS started work in 1792 and where now Islam, supported by Arab oil money, is taking an increasingly aggressive stance toward Christian work. On to Sri Lanka, also a historic BMS field where the church at Colombo was featured.

Angola was the next stop, where Christian work is being

rebuilt after the turmoil of the civil war. The last port of call was right across the Atlantic, where the Society began work after the closure of the China mission. The work in Paraná province has borne much fruit and now many Christian families are joining the long migration north to Mato Grosso to seek better land and BMS is going with them to help in evangelism and church planting.

Returning the travellers home the speaker reminded them that mission at home and overseas is one, and that the recent initiative of Tabernacle itself, in sending out its members to found a church on a new housing estate, with the help of HMF, stands alongside these stories from across the world.

The returned travellers then broke into seven groups, each praying for one of the fields touched upon in the tour. As the meeting came to its close, participants felt much more concerned and involved in the world-wide ministry of the BMS.



Fred and Marjorie Drake

No Strings

HELP without strings attached was given to those affected by the Paraná floods because of money from the BMS Relief Fund. This was the news given to the General Committee by two of the Society's missionaries from Brazil.

At the worst of the flooding, in the south of Brazil, in July last year, the Mayor of Rio Negro, Paraná went on local radio. The homeless in the town number 4,500 and only 15 percent of the town council's appeal for aid had been granted by the Government. The Mayor said that he could give financial and material help to a maximum of £50 to any practising Roman Catholic family in need, as long as they were prepared to have the local saint in their home for 24 hours before passing it on to someone else.

Only such Catholics would be considered for council aid.

However, the Mayor went on to say that there was an evangelical pastor in the town giving help to anyone! That was BMS missionary Roy Connor. So for about seven months there were long queues at the manse — sometimes as many as 25 or 30 families a day, from early in the morning until last thing at night.

No one was ever turned away, but each case had to be investigated so that the best help available could be given. So food, bedding, disinfectants, building materials, furniture, and many other things were provided.

Through the spontaneous and generous help of the BMS, the Southern Baptists, Tear Fund and individual giving, Roy and Margaret Connor were able not only to be in the right place at the right time, but to be of service to the Lord in the stricken community. No



The Connors

questions were asked about a person's religion. A needy person is a needy person regardless of labels. Jesus never asked questions before helping the hungry and needy, or healing the blind, lame, leper or lunatic. Love had to be shown in practical terms, and it still has to be, before the Gospel, preached in words, has a hearing.

During the flood relief programme operated by Roy and

Margaret, Roy became extremely well known. Whilst trying to help the homeless, Roy's own home was in danger of being inundated throughout the period from February to September 1983 when the south of Brazil was flooded five times. In the event it was not touched, but a leading town councillor offered his own new home to Roy and Margaret. He also suggested that Roy ought to stand for Mayor in the elections last November.

Dr Acres Dies

DR IAN ACRES, known as the BMS 'Family Doctor' (see *Herald*, July 1982) has died at the age of 75. He was associated with the medical work of the Society for more than 50 years.

He and Mrs Acres began their missionary service at Bolobo in 1933 and served there for 13 years. He was involved in a programme of sleeping sickness control in the Bolobo area.

The family returned home in 1946 and Ian joined the Bolobo pioneer doctor, Dr Girling, as a partner in his north London practice. This enabled him to maintain his BMS links. He served on the General Committee, the Medical Advisory Committee, and in 1967 he succeeded Dr Burton as Medical Director. When he retired in 1976, he continued to serve the Society as honorary medical adviser until 1982.

He was BMS Chairman in 1975-76 and was appointed an honorary member of the General Committee in 1977. He was responsible for much of the Society's medical literature.

BMS Summer Holidays

IT IS 74 years since the BMS held its first Summer School at Folkestone. They are now known as 'BMS Summer Holidays', but they are still as lively and present many opportunities for Christian growth.

