

MISSIONARY

HERALD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

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"WE HAVE SEEN HIS STAR
IN THE EAST AND HAVE
COME TO WORSHIP HIM"



DECEMBER 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

INDIA has been very much in our minds after the tragic death of Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi and the atrocities that followed in its wake. The Society has had nearly 200 years of service in the sub-continent and feels as keenly as the Indian people the pain and grief of these events. At its meetings in November the BMS General Committee agreed, unanimously to write letters of sympathy to both the Indian President and the Prime Minister.

'It was with deep sadness that the General Committee of the Society, representative of Baptist Churches throughout Great Britain, noted in its meeting on November 6 the tragic events of the death of your mother, Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, and the subsequent deaths of hundreds of your fellow citizens,' reads the letter to the Prime Minister. 'We express to you personally, to other members of your family, and to the community of your people, our sincere Christian sympathy.'

The letter ends: 'We would assure you of the Society's concern and sincere prayers for you as you undertake the onerous responsibilities of being Prime Minister, and for your people that there shall be lasting reconciliation and true peace.'

Whither the Indian Church

The missionary task force in India is slowly dwindling as folk retire and no new visas are being issued. Yet the new Moderator of the Church of North India, Bishop Dinesh Chandra Gorai, is using this situation to challenge the church. He has written a book — *Transfer of Vision* — to stimulate leadership. 'Today we are reaping the benefits of other people's work. We have no moral right to reap the harvest if we do not sow seeds ourselves' he says.

He sees the strength of the CNI as people. 'Because the church is poor, its wealth is people. Our present strength is that we are a poor church and that leaves many scopes open because we are not fully developed and we are still growing. We still have to challenge people. Our sense of insecurity, of being a minority and our financial weakness are our greatest assets.'

'He believes that restrictions on foreign missionaries have helped the CNI to understand its own role better. He sees no place in the future for the major role played previously by missionary societies. 'We need field workers not leaders from overseas. We don't need people to do the jobs which Indians are now able to do, but we do need people who can be a resource for the local church, give it new strengths, new hopes and new inspirations. They remind us that the church is universal.' We hope to review Bishop Gorai's book at length in a future issue.

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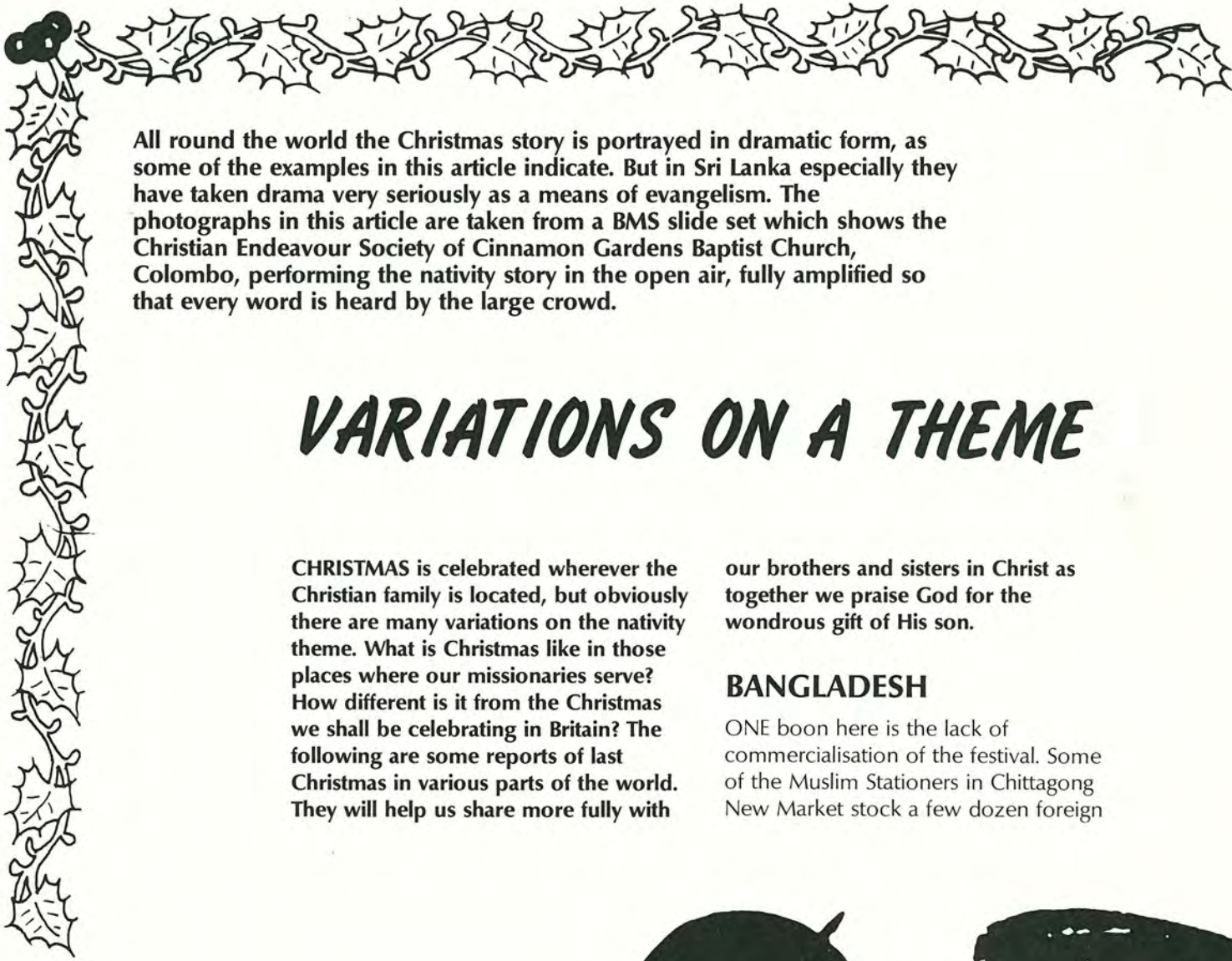
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All round the world the Christmas story is portrayed in dramatic form, as some of the examples in this article indicate. But in Sri Lanka especially they have taken drama very seriously as a means of evangelism. The photographs in this article are taken from a BMS slide set which shows the Christian Endeavour Society of Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church, Colombo, performing the nativity story in the open air, fully amplified so that every word is heard by the large crowd.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

CHRISTMAS is celebrated wherever the Christian family is located, but obviously there are many variations on the nativity theme. What is Christmas like in those places where our missionaries serve? How different is it from the Christmas we shall be celebrating in Britain? The following are some reports of last Christmas in various parts of the world. They will help us share more fully with

our brothers and sisters in Christ as together we praise God for the wondrous gift of His son.

BANGLADESH

ONE boon here is the lack of commercialisation of the festival. Some of the Muslim Stationers in Chittagong New Market stock a few dozen foreign



Christmas cards, and two or three other shops have one or two plastic Christmas trees for sale, but outwardly there is no sign of the approach of Christmas, for which we are thankful.

On the Sunday before Christmas the missionaries put on a Nativity play for about 90 Bengalis. The play was written by a young Australian, visiting Chandraghona for eight weeks with her Medical Student husband, who is gaining experience for his elective period. Richard Henderson-Smith played both Isaiah and the myrrh carrying Wise Man, while Judy was asked to be Mary. The play was well received – Bengalis are very fond of drama.

On Christmas Eve Dr Bob and Mary Hart entertained all the missionaries to a Barbeque in their garden, in the evening. The food was magnificent, and showed the usual 'missionary invention' when the kebabs were cooked on bicycle spokes, available in the bazaar for 3p each. At the end of the Barbeque the Leprosy Church members came and entertained us with carols enthusiastically accompanied by flute and drums. They continued on round the compound until the early hours of Christmas Day – men and children only, the culture here forbids the participation of womenfolk.

Christmas Day began with Church at 8.30 a.m. as usual, attendance was very good,

about 200 people being present. The service was led by Bob Hart, the sermon was given by Dr Chowdhury, and a group of us sang 'Joy to the World'. There were also contributions by the young people. Following church the round of visiting began, which truly sets Christmas here apart from that in Britain. It is the custom for the missionaries to be entertained in houses all day, eating sweetmeats and drinking very sweet Bengali tea. The number of people we personally visit is very small, but some missionaries have visited 14 houses on Christmas Day – and it is rather offensive not to eat everywhere! Our 'Christmas Dinner' is curry and rice in a tent in the garden of Dr Chowdhury's house.

Boxing Day is almost the end of Christmas, and we had our missionary meal, when 20 of us ate together in English style with turkey, imported from America, pudding, with dried fruit from Britain sent out by post, and crackers.

BRAZIL

ALTHOUGH Brazil is counted as a Third World country, it is very westernised and relatively developed, at least in some areas. When it gets near to Christmas, this westernisation is apparent. Christmas celebrations and preparations are very similar to those in the United Kingdom. As early as October the shops will begin

their Christmas displays. Soon Jingle Bells will scream out from amplification equipment in shop doors. Tinselled Christmas trees are on sale and Santa Claus – red suit, beard, reindeers and all – offers fabulous goodies at never-before prices.

For our Christian brothers and sisters, Christmas has its special meaning. In Baptist churches, music and drama is prepared and programmes are presented over the Christmas period emphasising the birth of the Saviour. Nowadays, many churches will be calling attention to the poverty in which the Christchild was born and stimulating a concern for the poor and desolate around them. Especially among the womenfolk offerings of food and clothes for the poor are made and these are often distributed on or near to Christmas Day.

As with most church programmes, Christmas will be used as an evangelistic opportunity, when others will be told of the relevance of Christ's birth for their lives. Most churches will have extra visitors for their Christmas services. It is the Sunday nearest to Christmas which is given most attention, although the church's special Christmas programme may be presented on Christmas evening.

There is rarely a Christmas morning service unless Christmas Day falls on a Sunday.

The Christmas period at Nova Londrina was notable for its highest ever temperature within our experience, while church activities continued undaunted by the intense heat. Several Christmas plays were performed with everyone perspiring under their robes and cloaks. Father Christmas, too, suffered rather, at the children's Christmas party, but managed to remain cheerful and kindly throughout the ordeal!

ZAIRE

CHRISTMAS at Binga was very enjoyable. We were getting anxious around lunch time. The sky turned grey and we watched huge storms circle and threaten and, fortunately for us, disappear. The musical evening was very good. It would be misleading to call it a carol service as the evening was more of a family concert. In the church we discovered much talent, our new Secondary School



The Story Teller introduces the characters and comments on what is happening



**Mary and the angel.
Angel pointing to the power of
the spirit**

headmaster in the end managed to steal the show with a surprise solo. The cheering and applause he received would have done for the hat-trick scorer at a Wembley Cup Final. Many of the Catholics turned up as well.

They were due to have their own Nativity Play that night, but a generator failure put paid to that. We also had a good number of plantation company people, including the new General Manager.

The next evening we had our own Nativity Play. This of course meant that the afternoon was dedicated to making props and costumes. It is, you will realise, contrary to the African mind to worry about things like costumes and props until the late afternoon of the evening of the performance.

We are glad to say that both with the concert and the play we managed to win a significant battle in the war to keep it short. The generally accepted maxim here is 'never mind the quality, look at the length'.

Christmas Day was good fun. The service, at least the offering, was incredible. One of the Company agents didn't realise that we were not, as in

other years, taking the offering up from families or from groups within the church, but taking it men vs women. The agent put in an envelope with the name of his family written on it. Problem.

How now do we split the money between the men and the women? Fifty-fifty? 'Yes,' shouted the women. 'No,' shouted the men, who maintained that the man was the head of the household and all the money should go towards the men's total. There was a good hearted, noisy argument for half an hour. It didn't make any difference, all the money had gone into the church books as one figure, but people did enjoy the debate. We can't imagine this sort of thing happening at home, but again we can't remember having laughed so much in church. We don't do that sort of thing do we? Not even on Christmas Day.

After the 'event' in the church we had our Christmas lunch in our garden. This was for us the normal Christmas Fare — monkey, duck and chicken. Antelope, crocodile and elephant were not on the menu this time.

NEPAL

THERE were about 37 people at our Christmas church service. Afterwards we all had a meal of rice, chicken and vegetable curry, radish pickle followed by an orange and tea. But Christmas

things went on for three days. On Boxing Day a service was held outside our out-patients' department and there were over 100 people there, most of whom I suspect had not heard the Gospel before. Various groups of people sang and a message was given. The day before we presented a drama of the Christmas story, also outside, although it was rather cold because we did it at night. Unlike our summer dramas this! We pray that God might speak to them through the roles they played. Again the audience was over 100 people, mostly our neighbours from nearby houses. The only complaint from them was that it was too short and indeed it was by Nepali standards. A Nepali drama will usually go on for several hours, whereas ours was over in just over half an hour. The missionaries are going to have a meal together, to which my contribution will be a Christmas pudding. I rather rashly said I would try to make one and with a little help from the Australian, who gave some dried fruit, and with a lot of improvising 'something' has been produced.