'Each year young people respond to the challenge to commit their lives to Christ and to the task of His mission to the world,' BMS Young People's Secretary, David Martin told the General Committee at its March meeting. 'They are times of great fellowship, enjoyment, teaching and personal development, and ought not to be missed.'

Over the years many have been recruited to missionary service, and others have returned to their home churches better able to play a responsible role.

'There are still vacancies at this year's Summer Holidays. I urge you to encourage young friends, and families, in fact people of all ages to come and join us this year,' Mr Martin said.

Favela Work in Cotia, São Paulo

The work we do here has many frustrations but at the beginning of February we had evidence that it was worthwhile. Registered in our Holiday Bible School were 84 names. On two days during the week we had over 60 boys and girls in our garage/chapel. They responded with affection to our efforts and they behaved well. Several

raised their hands in response to the question: 'Who wants Jesus Christ in his heart and life?' Of course it's only the beginning and the full implications are not understood, but, Praise the Lord, we have had the privilege of sowing the seed of the Gospel. Our prayer and expectation is that in due time the full fruit will appear.

Dialogue during Bible Class

'Also in heaven is the Book of Life. Whose name is written in the Book of Life?'

Jenete: 'Yours teacher.'

'Amen, and for all others who have accepted the Lord in their hearts.'

Jenete: 'If there are so many millions of angels in heaven, will there be room for us too?'

'Of course, heaven is a huge place. There is room for all who believe.'

F Vaughan

TALKBACK



WHAT OUR
READERS ARE
THINKING

Anyone Interested?

From Howard Holmes

I was most interested to read what the Rev Neil McVicar (BMS Overseas Representative for Asia), said to the General Committee in November about the vital need for more prayer for Asia, and pointing out 'that British Baptists often visit Asia as tourists or on business, but they rarely take the trouble to call on any of our BMS missionaries, or to meet their Baptist partners in the national churches. Tourists should include areas of Baptist work on their itinerary.'

Most tourists are obliged to

accept a 'package tour' with a prearranged itinerary, with no time or opportunity for making visits as so aptly suggested by the Rev Neil McVicar, desirable and helpful as such visits would surely be. I was privileged last year, to be one of those who joined the 'Work Study Tour of India', under the auspices of the BMS, and the Gravesend and District Community Relations Council. The tour included specific visits to areas of BMS work in India: meeting the Rev Geoffrey Grose of the Green Park Free Church in Delhi; fellow Baptists at Serempore College,

and BMS missionaries David and Joyce Sorrill, and three Christian schools.

Would it not be possible for the BMS to initiate a move (through the *Missionary Herald* and *Baptist Times*), to ascertain if there is sufficient interest among fellow Baptists, with a view to organizing a tour to include areas of Baptist work in Asia, as suggested by the Rev Neil McVicar. Those of us who joined the 'Work Study Tour' of India were greatly blessed by the fellowship we enjoyed with BMS workers, and other Christians engaged in a vital real spiritual

experience, and a great challenge, enabling us to pray not only more intelligently, but more fervently for that great area of need that is Asia.

HOWARD HOLMES

76 South Norwood Hill
London SE25 6AQ

Mr Holmes has prepared a slide/tape presentation, 'This is India', with a synchronized commentary and lasting 35 minutes. It especially features BMS associated work and Serampore College. Anyone interested in using it please contact Mr Holmes. Tel: 01-653 4867

Brazil Correspondence —

Rev Harvey and Rev MacNeill will be replying to correspondence in next month's edition.

From Rev Paul Walker

BY the tone and content of Eric Westwood's letter it is evident that Andrew Mawson's words have touched a sensitive nerve. This is potentially good, and hopefully it will open a creative debate. One of the major elements in the debate is the fact that the BMS and its work was conceived in a different age. Missionary work was begun at a time of British colonialism and is historically tied to it. There is a growing historical awareness among Christians, and the recognition that the present incongruities of missionary work can no longer be suppressed.

The Christian faith has inherent within it, the concept of expansion. When that expansion was expressed in terms of the white western

church going to 'convert the heathen', not only did it take its faith, but tied it to a culture and 'exported' it as a package. Many now recognize that for the white western church to 'export' anything is wrong. We can help, serve, encourage and offer a practical vision of God's love and compassion in Christ, when invited, but that is the limit.

The confusion arises when we try to cling to both these elements at once, to maintain the expansionist approach to 'convert the heathen', but to do it under the guise of help, care and broad development work. Charity given for an ulterior motive ceases to be charity and becomes arrogant paternalism. This is what offends many people. It also has the effect that promotional films about the

work of BMS try to maintain the myth that we are there to 'convert the heathen', hence such titles as *The Spreading Flame*. Such films are light on political, economic and social reality, lack historical perspective, and are heavy on the glorious expansion of Christianity. I am sure that BMS personnel, both at home and overseas, recognize and are well aware of the tensions that I am falteringly trying to point out, and yet to keep the popular support of the broad, conservative body of Baptist people, we have to maintain the sham.

This difficulty is expressed in a different form in Rosemary Williams' letter. As she so rightly points out, the problem of the relationships between people of other faiths and Christianity is no longer a matter to do with 'darkest

Africa'; it is on our doorstep in all our big cities and some small towns.

The attitudes of 19th century missionary colonialism are outmoded and outdated, and we must grasp the nettle, hoping to move towards a more equitable and acceptable view of 'missionary' work, that is not only taking place overseas but is also firmly planted on our doorstep.

At present the BMF is under radical review, its matters and policies having been formulated in 1948. Is it possible that this is also the time for radical rethinking of the role and attitude of the BMS?

REV PAUL WALKER

Highgate Baptist Church,
Birmingham

From Rev Philip H. Smith

I have every respect for people like Eric Westwood, who work in the most difficult circumstances in a country far from home, but sadly, his response to Andrew Mawson's letter failed to answer some important questions raised. It was a gut reaction to criticism and, as such, is understandable, but maybe some of Andrew's criticisms are valid and need to be taken seriously.

The main points of Andrew's letter were:

- 1) It is a fact that some BMS missionaries are supporting the poor in their quest for land rights, a living wage and justice in other forms. Why is this work not recognized in BMS publicity and encouraged as being central to the Gospel? (see Luke 4 v 16-21).
- 2) It is a fact that Brazil is a nation of extreme wealth and extreme poverty, oppression and even mass murder by the authorities. While appreciating the delicate position of the BMS about visas, should

we not be protesting about such injustice and making readers of the *Missionary Herald* aware of how, for instance, the Boro Indians have been systematically murdered?

- 3) Brazil is the home of the world's largest rain forest, which ecologists tell us is vital for the survival of our planet. It is being destroyed and BMS missionaries are moving into the areas developed where the forest used to be. Is this not an issue that Christians should be addressing?
- 4) As Martin Luther King claimed in *Strength to Love*, any religion which professes to be concerned with the souls of men, and yet is not concerned with the economic and social conditions that strangle them, can properly be labelled 'an opiate to the people'. Why is there so little mention of this concern for economic and social conditions in BMS publicity? It appears as an after-thought or an incidental, but it should be central to our mission shouldn't it?

- 5) It is a fact that Roman Catholics were in Brazil centuries before the BMS. Why is there no mention of attempts to work with our Catholic brothers and sisters in Christ in BMS literature? Is no attempt made? I find it disappointing that Eric Westwood so easily writes off Christians of the calibre of Helder Camara. If any reader has never heard that name before then you should be informed about a courageous Catholic Bishop, who is seeking freedom for the oppressed in Brazil's poorest city.

answered and I believe that they deserve real answers. The BMS must face these questions and seek to answer them, not for my sake, not for Andrew Mawson's sake, but for the sake of the Lord whom we all seek to serve.