Christmas is certainly different out here, but some things are not missed at all, such as all the western commercial trappings of Christmas. The real meaning of the Lord's birth is much clearer out here somehow — of course it's a time when you miss your family and friends more than at other times.



**The wise men before Herod the wrong King
in the wrong city asking about the Messiah**



FIFTY YEARS ON

Leslie Wenger writes to a new candidate about the joys and frustrations of missionary life

Dear John,

So you have been accepted for service with the BMS, and you ask for my advice from my fifty years experience! If you want practical advice, ask someone who is only a little older than you, who is in the area where you hope to work: don't ask me!

All that I can say is, expect the unexpected.

Fifty years ago situations were relatively stable, though winds of change had begun to blow. Terrorism had erupted in Bengal: government officials had to carry revolvers with them everywhere, even to dinner or to church. Nevertheless, the white man still ruled. Missionaries were early thrust into headships of institutions to direct the work of older and more experienced nationals. Change, however, was imminent. A pamphlet by an Anglican missionary reminded us that we were called to be 'Not Leaders, but saints and servants'.

Instability

Nowadays situations are everywhere completely unstable. Though antibiotics are available for you in illness, so that

you are not likely to have a fellow-missionary die in 24 hours with cholera; though you may (or may not) have electricity and refrigerators; though you can fly home in a few hours in a family emergency (may that not happen!); though there are various comforts which were uncommon or non-existent 50 years ago: yet, I salute you.

You face greater uncertainties in the social and political restlessness that is evident everywhere. Your white face may sometimes be a liability rather than an asset. The supposed superiority of Western culture is radically questioned and to claim superiority for Christianity, as people see it, is indefensible.

So I salute you and I admire you for your courage, your faith and your obedience to the call of Christ, whose Gospel is as vitally necessary as ever it was.

Dangers you must expect. Three very devoted Anglican missionaries, whom I knew, two of them especially dear to me, were murdered in Bengal. In my last period of service in Dhaka, our missionary families were evacuated twice in seven years. More often we have seen around us fires and yelling mobs intent

on murder, with or without the help of police and soldiers. Self-government, so called, has benefited a few, but has not always been better for the vast majority of ordinary folk.

A servant

But you will be with them, not as a member of the imperial race, but as a brother who cares: not as a leader, but as a servant, and (may I hope?) as a saint (thought I trust it will be others and not you who will recognise that). You will be working in partnership with the church which is already there, not as leader, but as servant. You will have a Gospel that does not put on airs of superiority, but is of One who came to serve and give His life as a ransom. If you live alongside people as brother with brothers and sisters; if you speak and live in the humility and the grace of Jesus, then the light of the glory of the Gospel of Christ will shine out.

Yes, I salute you, and admire your courage as you follow in His way.

Occupational hazards

Another thing. When I was assaulted and put on a criminal charge, which was

concocted for political reasons, I learnt three things. Former missionaries wrote of similar experiences and it was clear that such things are an 'occupational hazard' of a missionary's life. Then, as the critical day for the trial drew near, I suddenly felt that I was being lifted up on a wave. I felt quite light-hearted, not knowing why, not, that is, till a few days later the spate of letters came from friends who, as soon as they had received my newsletter, began to pray specially for me. Many can testify to this power of prayer transcending distance. So keep us informed, and you will be lifted, upheld and carried in times of difficulty, danger and despair. You will not know how.

Most of all I clung from the beginning to the faith in God who raises the dead. It seemed that my missionary career had ended in disgrace. In a sense I was dead. But God raises the dead. After months of waiting, a new door opened by God's grace to new opportunities, which led to unexpected fruitful developments.

Shocks come as we find cultural differences reflected in the church, with priorities in standards of behaviour other than our own. Remember Corinth, where Christians, who claimed to be spiritually rich, tolerated immorality and corruption. See how Paul coped. If it had not been for Corinthian quarrels, we would never have had his wonderful hymn about Love.

Frustrations

Frustrations may lead you to think you are wasting your time, just as the Servant of the Lord felt (Isaiah 49:4). Frustrations may partly be due to your thinking too highly of your own gifts and quality of Christian living in comparison with others.

There was a time when it seemed to me that all I tried to do for 'these people' was utterly useless. 'I had laboured in vain.' The Lord came to me and questioned me: 'Do you love me more than these others do?' 'Yes.' 'Do you even love me?' 'Yes.' 'Are you really on my side at all?' That third question was the sharpest cut of all. 'Yes. Lord, I dare not say that I love you as I ought in the full meaning of the word, but you know everything, you know that I am on your side.' 'Then,' he said, 'feed these people, they are mine, weak as they are. Tend

these people, they are mine.'

If you ever feel frustrated like the Servant of the Lord, remember the promise given to him in the verses that followed.

Expect yet greater things – more stretching tasks. The great joy of looking back over fifty years is to see, as it were, acorns planted years ago, and now grown or still growing into oak-trees. Many of these 'acorns' were students, some were institutions or programmes. They were planted years ago, and now we can see that the labour was not in vain in the Lord.

Growth

Let me give two examples. At the London Assembly I was tapped on the shoulder. A former Serampore student, of whom I had had no news for over a decade, was beaming with pleasure at seeing his teacher of Pastoral Theology.

He was about to return after a year at Bristol College to be Principal of the Theological College in Cuttack: his special subject is Pastoral Theology.

Then in August a letter from a former student of our Pastors' Training School in Dhaka, of whom I had had no news for some years, wrote about the Preaching Team of which he is part. Work has opened among the Paharia people, 'who are very interested for salvation.' He named six churches and hoped for three more churches very soon.

I cannot claim like Paul to have planted more than one or two acorns. I did some ploughing in one or two cases. Mostly like Apollos I simply watered. But it was God who gave the increase.

The results that are lasting cannot be seen in the short term, but if you do not faint, you, or others, may reap, and you will see some oak-trees, maybe after 50 years, when you are retired. May you plough, may you sometimes plant, may you consistently water other people's plantings, and God will give the increase.

I recall the response given by Wilma Aitchison a few years ago. When she had been considering missionary service, an older lady said, 'Don't go. I once thought of becoming a missionary, but I decided not to. It was too dangerous out there.' Wilma's comment was: 'It is more dangerous to be outside the place of God's plan.'

You have heard the call: you are ready to obey. 'He who began the good work in you will complete it till the day of Christ.' And may the Lord be with you, to guide, to guard and to give the increase.

Yours in admiration,

Leslie Wenger.



Leslie Wenger, photograph of him when he first went out, 1933

Sylvia Roberts worked as a BMS volunteer in India and had to come to grips with a new culture

MY first attempt to take a rickshaw in India was outside the Christian Hospital, Berhampur when I hoped to go to the market in town. 'Bus stand?' I asked tentatively. The answer was a side-ways tilt of the head. What was that? Didn't he understand what I wanted? I tried again; 'Bus stand?' The same reaction — a

waxed with herbs or spices and wrapped around red betel nuts or tobacco. The wad of leaf is crammed into the mouth and chewed with rigour, producing great quantities of liquid to be evacuated where possible: similar I suppose to the habit of chewing baccy, which was so common in this country many years ago.

There's more to people

sideways flick of the head. Thinking that this probably meant, 'Well, maybe — if the price is right', I got into the rickshaw, hoping for the best.

I now know that this gesture is an Asian 'yes', as common as our nod of the head. But without an awareness of this custom there was a complete lack of understanding, even misunderstanding.

There were many things in India that I found difficult to understand simply because my cultural background was so different to that of the Asian world. One feeling that came immediately to my mind as I thought back to my thirteen months in India was my disgust at the prevalent habit of spitting.

Hygiene

While we do see people spit in this country, it is nothing when compared with the stomach churning hacking up practised by Asians, men and women alike, educated and uneducated inclusive. The fact that spitting is so common is in part due to the habit of chewing pan. Pan consists of a special type of flexible green leaf, greased and

This practice of public spitting, to a Westerner quite disgusting, becomes more understandable on an investigation of Indian customs and beliefs. To an Asian any bodily excretion is considered unclean and must be discharged from the body as quickly as possible. Any contact is repugnant and is therefore limited — hence no handkerchiefs! To an Asian, the western habit of blowing the nose in a hankie, which is then stuffed into a pocket is absolutely filthy. The only use for a hankie in India is to mop a fevered brow. The desire for personal cleanliness is all important; the effect of the practicalities of this on other people is immaterial.

This desire for cleanliness extends to other areas of life too. In Eastern countries a daily bath is essential, because of the heat and dust. Even the poorest village people bathe each day in a tank, a large artificial pool constructed to meet all of the water needs of the community.

In cities the homeless and poor, having no taps or mains water supply wash beneath the street pump, the fortunate lathering themselves well in the middle of the pavement unconcerned with the

passer by. Soap of course is a luxury to the poor: for the less well off water alone must suffice.

Oral hygiene too is very important. The first morning stop after an overnight train journey results in a mass exodus from the carriages as people hurry to taps or sinks on the platform in order to clean their teeth and tongue! I have never seen a tongue-scraper before I went to India. The cheapest consist of a simple strip of gaily coloured plastic, dragged across the tongue to remove unhealthy coatings. The more elaborate are curved pieces of steel, widened at the centre for greater effectiveness: easily mistaken for an instrument of torture. Again there is no shyness or embarrassment about performing what we consider to be private functions in public: concern for individual well-being and cleanliness is all important. The possibility that this may cause offence to others is not even considered.

Holding hands

A second situation that I found very strange was the sight of men holding hands in public. On my initial sightings I assumed that the men concerned were homosexuals, but having seen ten or more couples similarly joined I realised that I was probably wrong! This again was due to my lack of understanding of Indian customs. Asian people are physically very demonstrative; they are not shy at showing affection or friendship in the way that we are, the more reserved British. When I visited the student nurses in their hostel I would be dragged in by two girls, one on each hand. They sat me down on a bed and sat beside me to stroke my hair, hold my hands, paint my nails, dress me in a sari or place a bindu onto the middle of my forehead. At first I found this very embarrassing until I realised that it was simply a way of showing friendship and was in no way strange or warped. This was merely different from our own ways.

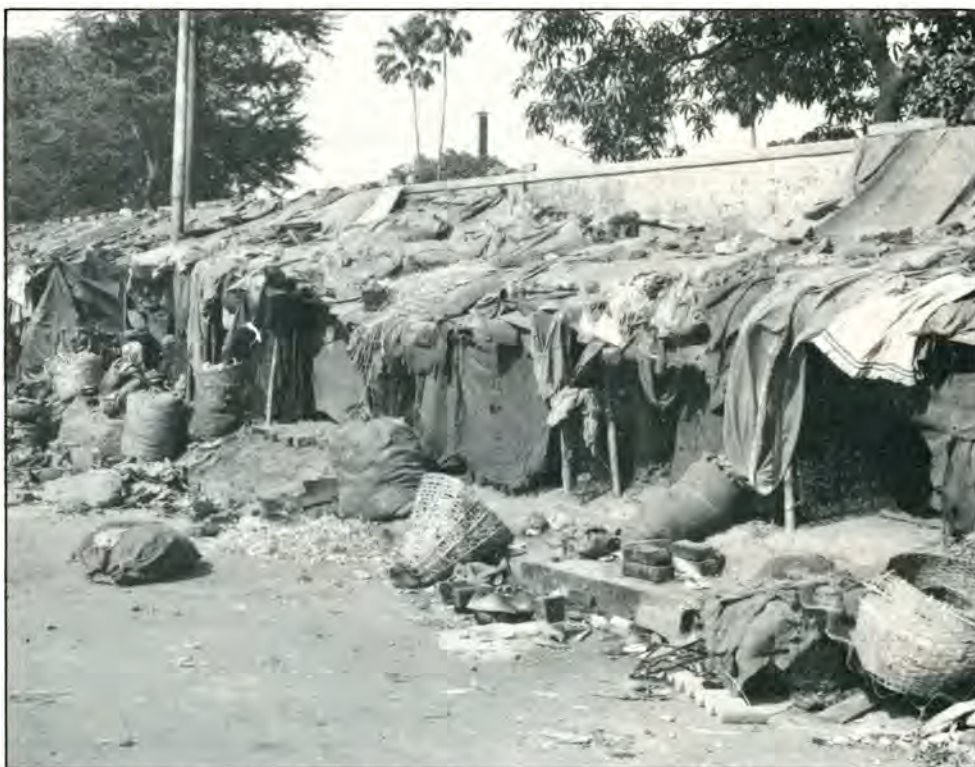
Death

A third area of life that I found particularly difficult to come to terms with was the attitude to death and mourning. I was privileged (if that is the correct term to use) to attend a laying out and burial at the Christian Jacobite

church in Kerala, south India. I was horrified at what I saw as a lack of dignity and respect for the dead relative. First of all I attended the public viewing of the body in the front room of the family's house, a room filled with women crying and tunelessly chanting. This was followed by the removal of the body to the front garden where the family gathered behind the coffin to have their photographs taken, close relatives gazing mournfully at the corpse. Those left in the house stared out of the windows and craned their necks to get a better view. To me this was a rather distasteful spectacle with little dignity or decorum. Photographs of funeral and laying out will be eagerly passed round friends, hands snatching to get the first look. Difficult as it was for me to understand, this was the custom and no disrespect was intended. The photographs act as a means of remembering the dead relative. For poorer people few photographs can be taken during life (cameras are a great rarity in India and are mainly owned by professionals), so a large framed photograph of the dead body, hung up in the living room, is a means of bringing back memories of life. The funeral too plays an important part in the act of grieving. Trauma and a display of emotion at the funeral is a great method of releasing misery and grief, leaving the bereaved better able to continue with life after the ceremony.

I went to India from another culture and imposed *my* attitudes and values upon my interpretation of Indian life. They were inappropriate. This in a sense was prejudice — judging a situation before having full knowledge and understanding. This is not confined to the visitor abroad however: it is also prevalent in this country. So often we judge by appearance and stereotypes, comparing others according to our norms. Someone is black so they of course will behave as the blacks in the Brixton and Toxteth riots — violent and aggressive. We see an individual in a wheelchair and assume that they are mentally defective. 'Does he take sugar?' is the very apt title of a BBC radio programme for the physically disabled, reflecting our tendency to treat disabled people as intellectually incapable. How many skinheads or punks have we condemned simply on the basis of their appearance?

Something that I did learn in India is that there is always more to people and situations than meets the eye. We should not judge until we understand. Only with understanding of the norms and values of others can we gain an insight into their behaviour. And only by looking at life from the point of view of others can we dare to form any judgment or opinion.



Learning to see but not judge by western standards



At Santi Kutir

Janet Kerrigan takes four days off from language training to visit a ladies' camp in Bangladesh

TOWARDS the end of August 1984, Janette Watson and I took four days off from our usual routines and visited a ladies' camp at Santi Kutir. The ladies camps are run by Jacqui Wells, one of our BMS colleagues, and are leadership training camps. Two are held every year, each lasting a month. The ladies have to attend four of these camps, not necessarily in the same year, to get their certificate. The teaching is done by both Bengalis and missionaries, not just BMS missionaries. They have classes on Bible teaching, Church history, witnessing and other Christian topics as well as leadership training and health care teaching. This time Christine Preston did the health care teaching and ante-natal care, delivery of a baby and care of the mother and baby. At the end of each series of classes they have a short examination.

Janette and I decided to go for the weekend to see the ladies and give a little help. Janette led two of the evening worship sessions. It gave me more experience of village life. Talking with the ladies in Bengali was also good practice for me, as David and I are spending till December 1984 learning the language.

At Santi Kutir there is a clinic run by two sisters of the Liebenzeller Mission who live there. Liebenzeller Mission is our sister organisation here in Bangladesh and also works with the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha. One of the ladies runs the clinic for a month while the other is out in the villages doing evangelistic outreach and medical work. Then they change over. The only way to reach Santi Kutir, particularly at this time of year, is by *noaka* (boat). They have two *noakas*. One is like a small house boat in which

they live while on their village trips. The other came to meet us at Gournadi, six hours away by river and canal.

Bus ride

Janette and I left Barisal on the seven a.m. bus. Just as we left, the monsoon skies opened and it poured with rain. Of course there were no windscreen wipers on the bus! Fortunately our seat was next to one of the windows that did not leak. The bus ride to Gournadi, only twenty miles away, took two hours as we had two ferry crossings, a regular feature of travel in this part of Bangladesh. Having found the boatman who had come to collect us, we climbed down a slippery muddy bank, not easy in our sari's, and got into the *noaka*. We settled down for our six hour journey with each sitting on

opposite sides to balance it. The boatman squatted on the end and rowed us along. The *noaka* had a wooden hut-like structure, so we did not get wet in the rain like our boatman. Most boats of this sort only have a plaited bamboo cover, which does not always keep the rain out and it blows in at the ends anyway.

We arrived at a place called Jobapar at 1.30 where we had lunch with the Swikas — an order of Bengali Sisters belonging to the Church of Bangladesh — a lovely rice meal, and enjoyed real Bengali hospitality. Jacqui joined us there as she had come to Jobapar the previous day to do some teaching with the novices, who live and work in the convent.

We were able to hear on the rest of the journey how well the camp had been going, so far, and the different things the ladies had been learning.

Arriving at Santi Kutir around six o'clock we were made to feel very welcome. After a shower and a change into clean dry clothes we had another lovely meal before meeting the ladies of the camp, who were busy revising for their 'History of Israel' examination the next morning.

On the Saturday morning, after a good night's sleep, Janette took me on a tour of the compound to see the clinic and other work that is going on there. In the afternoon the ladies were free from classes but were preparing for the concert to be held in the evening. The concert was very good. The ladies sang, danced and did sketches. We sang 'Old MacDonald had a farm'!

Sunday morning Jacqui took the service in the little church; some of the ladies took part praying, reading and singing. Jacqui spoke from Luke 13:10-17 on being healed from bondage and how Christ can set us free.

In the afternoon Janette, Jacqui, two others and I went for a ride in the *noaka*. We listened to the Sunday service broadcast by the BBC. Then had a picnic tea before returning to Santi Kutir. The worship time with the ladies, that evening, was held on the roof. It was lovely to watch the sunset behind the trees, giving the clouds a lovely pink hue as we read of God's 'good pleasing and perfect will' in Romans 12:2 and sang of His glory.

Monday morning, after breakfast and a time of worship led by one of the ladies of the camp, Janette and I prepared to leave for Barisal. It had been a lovely weekend with people whose experience of Christ as Saviour and Lord was so real, and for whom the name 'Christian' is not something inherited from earlier generations, rather a living testimony to their beliefs.



Type of boats and scene that Janet would have used and seen

A witness to Christian co-operation

The opening of Pimu's new leprosy building

CHANGES in the treatment of leprosy were highlighted when a new leprosy building was opened at Pimu in August. The construction workers, hospital personnel, patients and church members were all present for the opening ceremony on August 5.

BMS doctor, Adrian Hopkins traced the recent developments in leprosy treatment, which led to the closing down of the leprosarium at Nzingo seven kilometres from Pimu.

'Our understanding of leprosy has changed and patients on regular treatment, with regular surveillance, are not a danger to those around,' he said. 'So gradually since 1977 these patients

are being reintegrated into their own villages.'

'Since 1974 most new cases have never been admitted to hospital. All patients are visited by the Leprosy Nurse, Citizen Anjolo, who circulates in the area on his motorbike. There are, however, some with special problems, like foot ulcers, or patients with reactions, who need to be hospitalised and kept under closer medical supervision. Such patients are now being hospitalised in Pimu.'

'The first plans were made in 1977, and, after agreement from the Leprosy Mission, the building was commenced in 1979,' said Dr Hopkins. 'Although the building is not yet complete, the wards

for TB and leprosy patients are advanced enough to start using it. The office/laboratory/consulting room is almost completed. The rooms in the middle are for a foot bath facility and a shoe making workshop.'

Dr Hopkins concluded by thanking the Leprosy Mission for its financial and moral support throughout the long building process. He also thanked the various people in charge of the building programme, most of whom were no longer present.

The building was started by Luke Alexander and David Aubery. Luke had followed through most of the building before having to return to the UK. During the last year Paul Newns has been supervising the work. Finally thanks were expressed to the building team, most of whom had been with the project from the beginning.

The opening and dedication of the building was led by Pastor Bombimbo. Taking Psalm 100 as his theme, he pointed out that the day was a day of praise and thanksgiving.

Dedicated to God

'This is a building dedicated to God's work and is an ongoing witness. The new building will probably outlast most of us present and as such it is a permanent witness. A witness to our faith in Christ Jesus and our work to help the sick in His name, but also a witness to what can be achieved by the co-operation of Christians throughout the world. The building is a witness to the love that people in countries overseas have for God's work, some of them not even knowing the name of Pimu, but because of their concern their gifts have been channelled to Pimu to help in our task.'

After a prayer, Mama Pastor Bombimbo opened the building by cutting the ribbon — actually, very appropriately, a bandage.

In his prayer, Pastor Bombimbo prayed that those who worked there would glorify God in their work and that the patients would use the building not only to find help for their physical needs, but also their spiritual ones.

COMMENTS QUESTIONS QUOTES

By DEKA

ENCOURAGEMENT IS a word that has kept coming to hit me over the past few months. The need each of us has to be encouraged, and how we should be sensitive and aware of the need to seek to encourage others. Which of us has not known the impetus, and lift to our spirits, that we have experienced when an encouraging word or smile has just made all the difference to us in the task or situation we have been involved in at that time. Can we be the same for others — a real encourager?

A real life situation in Nepal, and this is what a missionary has written:

'Please think about the twenty boys who are asking for Bible Study, but who must be refused because of the law. What encouragement can be given them?'

Wrestle with that one for a little while, and try to understand the dilemma of longing to be able to give encouragement, but how to do it constructively and help fully in that situation. It would seem so right and proper to accede to such a request for Bible Study, but the law says . . . so what do you do? How do you encourage?

Q Q Q Q Q

Let us consider this from another angle — again a quote:

'It seems that often when we move to encourage someone else we are ourselves encouraged with our spirits lifted and our perspective altered Godwards.'

One of the delightful, wonderful, surprising ways that God blesses us; I have felt so humbled by experiences like this, remembering my reluctance, slowness, and sometimes lack of desire to get up and go, and seek to help and encourage another. Our very tardiness can mean that we are not only depriving another, but ourselves also of the encouragement that God is ready, and wanting, to give.

Can we look upon Christmas as the time in a unique way reached out to encourage us by sending Jesus into the world, He came to us, a living demonstration of God's love, care, and

compassion for us? But I think we have to go on from there — this Christmas, what are we going to do to encourage love and compassion?

This Christmas could be an extra special one for each of us.

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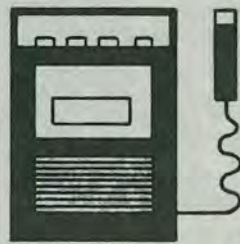
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New Members of the Baptist World Alliance

WASHINGTON, DC — UBSA should become a household word among Baptists concerned about their larger Baptist family throughout the world. UBSA stands for Union Bautista Sud-Americana, or the Baptist Union of South America. It is the newest of the six Regional Fellowships of the Baptist World Alliance, and was accepted into membership in the Alliance of July 1983.

Baptists from South America gathered in Asuncion, Paraguay September 26-30, 1984 for the 4th general assembly of UBSA. It was evident that they had discovered strength and encouragement in meeting

together as more than 100 leaders participated in prayer, preaching, and deliberations concerning common programmes and goals.

Morning lectures were delivered by Dr Justin Anderson, professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (USA) and Rev Waldemiro Tymchak, director of the Brazilian Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Both speakers urged South Americans to take their missionary responsibility seriously. Evenings were dedicated to evangelistic rallies in the various churches.

After many hours of

discussion, a new constitution was adopted. There was a sense of optimism that not only is UBSA working, but it is absolutely necessary to keep South American Baptists united and working together.

The Rev José Missena, executive secretary for many years, resigned in order to dedicate himself to evangelistic work. The executive committee is searching for a new executive secretary. The Rev Guillermo Milovan, president of the Baptist Convention of Uruguay, was re-elected president of UBSA.

BWANS

Auxiliary founder's centenary

Mrs Elizabeth James of Llwydiarth, Maesteg, was 100 years old on October 6. Living with her daughter she is extremely lucid. She can recall clearly the early days of her education and her pupil teaching in the last century as well as vivid memories of the 1904/5 revival in South Wales.

Mrs. James was a founder of the Maesteg Auxiliary of the BMS and its Secretary for over 30 years. She and her late husband were also responsible for sponsoring a Sri Lankan student at Oxford for three years. He is now the Principal of the College at Kandy and is in regular contact with his Welsh 'mam'.

All of Mrs James' boys were able to return to celebrate the birthday. The church members at Bethania, Maesteg, are very proud of their ever faithful oldest member.

Prizegiving at Chandraghona

The Nurses' Prizegiving and Capping Ceremony was held at the Christian Hospital in August 1984. Prizes were presented by the Principal of the Nurses' Training School at the Chittagong Medical College.

Holding lighted candles they recited the Nightingale Pledge. They were also reminded that NURSE stands for the following.

- N = Natural in mind and manner.
- U = Understanding in pain and difficulty.
- R = Resolute in purpose and patience.
- S = Serene in crisis and criticism.
- E = Encouraging in words and action.



Shetland Deputation

DURING the month of September Rev Ron Armstrong, Scottish Representative, paid a second visit to Shetland Baptist Churches. A warm hospitality, combined with a keen local missionary interest in Shetland made this a memorable and rewarding deputation. This is perhaps the only deputation in the UK that requires air trans-

port, as Lerwick is closer to Norway than to Aberdeen.

Mr Armstrong visited all six of the Shetland Churches, and spoke to youth meetings as well as adult groups, including the most northerly Baptist groups in Britain, the Brae Fellowship at the oil town of Sullan Voe.

RA



Three boys and three girls having passed their preliminary exams after six months' training were awarded their caps and belts.



Prizewinners.

Magazine Experiment — Increased Churches Order

AT THE end of 1982 there were 13 members of the church taking *Missionary Herald*.

The Council for Mission made the decision to spend some of the money in the Mission Fund to finance the order of an extra 30 copies of the *Missionary Herald* each month of the year 1983.

It was decided to give these *Missionary Heralds* to a selected group for three consecutive months and then give them the option of continuing to receive the *Missionary Herald* for the remaining months; then they would pay for them. Ten or so people took up this option.

Deacons and leaders of organisations were given the *Heralds* first and then the church's membership and congregation list was systematically covered.

At the end of 1983 I made an order for 35 copies of

Missionary Heralds, for the year 1984.

Some Reactions:

Older members would not accept the free issues and insisted on paying for each one.

Others took it as a joke, 'Here comes Jacq and her mags!'

Some asked why read it? When I told them that we ought to know what's going on in God's world they replied but I watch the TV and read the papers!

Some copies were left unopened at the back of the church.

Others were pleasantly surprised at the content and format of the magazine and enjoyed the *Missionary Herald*.

The experiment to educate the members had been worthwhile!

I await the order requests for 1985!



Miss Katherine received a Medical dictionary as her prize. She came 1st in Bangladesh in the Diploma of Midwifery exam of the Government of Bangladesh.

A Journey to India

With the dramatisation of *Far Pavilions*, and the novels of Paul Scott and John Masters on radio and television, enormous interest has been aroused in India. No one should imagine, however, that if they visit the sub-continent life will be lived at such a pace and so glamourously as depicted on the television.

Nevertheless, India is a fascinating country, and well worth visiting. With a population nearing 800 million, and increasing at the rate of more than one million a month, it is bound to be one of the leading nations of the world in the future. Already it is among the first ten of the industrialised nations of the world.

The Christian Church, 16 million strong, is possible larger than that in Britain, and yet we know so little about it.

There will be an opportunity to rectify this when the Baptist Missionary Society in partnership with Eltham College, the school for the sons of missionaries, sends a party to India in December 1985. The visit will be of three weeks duration, and in addition to visiting the historic

Muslim and Hindu sites in Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Benares (modern Varanasi) Calcutta, Berhampur and Madras; special attention will be paid to 'experiencing' the church in India. Visits will be made to places significant in the history of the Christian church in India, such as Serampore College, Carey Baptist Church, and the Old Mission Church in Calcutta. It is hoped that we shall be able to share worship in indigenous Baptist Churches, as well as those which have joined the Church of North India. We shall try to see something of the Church of North India's mission stations in the Kond Hills, and Berhampur.

It must be stressed that this is not a luxury package tour. We shall be travelling mostly by train (2nd class sleeper) and aim to be in touch with the people, rather than flying over them in our journeys. Our accommodation will be in YMCA hostels, or Mission Guest houses where possible.

Interested? Then it is not too soon to contact the Rev David Martin, Young People's Secretary, Baptist Missionary Society, 93-97 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA.

Making 'hulla'

The noise? Children enjoying themselves. It was the Second Kids' Missionary Tamasha run by Whitton and East Sheen Baptist Churches. There were about 60 of them making 'hulla' as they say in Orissa, with games and a quiz and competitions, all with a missionary basis. There were local beauties in saris. There was an exhibition of Zairean relics from the cellars of Mission House. There were kids everywhere finding church halls more highly polished than school

playgrounds and making good use of the fact. There were voracious appetites for the barbecue laid on for them. There were earnest teachers engaged in counting the collections of stamps for the BMS (East Sheen won by 6,000 to 3,000), amidst all this noise and at the end everyone sitting, watching a BMS film 'The city that cannot stop' and an epilogue to remind them that the Lord can make use of all their talents, however small.

TB

TALKBACK

From Gladys A Mayoss

I HAVE just completed reading the *Missionary Herald* for September. As long as I can remember the *Missionary Herald* has always been in my home (and I am now 88 years old). I feel I must write and tell you what an interest and joy it is to read it every month — but I must congratulate you on the present 'lay-out' and type of article which makes every issue absolutely alive and interesting. I look forward to every new issue which is always handed to me regularly (1st or 2nd Sunday morning) with a smile.

I understand a lot more now about what is happening in Nepal. The article in the August magazine has made it come alive.

It makes me proud of the BMS, and although through age and deafness I can no longer serve it as I did for many years (Medical Missionary Birthday Scheme) I delight to have my envelope handed to me monthly by one of our young people who is an enthusiastic collector.

*Miss Gladys A Mayoss
Shirley, Southampton*

Essential

From Miss D L Bell

The *Herald* is a must for all BMS supporters and is full of interest with so much information for prayer partners. (I was brought up on it, as my Uncle, the Rev John Bell served in Africa and China, and my cousins William Cranston and Jean Ives Bell have been in various countries when they had to leave China.)

Now I am concerned about the faintness of the type, and wonder why it cannot be black instead of grey.

The article in the October issue on 'Missionary Training' by the Rev J Grenfell is almost unreadable by elderly people because of the dark building behind it, which also applies to 'Call to Prayer' with faint type over dark imprints of countries.

LACK OF WORLD-

From John C Radley

AT LAST! something about what actually happens at BMS Summer Holidays in the *Herald*. And what a typically parochial bunch of Baptists the people questioned were. Reflecting, no-doubt the inwardness and lack of world vision of most of our churches.

If there are any ready-mix solutions to the young

people's ignorance and requests they are both long and short term. Here are some suggestions.

1) Let Sunday School teachers examine the contents of their material; does it provide a place for examining the world-wide nature of mission or is it always about 'me and Jesus'?

2) Let the BMS state clearly where we differ from the aims and approach of such bodies



WHAT OUR READERS ARE THINKING

From Mrs Margaret Adams

I have recently taken on the job of Missionary Secretary at Carters Lane Baptist Church Halesowen and have consequently had my interest in the work of the BMS re-visualised.

This month's edition of the *Missionary Herald* (October) has given more stimulation. It has several articles, perhaps in particular Janet Wilson's diary and 'Living in a Goldfish bowl' by Vivian Lewis, which give a real insight and 'feel' to what it is like to work as a missionary overseas.

I also found Jim Grenfell's article an excellent account of the training given at St Andrew's. I have been able to visit St Andrew's on several occasions and have been very impressed by the spirit of the College. It was especially interesting to read this article as Mr Grenfell has recently led our worship!

Thank you for this particular edition of *The Missionary Herald*.

Margaret Adams

Halesowen

Reading

Why cannot the ordinary type, which is convenient size, be blacker, as is that of the names of missionaries on the back inside cover?

By the way, if the former Carey Hall building is the one in the relief on pages 192/3 of October's edition and is now St Andrew's why was the name changed?

MISS D L BELL

Bexhill-on-Sea

We are sorry that the type appears grey. It is in fact black, but we are changing the typeface from January onwards and believe that this will be more readable. We also apologise that the photograph of St Andrew's and the Prayer Call maps were darker than we intended.

Solongo — Grass cutting

From a Zairian Missionary

MANY thanks for the evocative article by Joyce Ridgen Green on 'Grass cutting in Zaire' in the October issue of the *Herald*. She describes an aspect of life there which is not often commented on in Britain but which has been commonplace for the past fourteen years.

Could I enlarge a bit on the title of the activity?

The name *solongo* which she heard at Bolobo and Upoto becomes *salongo* elsewhere. It is a quick way of saying a whole phrase: *ise alonga-o*, which means: Father always succeeds! His is the solo part of a little song heard when any group of people are working together on a heavy job. After one of them has sung it, the whole group shout in chorus: *alinga mosala*: he likes work! In tonic *sol-fa* the music is:

*ise alonga-o / m :m.r / m.r:r
alinga mosala d / ddd:rr /*

It was featured in a recent TV film about the Zaire River when some workmen on the Lualaba were off-loading oil-drums and was the only piece of traditional African music in the whole performance. Such communal singing helps to bring enjoyment and take away fatigue when people work together in Zaire.

Missionaries who come to Britain and see the litter in our cities and even in the countryside can't help wondering whether it might be a good thing to have *salongo* every Saturday morning here too!

A ZAIRE MISSIONARY
WITH BMS

Zaire

VISION

as Tear Fund and Christian Aid and where we co-operate with them.

3) Let baptism and church membership preparation always include a visit to another church; a mosque or synagogue and a 'pen-pal' relationship with a Christian from abroad.

4) Let BU Mission Department and the BMS pool their resources and, if necessary in

an ecumenical context, produce a series of visual aids to promote a world-wide vision of mission.

5) Let no church plan a Deputation unless it be first scrutinised by its Young People.

JOHN C RADLEY

Great Missenden



*Solongo: women clearing a path
Taken from October's issue of 'Missionary Herald'*



CALL TO

PRAYER

1784 - 1984

Zaire - Pimu, Bosondjo 2 - 8 December

Pimu and Bosondjo are two district centres in the North Equator Region of the CBFZ. Pimu is fairly big, mainly because the church, the schools and the hospital are situated there. Bosondjo is a large palm-oil plantation providing work for almost all who live on it.

During 1984 there have been many staff changes. Luke and Katie Alexander returned to the UK because of the illness of their baby and are on leave of absence. Olive Satterley, a nurse is also on leave of absence, and Dr Digby Withers is at present in a GP training practice in England. However Yvonne Errington has joined Cheryl Trundle and Brenda Earl in their nursing work and in the Nurses' Training School. Dr Njongo's continued work has been supplemented by two Peace Corps workers. Dr Adrian Hopins is Medical Director, and Paul Newns works in building and maintenance.

It would be very nice you know to have a Christmas like we used to have, with carols soundly sung in church and street; a Christmas full of joy and noise, of beaming face and laughing voice, and choirs hitting hard the angels' chord.

It would be very nice you know to have a Christmas like we used to have, without the stress on needy, poor and lost, when I could eat my turkey, pud and chocs and have no picture of a refugee to conjour up an indigestive thought.

It would be very nice you know to have a Christmas without guilt, no nagging doubt or hurtful conscience prick, but just in joy to worship Him who came from God to live in love with men.

India - Phulbani District Orissa (The Kond Hills) 16-22 December

The churches in this area, which is about the size of Wales are part of the Diocese of Cuttack, Church of North India. In spite of problems of illiteracy, shortage of trained leaders and financial cut-backs, the churches of this area continue to multiply and grow.

There is a boarding hostel in Balliguda and another in Udayagiri giving a Christian home background for children who attend local schools.

Joan Sargeant is the Girls' Hostel Superintendent and is involved in women's work.

Joan Smith is Nursing Superintendent at the Moorshead Memorial Christian Hospital, where there is a shortage of Indian medical staff. Dr Harashita Nayak is the Medical Superintendent, but he is likely to be moving on to gain further experience in the near future.

But don't you see that Christmas must be both? Those cards from Shelter, Oxfam, Save the Children say the world is full of sorrow, even now, and Christ was born to tell us that God cares about the fate of human life - His stable is the home of all earth's poor.

So Hallelujah, Praise the Lord. God send us forth in joy this Christmastime to tell the world in carol and in deed the love of Bethlehem stable long ago, the love which reaches through all time - till now.

Home 9-15 December

Probationer Missionaries/Operation Agri 23-29 December

Missionaries, newly arrived overseas, remain probationers until they have successfully completed their language study. So we pray for those who at the moment are studying Brazilian Portuguese at Campinas, near Curitiba, Parana, those studying Bengali in Barisal, Bangladesh, those studying Lingala and Kikongo in Zaire, and in Nepal, those grappling with the complexities of the Nepali language. We remember too the current BMS Women's project, Making it Plain, which is supporting this training.

We remember too the invaluable work of Operation Agri and its Committee, supporting as they do the work of agriculture and rural development, and supplying livestock, seed, equipment and technical advice for a variety of situations.

BMS is a family of different people. Some are employed directly, whilst others work in voluntary capacities, using their time, talents and energies in the service of Christ. Supervising the health of missionaries in the Medical Department at Gloucester Place is Dr Richard Rathbone. He attends Mission House each Tuesday and meets missionaries newly arrived home and those about to leave for work overseas. He is assisted by former missionary Ruth Murley. The Society has appointed Area Representatives to act as a closer link with the local churches in Scotland, Wales and parts of England. The Society too is grateful to those who run the Stamp Bureau and the Missionary Literature scheme.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS**Arrivals**

Rev A and Mrs Goodman and family on 4 September from Binga, Zaire.

Miss J Wells on 15 September from Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

Departures

Mr R Smith (volunteer) on 18 September to Kinshasa, Zaire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously (6 September-27 September).

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