PS and by the way Eric, some of us feel that God has called us to minister in Britain, not in an armchair. We recognize your ministry, so please don't undervalue ours.

REV PHILIP H SMITH

Chaplain, Polytechnic of Wales, Pontypridd, Mid-Glamorgan

These questions were not

AN OPEN LETTER TO ERIC WESTWOOD

From Rev Derek Winter

Dear Eric,

I see that Andrew Mawson's letter has provoked mention of my name in 'Talkback' in the same issue of the *Herald* that carries your reply.

I find your defensive and sarcastic reply to Andrew disappointing. We can hardly expect people to give money to missionary societies and take a prayerful interest in the work, but then complain when they take a critical interest as well! Anyway, you've taken Andrew's letter as an attack on BMS missionaries in Brazil; in fact, he was criticising the film *The Spreading Flame* as giving a distorted image of the Society's work — he specifically says that in his opinion it does an injustice to the work of many of the missionaries — as well as failing to reflect the Brazilian reality. You have yourself expressed concern for the endemic poverty that afflicts so many people in Brazil, in your article in the March issue.

Next, you slate Andrew as an armchair critic. But you know as well as I do that living and working in Brazil for years is no guarantee in itself of understanding its complex political, social and religious situation; nor is someone disqualified from analysis and interpretation simply because he's never set foot in the place. In our interlocking world, many of the problems of Latin America are the mirror image of our own (it won't have escaped you that Oxfam is now funding projects in Britain!). In any case, the 'armchair in Kingston' jibe misses its mark. As I write, Andrew is on a visit to El Salvador, and in touch with people whose witness to the gospel could cost them their lives.

Then you have fun with the picture of Andrew explaining his incarnational theology to a small congregation of unlettered farmers, but that implicit paternalism won't do either. A few years ago I was sitting next to a Brazilian from the sticks of Para, listening to an hour-long exposition of this 'incarnational theology' from Gustavo Guitierrez. 'What did you make of that?' I asked. 'Marvellous,' he replied. 'He puts into words what we feel in our bones, but find difficult to articulate.' But what bugs me is what looks like thinly-veiled hostility to the Catholic Church. Yes, that church's contribution to the ignorance and subservience of Brazilians in the past is a failure that is openly acknowledged by many Catholics; but why do non-Catholics have to cold-shoulder a genuine and wide-spread change

continued on page 99

From Rev Gordon Holmes

THERE is a danger that the Talkback discussion of the role of the BMS in Brazil will become polarized. A way forward is suggested by R A and A F Evans. They provide a kind of researched case study from Brazil as one of a collection published in their book *Human Rights — A Dialogue Between the First and Third Worlds* (Orbis/Lutterworth 1983).

Alan Johnson, a business man, flies home to his local congregation following a visit to Brazil. He has been asked to report on the role of the Church. On the basis of his experiences the authors invite readers to send them their comments. Two reactions are provided. One is from Kosuke Koyama, the Japanese theologian, who notes that Alan Johnson was given three different views, each by a separate advocate:

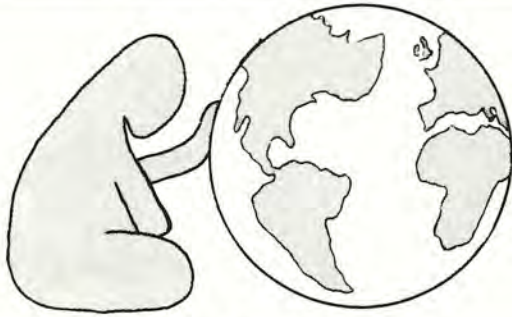
'The first is (for the Church) to take active participation

in the total life of a nation. The second is to concentrate church energy and resources on conversion alone. The third is a gradualist position. I believe the discussion must go on among these three. The living church must be able to seek mutual corrections.'

For us the discussion and comment making could take place beyond the BMS General Committee in — at least some — local meetings or groups. Resources would be needed. The interesting study papers being distributed to the churches by the BMS could be developed to provide a means. For content the Evans' case studies, and how they use them, provide a model.

REV GORDON HOLMES

Christian Aid Area Secretary,
Avon & Somerset,
Westbury-on-Trym Baptist
Church



CALL TO

PRAYER

1784 - 1984

Home 29 April – 5 May

THE Baptist Assembly is being held in London this week. World mission, at home and abroad, will be stressed right at the beginning, when Reg Harvey, BMS General Secretary, and Bernard Green, the Union's General Secretary 'open windows on the world to see what God is doing in this age'. This will lead into a time of praise and open prayer.

Derek Mucklow, who has already taken over the responsibilities of Chairman following the death in December of Alberic Clement, will be formally inducted at the Annual Members' Meeting. The Annual Report, 'Not Disappointed in Hope,' will be presented by the Secretaries, and business transacted. Both the Women's and Medical departments will be holding their special meetings during the Assembly. Dr David Russell is preaching the missionary sermon, and Roy Connors is speaking at the Wednesday missionary rally and valediction of missionaries. Please remember all these meetings that the missionary message may be presented with conviction and clarity.

Zaire – Kinshasa 13-26 May

THE economic problems of Zaire seem more acute in a growing and heavily populated capital city like Kinshasa. The Society has 15 missionaries there, but all with responsibilities for wider areas of concern than Kinshasa. Owen and Deanna Clark work in the CBFZ headquarters, Owen is Assistant General Secretary. Andrew and Anne North are also attached to the Secretariat looking after 'missionary affairs' and working as supply officer for the CBFZ. Douglas and Helen Drysdale will be returning to Kinshasa, where Douglas will be continuing to help in the building of the new office buildings.

The Hostel for Missionaries' children has five residents at the moment, looked after by Dai and Anne Davies. Ruth Montacute is head of the British Association School, which has a racially mixed community of pupils, Susan Shields and Caroline Jenkinson work with her. Tim and Barbara Blukeley are part of the University theological faculty, and Vivian and Gwen Lewis work at the International Protestant church.

India – Ludhiana and Vellore 6-12 May

THE Society had links with the Christian Medical College and Hospital at Ludhiana since Dr Edith Brown, a BMS missionary, founded the work more than 100 years ago. Dr Stanley Browne has recently visited the work, and in an article to appear next month, mentions the community health department which is helping to raise standards of health and hygiene in the surrounding villages as well as the town. So impressed by this work are government officials, that they are recommending that every medical college in India should have a similar department.

Whilst we have no missionaries working at Ludhiana in the north, Ann Bothamley is serving at Vellore Christian Medical College and Hospital in the south. She works in the intensive care unit. She was invited to speak at a conference in Australia, dealing with the treatment of cancer, and she took the opportunity of visiting Papua New Guinea en route. Ann is also responsible for a hostel for children of Indian missionaries.

Bangladesh – Khula and Jessore 27 May-2 June

KHULNA is an industrial town in the south of Bangladesh, and it has a mixture of old and new churches. John and Nan Passmore have now moved from Kalishpur to the old mission compound on the other side of Khulna. This is helping to advance the pastoral work and theological training of the churches. There are encouraging signs in the work – evangelism amongst Hindus to the South of Khulna, in literature and in the use of a book shop at a local exhibition, and in the town churches where a series of revival meetings have been held.

There are problems too and John and Nan often have to play the reconciling role in disputes, and to support the pastoral superintendent, J S Roy.

Jessore is an old area of BMS work, and whilst we have no missionary there at the moment, friends in Britain will know the Rev Robert Sarkar who has just moved there from Dhaka to become pastoral superintendent.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Departures

Miss Georgette Short on 13 March for CECO, Kimpese, Zaire.

Miss Valerie Watkins on 13 March for Upoto, Zaire.

Mr and Mrs D Kerrigan and family on 22 March to Barisal, Bangladesh.

Arrivals

Rev John Fumage on 10 March from Dois Vizinhos, Brazil.

Rev Frank Mardell on 21 March from Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

Miss Ann Flippance on 27 March from Binga, Zaire.

Deaths

On 21 March, **Dr Gladys Rutherford**, MB, ChB, DTM (India Village Service 1923-1957), aged 89.

On 31 March, **Dr Ian Sydney Acres**, MB, BS, DTM (Zaire 1933-1947) (Medical Advisor Committee 1954) (Chairman of Society 1975-1976), aged 76.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously. (7 February-12 March 1984)

Legacies

	£	p
Miss E A Astell	50	00
Mrs F L Barnett	100	00
Mrs E Brown	3,000	00
Miss G V Casselli	1,358	48

Mary Alice Chapman	80.00
Mr W Dickinson	201.52
Miss G Dufall	20.00
Mr W Gore	100.00
Miss D E B Holland	500.00
Mrs E M Lea	15,000.00
Miss E J D McKean	100.00
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Mrs M N Powell	389.57
Mrs E A E Stephens	500.00
Mr T Thomas	1,077.28
F Todman	841.80
Mr W H Valler	4,119.89

General Work

Anon: £1.00; Anon: £45.00; Anon: £28.00; Anon: £100.00; Anon (Motherwell): £610.00; Anon: £31.00; Anon: £30.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £7.00; Anon: £100.00; Anon: £4.00; Anon: £42.00; Anon: £7.00; Anon: £25.00.

Women's Project

Anon: £5.00.

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of heart, as if Medellin and Puebla had made little or no difference to the Catholic Church in Latin America? I'm not even going to argue this point, because I think it takes a pretty severe case of myopia to miss it, and anyway it's well documented elsewhere.

In any case, are Latin American Protestants, who could once be proud of their liberalising traditions, now in any position to criticise? While the Catholic Church, or a significant sector of it, has made its 'preferential option for the poor', and often providing the only space for protest against social injustice, many Protestants have been busy retreating into their spiritual ghettos, or even giving their active support to the repressive regimes that are responsible for so much widespread misery.

It's ironic that the report of Nilson Fanini's acceptance of patronage from President Figueiredo, who leads the 'decaying Brazilian quasi-dictatorship', appears in the same issue as your remark about the apolitical nature of the evangelical churches, and it shoots holes in the much-vaunted Baptist doctrine of church/state separation (as if an apolitical stance were ever a realistic option). Top Baptists criticise liberation theology for its failure to maintain a critical distance from Marxism; but where is the critical distance of this highly influential Baptist leader from rampant capitalism backed by military force? No wonder the President praised Baptists and called the gospel the solution to Brazil's difficulties — the 'gospel' that will go out from the new TV station will pose no prophetic threat to his government's twenty-year track-record of torture, repression and mismanagement of the country's resources.

To be sure, you say you can feel the first breath of the wind of social concern probing the minds of Brazilian Baptists, and you look forward to the creation of a department of social action. Exhumation might be a better word — that department existed twenty years ago, and was strangled by the denominational machine (social concern was equated with communism in those days), while some Brazilian pastors looked in vain to the Society for help in the unequal struggle for its survival. True, we mustn't 'impose from the outside what must be the result of thought and debate from the inside'. But that ignores the fact that what passes for the Brazilians' 'own patterns and ways of doing things' is often the result of imposing from the outside the ideas of the Southern Baptists of the USA, so that the ideology of 'Moral Majority' becomes the accepted wisdom of the Brazilian Baptist establishment, as vigilant a sniffing out 'heresy' as any clique of party apparatchiks. Dissident voices, with an arguably better claim to be heard as authentically

Brazilian, are silenced.

So this pussy-footing reluctance to rock the boat gives me a sinking feeling of *deja vu*. It's there in the first major report sent from Brazil nearly thirty years ago, and we're still too scared of controversy with the guardians of Baptist orthodoxy to listen to the prophetic voices of other Latin American Baptists, let alone national Christians of other denominations. It's ten years since the Baptist pastor, Orlando Costas, wrote: 'The time is quickly drawing upon the people of God in Latin America, indeed it is already here, when neither Catholics nor Protestants will be able to bear an effective witness for Christ except as Christians.' In the sun-parched *sertão* of the North-East, no one is going to ask whether the hand offering the cup of cold water is Catholic or Protestant. In the wretchedly squalid refugee camps of El Salvador, they didn't think it odd that a Baptist pastor, Marta Benavides, was organizing relief as right-hand woman to Archbishop Oscar Romero. But in Brazil it seems that Baptists can't even co-operate with CESE, Christian Aid's ecumenical partner based in Bahia and at present bringing emergency relief to the drought-hit North-East. Is it because that would mean working with Catholics?

In the end, it boils down to what we mean by preaching the gospel; then we can identify our real allies in the task. If we believe that the victory of Jesus is over all the expressions of sin that disfigure human life, including hunger amidst plenty, rampant injustice and cruel repression, and that the church is called to oppose these things in witness to the presence of the Kingdom, then the kind of co-operation that existed between Archbishop Romero and some of the Baptists of El Salvador becomes an urgent necessity. When Marta Benavides was here a year after Romero's death, she asked the officers of the BU and BMS to give higher priority to these Kingdom issues of peace and justice in Latin America. Someone commented that we need to educate our people about these matters.

'I'm glad you want to educate your people,' she replied, 'I want to stop my people getting killed.' (Yes, that's El Salvador, but it's only Latin America scaled down so that we can take it in.) Do you wonder that Andrew and people like him respond as they do? But what impression of the response of BMS is given by the film he criticises?

DEREK WINTER

Cheltenham.

NOTICE BOARD

SITUATIONS VACANT

25 Missionaries are needed to serve overseas as

Pastors and theological teachers	9
Agriculturalists _____	1
Builders _____	2
Doctors _____	2
Nurses _____	4
Woman church worker _____	1
Teachers _____	3
Educational/Medical/Development workers (for Nepal) _____	3

Fuller details from
The Personnel Secretary



SUMMER HOLIDAY?

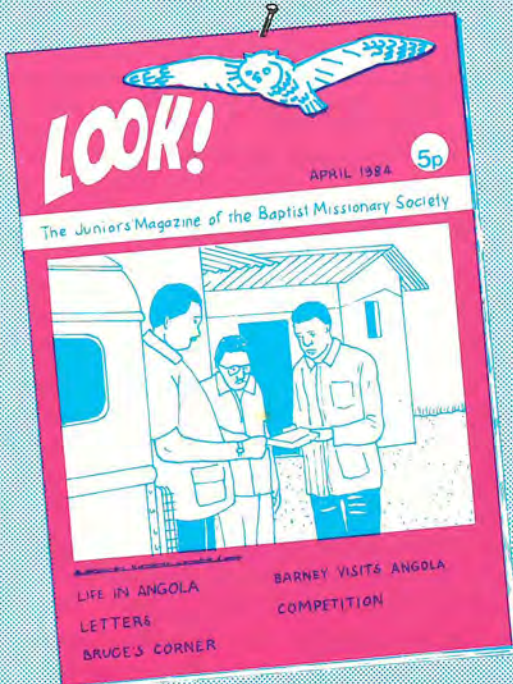
There's still time to book for a great holiday at Penzance full of Christian fellowship and worldwide horizons.

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4-18 AUGUST

WEDNESDAY 7 JULY 7.30 pm

BMS PUBLIC MEETING

WESTGATE BAPTIST CHURCH
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'MAKING IT PLAIN'

BMS WOMEN'S PROJECT
1984-85

to raise £20,000 for

**MISSIONARY
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Details from: Miss Sue Le Quesne

Further information about any of these notices can be obtained from: Baptist Missionary Society, 93 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA.