

HERALD

“Bom dia... how do I ask for bread?”

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Coping with daily life in a new culture



Editorial Comment

MISSIONARIES are not the whole of mission. They never were. For Baptists in Britain overseas mission has always been seen as the concern of the Church, even though a few keen individuals do have to stir the rest of us up from time to time. Today, with the greater emphasis we are placing on our partnership with the overseas churches, this stress on the involvement of the whole Church in world mission means that those whom we have traditionally called missionaries are but one part of the total picture.

Nevertheless missionaries are important in that they are those who are visibly seen to be doing something. So this month we make no apology for looking at what it means to be a missionary. What is it like to go overseas and to cope with a new situation, language, culture, and rolls and rolls of red tape? Zaire is different from Brazil and Bangladesh is not the same as Nepal and yet adapting to life in these countries teaches similar lessons about priorities, about human needs, and, most of all, about the human condition.

Not only do missionaries enable us to see life overseas, admittedly through western eyes, they also help us to take a look at ourselves. Coming back to this country on furlough or at the end of their service can be as difficult as going overseas for the first time. It is not just the well-stocked supermarket shelves which they find bewilderingly distressing, there is the whole question of our western life-style. Missionaries returning home are challenging us to look at ourselves as Christians and to ask whether we are living, eating, spending as we ought in a world of such great need. As Edith Hallett points out, words like 'poverty' or 'unemployment' have quite a different meaning to those who have lived and worked in the so called underdeveloped parts of the world.

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MISSIONARY HERALD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY



NOVEMBER 1986

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HOW WILL YOU MANAGE WITH FIVE CHILDREN —

landing in a strange country amongst strangers?

MY answer then was that I didn't know, but that we would cope. After all, we had been through quite a lot in the past and together we had managed. The 'we' was meant, and interpreted as David (my husband) and I. Now I realize the 'we' includes far more.

The heat was the first thing that hit us as we stepped from the plane. Anna (8) decided to do an about turn and get back on, as it was too hot. I had to turn her round gently and encourage her to descend the steps, insisting that she could make it to the airport bus waiting below. Layers of clothing were quickly cast to one side as we wilted, exhausted yet excited.

The glorious sight, the great profusion of colour, the vibrant purples and pinks of the flowering trees revived us somewhat. The view was almost unbelievable as we had left the cold, snowy, clime of the Lancashire Pennines.

The Welcome

We were very glad to see the smiling faces of David and 'Liz' Doonan, standing patiently, waiting just outside the custom hall. They were a means of encouragement to us as they told of the preparations that had been made for us

— a home, food, friends, schools organized — what more could we need to cope?

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases

His mercies are new every morning . . .



This was one of the questions put to Susan Jackson as she sat before the awe-inspiring candidate selection board just over a year ago.

As the days followed we became very much aware of the Lord's love and care for us as a family and individually. Our immediate needs were met as soon as they came into being. Together we made a list of all the differences we had encountered during the first weeks. In so doing we realized what a delight they had been rather than the trauma we had envisaged.

We have coped!

Six months later the culture shock still hasn't hit us. Yes, life is very different and we have managed.

- We have a completely different timetable – only half a day at school for the children and Mum and Dad surrounded by books, homework, teachers, tests – the other side of the desk!
- We live amongst a different people – loving, welcoming, warm-hearted; a people that we have quickly grown to love.
- We have been adopted by a different family and made new friends – our missionary colleagues and dedicated brothers and sisters in the Brazilian churches.
- We eat many different foods – lots of rice and beans alongside wonderful fresh fruits and vegetables, some of which we didn't know existed.
- We are speaking a different language – at least we are beginning to be able to communicate and understand.



'We eat many different foods . . .'

- We are slowly learning different habits and acquiring a new culture – clapping hands loudly as we approach someone's home rather than knocking on the door.
- We have got used to the irregular and rather 'dodgy' electricity and water supply – sometimes unavailable for short times – though never for too long.
- We are quite at home with most of our uninvited guests – especially the lizards and ants. The mosquitoes and cockroaches are not quite so welcome and can be a nuisance.

Support and love

The support and love of each other, the friendship and care of our

colleagues, the back-up by the home-staff, the constant prayer support and encouraging letters from family and friends at home; all these have helped.

Above, beyond and through all these however we have begun to realize the 'how' of God. He is our 'how'. His power has strengthened us and His grace has enabled us to know His joy in daily tasks. His forgiving mercy has encouraged us in our failings. His indwelling Holy Spirit has given us a great sense of peace in what could have been five traumatic, dramatic months. We have had problems, frustrations, differences of opinion, and misunderstandings, but through them all we have known the peace that God alone can give.

We praise Him for His faithful watch-care over us and pray for His clear guidance in our future service here in Brazil.

**'We have coped.
But the question was "how"?'**

REFLECTIONS



SCRUPLES??

One of the latest best selling games is called *Scruples*. In it, players are asked for their reactions to awkward and embarrassing situations. This might be fine for an evening of fun, but missionaries are often faced with real situations which need to be handled delicately. These times can bring the scruples of each missionary into question.

Ian and Sally Smith are serving in Nepal. In their latest prayer letter, they offer these three examples.

CASE STUDY 1: A ROOFING PROBLEM

During a recent heavy storm at least three houses in the area had their roofs blown off. Most houses have thatch on a wooden frame, the richer villagers have corrugated tin, or stone tiles last longer, but needs a much stronger wooden frame. The United Mission to Nepal is involved in research into a cheap light roofing tile made from cement and locally available fibre (see *August Herald*).

One of the people whose roof had been damaged came and asked one of the missionaries for financial help in repairing the house.

What should our response be?

CASE STUDY 2: A PROBLEM CHILD

A young ten-year-old girl from the village near the hospital has recently been visiting many of the missionaries' homes asking for food. She is the daughter of the first marriage of the hospital mail runner — but doesn't get on with her step mother and often refuses to stay at home. Sometimes she sleeps at her grandmother's house, but often sleeps rough. Several times she has slept in the hospital in a spare bed. On at least one occasion she has been caught stealing from people's homes.

What should we do?

CASE STUDY 3: THE LOST MONEY

A campus student from a town six hours away came to the church leaders this week as he had lost a large sum of money. Two weeks previously, his uncle who runs a shop had given him £500 (the equivalent of three years wages) to pay a bill to his wholesaler in a town a couple of days journey away. Somehow on the way he had lost all the money. He was now terrified of returning to his uncle and had been hiding for two weeks — he came to us hoping that we would be able to give him the money.

What should he do?

WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED . . .

CASE STUDY 1: A ROOFING PROBLEM RESPONSE

The tradition in the villages is for everyone to come together voluntarily and help out when this sort of tragedy occurs. We are trying to avoid responding to needs as individuals and instead give help through the church. Several Nepali church leaders have asked us to do this as it helps prevent mistakes from occurring, e.g. help being duplicated or given inappropriately.

The missionary gave the man a gift of 200 rupees (about £7) to help him repair his roof — which the church then reimbursed him in keeping with the policy mentioned above. However — as a result — the people in the village refused voluntarily to help him repair the roof as they saw he had been given money to do it. Nearly a month later the house still hasn't been repaired.

The other two houses involved both had their roofs back on within a couple of days — without our help! Sometimes when we think we are helping people we are in fact creating more problems — taking away their self reliance, and leaving them worse off than they originally were.

CASE STUDY 2: A PROBLEM CHILD RESPONSE

In one of our project team meetings we talked together about her, and decided we weren't sure what to do! If we continued to feed her and give her a bed for the night then we were taking her further and further from her family! It was decided to try and talk with her parents again, although this approach had been tried in the past.

In the end the problem was solved for us — some visiting tribal people from a few days north were passing through the village and took the child off with them — one version of the story says that one of the women in the group took a liking to her, and took her as her own daughter — the other version says that they paid 2,000 rupees (about £70) for her.

CASE STUDY 3: THE LOST MONEY RESPONSE

A very hard decision! Not so much to make but rather to implement, as we all felt it would be wrong just to give the young man the money — firstly because the church doesn't have that much! But then also because without proof it would be dangerous to start giving money to people to replace theft or loss. However, how can we help this young man — though Jesus didn't always meet people's needs the way THEY expected Him to He never turned them away. We spent several hours over a couple of days with him and eventually felt that it would be best for him to return to the town where he is studying, to report the loss to the police (although they will not do anything about it as theft losses here have to be reported within one week of being discovered). We then advised him to take a friend and return to his parents home, and then go with them to his uncle to explain the loss and ask his forgiveness. We gave him a small amount of money to help him on the journey. As yet we haven't heard what happened.

'NOBODY TOLD ME ABOUT...



from Ruth Clinch, who has just returned from spending two years working in Zaire

Imagine Britain as a mountain peak and Zaire as another. There is a long narrow bridge linking them.

Going abroad as a missionary is rather like that. The missionary spans between our country and Africa, between our society and theirs, between our church and the church of Christ in Zaire.

The bridge is there, very narrow just wide enough to travel on. But it is not easy to cross this bridge.

It is a very long bridge. It is almost two years long, and you cannot turn back. You can't have a little practice to see whether you like it. Once you're on you must go all the way.

There is only room for one person at a time on this bridge and so you must travel on it alone. And in the chasm, the valley between the mountains are gruesome monsters.

There are the monsters of disease, flies, mosquitoes just waiting to sink barbed infected teeth into you. Not to worry, I shall have injections to prevent the worst diseases, and maloprim to take weekly to prevent malaria.



OK. So I needn't fear that monster. There is the monster of driving a car in an undisciplined city, on the wrong side of the road where the soldiers are delighted to get you on any charge and because your skin is white you must be in the wrong and pay for it. Well, I have driven all over Britain in a mini-bus and in the city of London, and driven in France, so I'm pretty sure I can cope with that.



There is a monster of loneliness leaving my family and friends the people who love and know me. People who will pick me up when I'm miserable and help me when I'm in trouble and nurse me when I'm ill.

This doesn't sound too good, leaving these loved ones, but in the last few years as a widow I've got used to being alone.

There's the monster of discomfort. No telly, leaving my luxury equipped house, no visits to the theatre, no dining out.

Well, I've had this comfort for a long time. Maybe it's time I found out how the other nine tenths of the world live, and I have much to be thankful for.

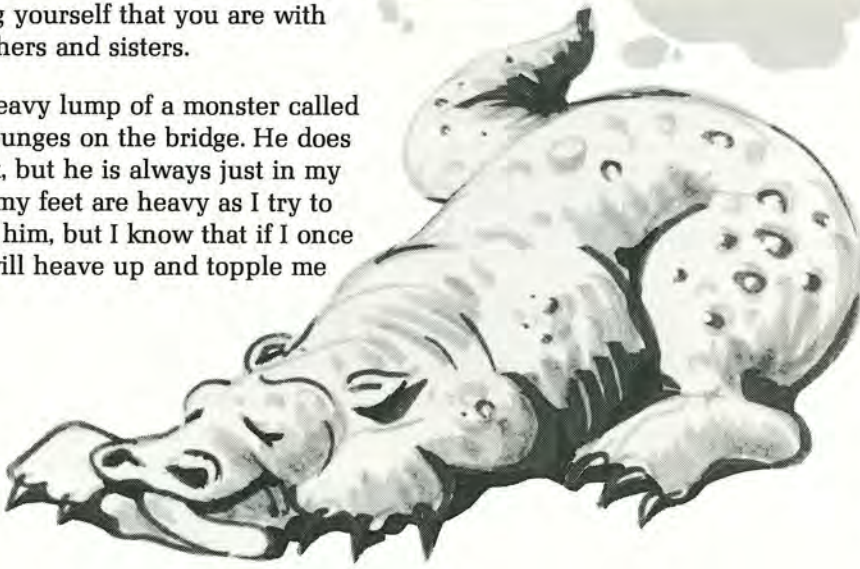
There's the monster of people of different colour and race, of belief, many of whom don't want you in their country. This monster holds up bunches of something unspeakable — fetishes — and waves them at you, cursing you with all the ancient evil of the African continent.



There's the monster of foreign language, when people speak to you and you stand mute and stupid, when they say something and laugh and you have no idea what or why. This monster will roar with laughter when you sit for one and a half hours, sometimes three or four 'listening' to a sermon of which you understand nothing, and you have to keep

reminding yourself that you are with your brothers and sisters.

A great heavy lump of a monster called fatigue, lounges on the bridge. He does not attack, but he is always just in my way and my feet are heavy as I try to step over him, but I know that if I once stop he will heave up and topple me over.



These are the monsters I can name, but what about the slimy green squeaking one there with the red-spots what does he stand for? And the shapeless one clinging to the mountain-side with violet spikes down his back. The monsters of the unknown.

Oh, I'm sure I shall cope.

So here I am, international driving licence, maloprim, teeth filled, two pairs of glasses, a few favourite novels, a tea-pot and frying pan. Ready to go.

You, my church, held a service to commission me promising your prayers and support and I realize for perhaps the first time that I'm not leaving you behind. You are coming on this journey with me.

And so, in my own strength, with my many years of experience behind me I set off, and you are all waving me goodbye, I set foot at last on the beginning of the bridge. Bravely and confidently head held high, ready for a Great Adventure.

But even as I take my first step the bridge shakes. Who can help me now? I am alone on the crossing. I dare not look back or I shall fall and I realize that after all the laughter and jokes and well wishing, the gifts, promises and singing of songs it is all quiet behind me, and I am aware that at the foot of my personal bridge you are hushed, and I don't need to look back to know that you are kneeling in silent prayer. And it breaks in me for the first time that my own strength and experience

is going to be inadequate for this journey.

And as I walk on across the bridge the monsters begin to writhe and rear up. Unable to communicate with the people I meet on the way each appears hostile to me. No one wants me here, why did I come?

When I arrive at my home my hostess says, 'I've only been here two months and I've had malaria.' (A slimy shivering sweating beast claws at me.)

I crush the mosquitoes on the wall and they leave a red mess, my blood!

I'm told, if you have an accident drive straight for the compound and lock yourself inside or else . . . (a many headed beast with a thousand voices and hands reaching out to grab).

Every one at the mission is very efficient and competent and very busy and the few minutes they can spare to welcome me are stolen from some more pressing task.

Post takes two weeks.

I have not brought enough dresses to be tidy and fresh for work each day, I cannot sleep, the noise of the air conditioner disturbs me even more than the heat. There are noisy neighbours with radios beating out monotonous rhythms. I can't get salads.

The beasts are sitting there around me, just waiting for me to fall. I cannot cope with these things. Nobody told me it would be like this . . .

And gradually I realize that this is what I have been learning about at church in all the years I have been going there and now it is becoming real in my life.

TRUST IN ME. I WILL NOT LET YOU FAIL. TAKE MY HAND AND FOLLOW ME AND I WILL GUIDE YOUR FOOTSTEPS.

HUMBLE YOURSELF IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD AND HE WILL RAISE YOU UP.

And in this way I triumphantly crossed the bridge into Zaire. It has been a very long journey, and I have some scars to show where each animal tried to get me — only to be stained by the Living Christ.

And I am here to try to live out the greatest commandment: Love the Lord your God with all your might and your neighbour as yourself.



...THE MONSTERS'

'EVERY month our Personnel Secretary deals with twenty, thirty, sometimes more enquiries for missionary service.' So said the Society's Chairman recently. 'Probably most go no further but among them are those whose call is of God and who will serve the Society in the years ahead.'

We rejoice with those who made the grade. They will know the satisfaction of living in the will of God, influencing many people for Him and extending His Kingdom overseas. They will be valedicted, prayed for, welcomed home and rightly honoured for their work (3 John 8).

What of those, however, who go no further? Are they the bad seed of the parable, eaten up by the birds of the air, scorched by the sun and choked by cares? Are they those who began to build and could not finish, to the derision of others? Do they see themselves as rejects, able only to add 'BMS (failed)' to their curriculum vitae? Or has some good come out of the process?

Too much

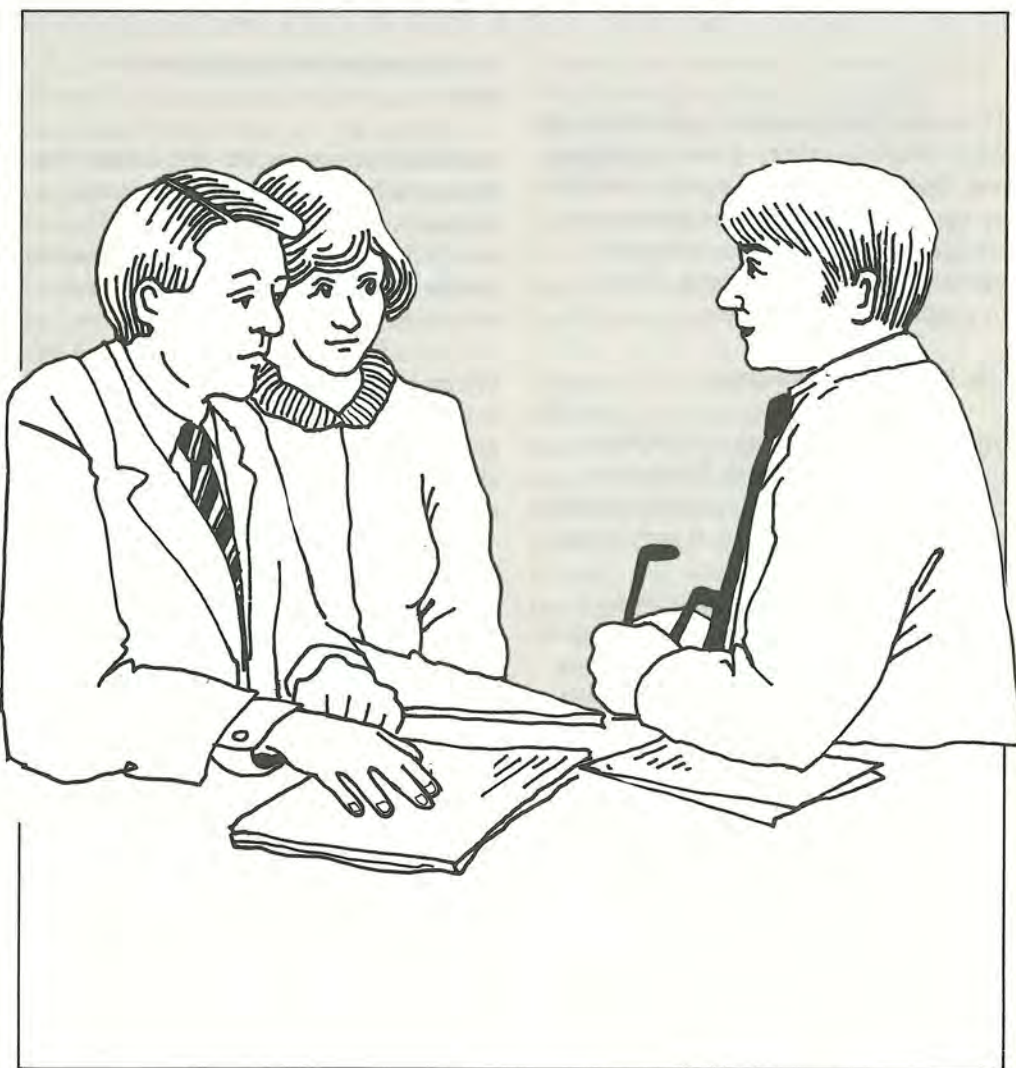
Some are undoubtedly drawn by the romance of missions. Service overseas can still seem glamorous especially when presented in a large meeting. Under the influence of emotion we will promise anything for God. The next day, in the afterglow, we ask how soon we can get abroad. When the reply comes stressing dedication, training and commitment our ardour has perhaps cooled a little. We realize that we may have bitten off more than we can chew and we go no further.

Others write half-fearfully. They make an enquiry, but ask themselves, 'Will my offer result in my being dragged relentlessly into service, half-willing and unprepared? Will a magnetic Personnel Secretary entrap me before I am ready?' When a reply comes indicating ways of service they say, 'I was only curious. I don't want to go any further.'

Still more discover along the way that they may not be suitable for overseas work. Although Christian service is only made possible by the grace of God yet certain human qualities are necessary. Those who fail CSE French

'THOSE WHO WENT NO FURTHER'

by Fred Stainthorpe



may never acquire 'the gift of tongues'. Others, dogged by ill-health, may find the tropics too enervating. Someone who has failed in this country will not necessarily succeed abroad and to be unemployed is not always a call to missionary work. Factors like these are sometimes not realized until enquiries proceed and they reveal the difficulties in going further.

Not for me

A number of enquiries do go further along the road. People may begin training only to discover that the way presents them with more problems than they had imagined. Their studies may make them realize that missionary work is not for them and so they must resign. This takes considerable courage

and honesty. Others find that they are temperamentally unsuited for overseas service and a candidate board may have to decline their offer. This is equally hard to face. It calls for much humility and despite assurances to the contrary can lead to feelings of personal failure.

Some may find the cost too high. Jesus drew large crowds at first but as He laid down the conditions of discipleship many drew back and followed Him no longer (John 6:66). In the same way today enquirers sometimes discover that the cost in career prospects, personal relationships, finance and comfort may be too great. Every course of training is an experience of self-discovery. What they learn about themselves prevents them from going further.

Deluded?

On the surface this makes depressing reading. Only the violent, it seems, take the BMS by force. Were they all deluded? Was God leading them up the garden path? As the 'rejects' consider the course of their lives is there anything which they have learned and for which they can thank Him? Has the

world church been helped by their abortive enthusiasm?

In many ways it has. They have all been exposed to the challenge of world mission and shown themselves willing to face up to it. They have all learned something of how a missionary society works, a subject which might otherwise have remained shrouded in mystery. Some of them may turn away embittered and a trifle cynical but the majority would, I think, say that they have found value from the experience. For them, 'Thou didst well that it was in thine hearts' (1 Kings 8:18). Some Christians are called on like Abraham to be willing to sacrifice their Isaacs. Having felt themselves called to go abroad, when the sacrifice is not demanded of them, they are able to serve the Lord wholeheartedly and with a clear conscience here. They have made progress in the art of discovering God's will. His 'No' can be as useful as His 'Yes' if we are willing to act on it. The 'No go' sign leads to a 'Road clear'.

Advocated

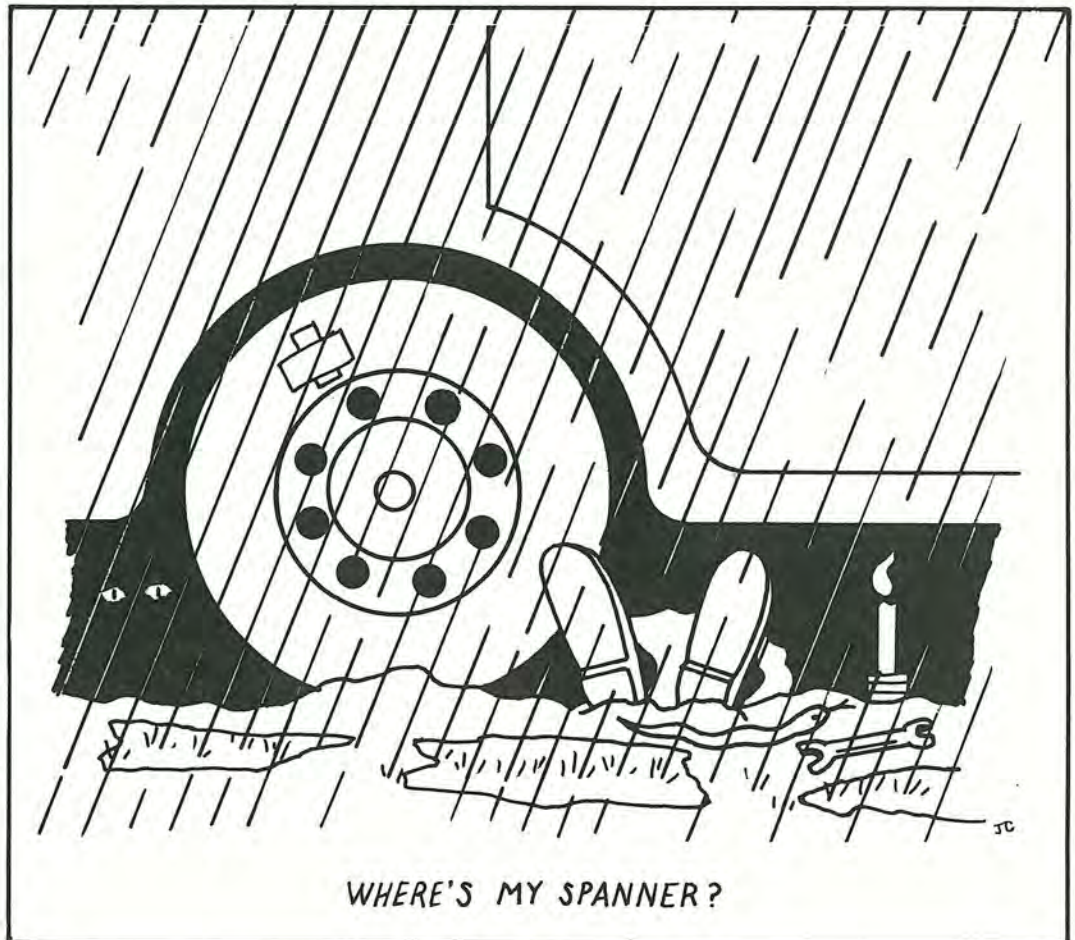
In addition, their interest in the world church has been aroused. If this is

maintained it can make them indispensable advocates of world mission in their home churches. Too few of these exist. Ideally we should all have this vision, but in practice we need to be spurred on by the enthusiasts. A reject can become an enthusiast.

They can at least say, 'I obeyed what I thought was the call.' Some of our church members may not have this defence. When the call came they did not follow it up. Jesus wanted to go further with them but they said, 'No' and, 'there came a mist and a blinding rain, and life was never the same again.' Only when they acknowledge their refusal can they be released for fully useful service here.

Those who responded but went no further need not despair. God has not rejected them. Mark who had not gone on to share in the work later became an honoured colleague of both Peter and Paul. It would be interesting and revealing to hear from some who 'went no further' about how God has used their willingness to respond to what they believed to be His will for the furtherance of His Kingdom through their residence here.

"THEY NEVER TOLD ME"
THINGS
MISSIONARIES
HAVE
TO DO!





Worlds Apart...

OPT OUT

It was more like opting in to a new kind of life for Stella and Trevor King when they went to Nepal.

GOING overseas as a missionary meant a complete change in life-style for Trevor King. But the lessons he has learned have stayed with him on his return to Britain.

'When I told my friends and the company I worked for

that I was going to Nepal, they said I was dropping out, and I suppose I was,' says Trevor. 'I sold my house and bought a smaller one, and I gave up my car.

'Opting out means different things to different people.

For me it meant giving up many material possessions, but I found that easy. I gave up a number of books I had hardly looked at for a long time. If ever I need them I can go to the library.

'There have been some snags of course. Our house, now we are back in Britain, is not large enough for a family party.'

Trevor and his wife Stella didn't find fitting into life in Nepal too hard either. They



Across Cultures

ING ...?

had already cut down on food and not having many 'things' to worry about gave them a sense of release.

'We learned to have more time for people than things. We realised that what can't be done today can be done tomorrow, or the day after. People in Britain are always in a rush.'

They also learned from the people in Nepal that what you have, however little, you share.

'If you've got possessions, you share them. If you've got money, you don't keep it to yourself, you employ others to do jobs for you, and so spread the money around. It's an ideal system in a country where there is no such thing as social security.'

Their eating habits have also been changed by life in Nepal.

'We are not vegetarians, but a lot of Nepalis are. We found we didn't need to eat meat

and now we have come back to Britain we continue to eat very simply.'

Trevor came out of a well-paid computer job: 'But we didn't notice any lack of money. I got rid of the car and not only do I not have to spend time cleaning it, there is nothing to spend on maintenance either. I think there is something in the rat-race about power. Has my power decreased? I haven't noticed.'

IT IS ENRICHING TO HAVE TWO CULTURES

'But it's hard, in retirement, to be away from one's former life,' says Edith Hallett

SOME people have dual nationality: I have dual culture.

True, I was born and bred in Britain, and that counts for a great deal, but all the best years of my working life were spent in India, and that counts for a great deal too.

So retirement was difficult. How many people when they retire do so with the knowledge that all friendships made during almost all of their working lives must be abruptly and finally broken? I at least came to live amongst people who had little knowledge of my previous way of life and fading interest in it. I learnt to be silent on the subject. Silent that is until the rare occasion arises when I meet someone who can understand and listen. If then I err in the other direction, who can wonder?

We who have lived for many years in the Third World can never have the same outlook on life as most of our friends who have remained in this country. Never can poverty mean to me difficulty in keeping up payments on TV sets, or doing without an overseas holiday. I can – I really can – appreciate the tremendous hurt that comes with prolonged unemployment: but it is the damage to the personality which I deplore. The poverty that results cannot touch my heart.

In India unemployment means no income coming in at all. No unemployment benefit; no children's allowance; no health system. At the best it means dependence of relations

and crippling debts building up; at worst near-starvation. That's what it has come to mean to me too – and will do till the end of my days.

I do not feel apologetic for this change in my way of thinking, even if I find it politic to keep it rather quiet. I believe that it is high time that we of the West took a more world-wide view of these things. Too long we have meant by 'everybody', 'everybody-in-our-little-bit-of-the-world'.

I am rather dubious about another change in my outlook that I have noticed. The Watergate scandal and the affairs of Richard Nixon have rather faded from our minds, but one thing I shall always remember with a slight feeling of uneasiness. Most people may not remember that some of the Eastern countries were apparently puzzled as to what all the trouble was about. Naturally any patriot, however high-minded, would use all the means at his disposal to obtain any information that might be of use to him. Surely *that* can't be regarded as corruption!

Please, I am not saying that I agree with this view; but I did find myself able to view it from the standpoint of my second culture. It made me feel something of an alien.

On the whole I have no regrets at having this dual culture. I find it enriching. But it is hard sometimes to be condemned in retirement to so complete a break with so much of one's former life.

'MISSIONARIES ARE PEOPLE TOO'

THE word 'missionary' is surrounded by a huge wall of myth, misconception and mystique. So much of our time is spent trying to chip away at these well established bricks, that we are in grave danger of forgetting what or who is lying beyond the wall.

Let's look at one or two of the 'bricks' – but surely they are not ones we build ... are they?

BRICK ONE

MISSIONARIES ARE EITHER SOCIAL MISFITS OR SUPER-CHRISTIANS

One of the many refreshing aspects of the Bible is seeing how God used ordinary, everyday people to carry out His work. That is as true today as it was for Old Testament people. 'Missionaries' come from all walks of life, from varied theological and church backgrounds, from all classes, from all continents. But they all have one thing in common. They choose to serve overseas as a response to their Christian commitment and to the voice of Christ in their lives – 'Go, and make disciples ...'. Some preach, some teach, some heal, some hoe, but all share and love, in the name of Christ.

BRICK TWO

THOSE PAGAN PEOPLE IN FOREIGN LANDS MUST BE SO GRATEFUL THAT 'WE' ARE HUMBLE ENOUGH TO SHARE OUR SPIRITUAL WISDOM

Become an overseas missionary believing this, and you will be sadly lost. You might encounter resentment, hatred, hardship and, most of all, misunderstanding in other countries. Blundering in to a new country expecting all to feed from the wealth of your knowledge will lead to disappointment. An attitude of humility, of a willingness to learn as well as to teach, of a readiness to receive as well as give will get you much further.

Each country in which the BMS works has an established national church. Today, Partnership Mission is what it's all about. We are a world church engaged in a world mission – together.

BRICK THREE

IF HE/SHE'S BEEN 'CALLED' TO GO OVERSEAS, THEN OF COURSE, HE/SHE'LL ENJOY LIFE THERE!

Going overseas can bring with it a great deal of emotional upheaval. A new land, a new language, a new diet, a new climate and a new kind of people all demand that you adapt! Most missionaries do. Some don't. Those first few months are frequently very hard and very lonely.

BRICK FOUR

MISSIONARIES HAVE A SPECIAL HOT LINE TO GOD WHICH MEANS THEY CAN WORK FOR 30 HOURS A DAY

Missionaries are people too. They need to rely very much on the strength which only Christ

ARIES PLE TOO'

gives. But weariness comes all too often. Tiredness, anger, frustration, and high self expectations can all be countered with a touch of humour, and much prayer and love.

BRICK FIVE

MISSIONARIES ARE SO STRONG THAT I REALLY DON'T NEED TO WRITE TO/PRAY FOR/SUPPORT HIM/HER

We are a family. We all need to know that we are loved, remembered and upheld. Not all missionaries are the best correspondents, but they share these needs. The names of so many missionaries pass across the pages of this magazine each month. Choose one or two and write to them, share with them, support them and, above all, pray for them.

The truth is, we are all missionaries. We are all involved in world mission. Isn't it about time we made that involvement more than just a good intention?



You are part of the Baptist world family!

Baptist World Alliance Day

Your Baptist congregation is one of nearly 130,000 churches with over 34 million baptized members worldwide. Many of your sister churches observe BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE DAY the first Sunday in February or another convenient day. The Baptist World Alliance counts national Baptist Unions and Conventions in 143 countries as constituent members.

Program materials are available from

OR

The Baptist Union
4 Southampton Row
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The Baptist Union
14 Aytoun Road
Pollokshields
Glasgow G41 5RT

OUT OF DARKNESS INTO THE LIGHT OF CHRIST:

1987
Theme

Liberation Through Jesus Christ John 8:36

WISH YOU WERE HERE . . .

says Ann Bothamley, who, like many missionaries finds holiday-making overseas something of a problem.

WHERE are you planning your holiday next year? Perhaps you like winter holidays in the snow, spending cosy evenings round a wood fire. Or perhaps you like sun and surf on the Mediterranean. . . .

So many possibilities – for adults and children.

If you're a Christian, there's that lifetime opportunity to visit the Holy Land, or many other holidays that you can spend enjoying Christian fellowship.

If you live and work in India, the choice is not so extensive. In fact, it's pretty limited. Stay on the plains in a temperature of 42 degrees celsius upwards and suffer frequent electricity cuts – or escape to the hills. The hills? What hills? Well, you could travel thousands of miles to the north or go south to the Nilgiri or Palani hills – about 12 to 15 hours away by train. Booking tickets on the overnight train can be something of a nightmare, but it is possible. The problem comes when you are only allowed to book the return ticket once you have reached your destination. Fighting to get on the buses which make their way up winding roads from the plains is another aspect of the journey.

TRANSPORT . . .

This year, we decided to go by car. Ten hours journey laden with bedding, household necessities, a box of books and a kerosene stove.

Indian roads are not quite like motorways. 40 miles per hour is the maximum speed – and often less, when you have a detour into a field to avoid fallen telegraph poles or uprooted trees, numerous potholes, goats, chickens and bullock carts. Thank the Lord we arrived safely.

ACCOMMODATION . . .

Where to stay? Some missionary Societies still have bungalows to rent and usually you can find a vacant one by writing in advance. But you never know how well or poorly these are equipped.

COOKING FACILITIES . . .

This year, our cottage has an ancient woodstove – capable of filling the whole kitchen with smoke but which at times works very efficiently. When it works, we can boil water for a bath – the cold water is icy here – and it has been possible to make scones and cook vegetables.

FOOD . . .

What about food? A cake and two loaves of bread made on the plains are keeping well and an Australian recipe made by sailors called 'hard tack' makes a good snack lunch. Soup packets and a few tins saved from a food parcel are a luxury and people selling fruit and vegetables

come to the door each morning. Prices are high. The people who live here are poor and the 'season' is their only means of income for most of the year.

ENTERTAINMENT . . .

Entertainment? Well not quite what you would expect, perhaps. The most exciting would be a walk or a picnic with other missionary colleagues.

Other activities include making jam with sugar brought up from the plains, reading avidly, praying and sitting in the sunshine or beside a log fire in the evenings.

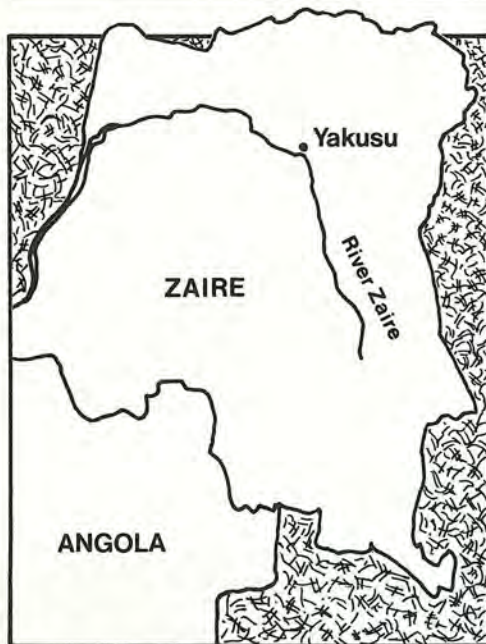
The beds are old and not that comfortable. One has to keep washing and using the same limited vessels, and sometimes it is frustrating – especially when the stove takes two hours to get going.

RECHARGED . . .

However, we shall return to the plains thanking God for a wonderful holiday, for rest and cool air to breathe, time to read and pray and just to be quiet – recharging those batteries for the work that God has for us throughout another year.

I hope that your holiday will do that for you even if the holiday will be quite different.

THE VITAL ROLE OF CATECHISTS . . .



Roz Williams, teaches at the Bible School at Yakusu, Zaire. Earlier this year she sketched out her perception of the role of a Catechist in the life of the Zairian church. Speaking to the Regional Assembly of the Baptist Community of the River Zaire in February, Roz asked some basic questions.

What is a Catechist?

He's a teacher — a 'pastor' — a leader of prayer times — a preacher — an organizer — an encourager of Christians — an evangelist.

A school-teacher receives at least four years training. A pastor, with his task of preaching, evangelizing and guarding his people, studies for four years. Both teacher and pastor have spent several years in school before entering on their specific courses. A catechist is often working alone, dealing with many people and many problems. He

probably has received little education — and certainly lacks specialist training. It is so vital that the courses organized for catechists shall be ongoing, that they cover all aspects of the work and that every opportunity is taken to deepen his spiritual life. It is here that strength and inspiration will be found. To this end, weekly — or at least fortnightly — classes should be held, including extra work to be done between times. A time for 'retreat' needs to be made, too, in order that the catechists themselves should be 'fed'.

The problem of finance is ever present. A catechist who receives 50 zaires a month (just over 50p) for his service to the Church will find difficulty in paying for correspondence courses, the cheapest being 7 zaires. Books and pens cost money and as his people will doubtless look to him in time of difficulty, this meagre allowance will do little. If the Church is unable to support her workers with a reasonable salary, she should at least provide the tools necessary for study.

Correspondence Courses

There are several schools which offer courses. The most useful courses give clear Bible teaching, so that the catechist is better acquainted with the Word of God. They also explain doctrine simply, and many errors now being freely taught amongst village Christians can be eliminated, for example, that baptism gives salvation, or if a Christian dies without having paid all his dues to the Church, he won't go to Heaven . . .

It is possible to follow the courses in French, Lingala, Bangala or Swahili. They consist of a book of lessons and another of examinations. The reader

uses his Bible and the book to learn a topic, and then answers the questions given. He is not requested to write sentences, but must choose the correct answer from several offered. This helps anyone whose education has been limited. The completed book can be returned to Yakusu — or to the Pastor who is responsible for the training of the catechists — for correction.

Classes

(1) Help is needed to teach more fully the first steps of the Christian way. Teaching the *babili* (baptismal candidates) is not a matter of teaching the correct answers to the Catechism, but of establishing the faith, of laying a good, strong foundation. A series of booklets has been developed with the aim of helping candidates to make a full commitment, so that their lives, both before and after baptism, shall give a clear witness. During this course, one can guide the catechists in their role of shepherd — discussing problems which may arise — how best to deal with them, without always using the strong deterrent of excommunication — how to foresee a time of difficulty or distress or doubt . . . in other words, the cure of souls. This training needs to be carried through all topics, whether with the *babili*, in Bible Study or more general subjects. A simple collection of Bible references is available, so that a catechist, faced with death, or trouble, or joy, can lead the believers into a stronger faith through a Bible reading and prayer.

(2) Without guidelines, it is difficult to prepare sermons or plan a service. Therefore a course on simple Homiletics and Liturgy would be invaluable. It is pretty well obvious that only a very few 'ordinary'

believers dare to approach a pastor with their doubts, or when only needing light on a subject. Indeed, what pastor in Zaire has the time to spare for that? But they will ask their catechist. For that reason, the catechist must receive some lessons in doctrine.

He must know what the Bible says about baptism, the Lord's Supper, life after death, and so on. A positive attitude to church membership and discipline is preferable. Yet the catechist must be able to say, 'You must not'.

He must have an unshakeable conviction, based on the Bible. It is not enough to say, 'The Church says.' One must go further back, to the Word of God, saying, 'Jesus said'. . . . 'The Bible says. . . .' 'The Christian approach is. . . .' We have attempted to meet this need in a small booklet which was prepared in response to questions raised by Catechists, such as — 'Mademoiselle, someone in the village is a bad drunkard. When I told him that Christians don't approve of getting drunk, he wanted to know where they heard that. . . . What does the Bible say about it?' Or, 'Someone asked me why he can't keep his six wives if he becomes a Christian. Is there anything about that?' or, 'If my wife gets ill and wants to go to the witch doctor, what do I tell her?'



Bible School a Yakusu

We find it difficult enough to turn to an appropriate passage, with all our training and reference books. These men, in the front line of battle, have got to be given a certain amount of counselling, and, in the absence of a full concordance in Lingala, a very modest one is in process of being duplicated. It is so 'modest' that we can't afford covers for it. . . . The catechists need practice at using an index.

(3) ORGANIZING — In order that all groups — men, women, teenagers, children — receive help, a catechist has

to be able to delegate responsibility and know how to supervise without suppressing. He will appreciate a time of training in coping with Sunday School work, Bible Study, evangelism, and so on. He needs to understand that his pastor is his superior and that he must accept the decisions made by the Church as a whole. He needs to realize that he is not the only one entitled to lead Christian work, and it should be the aim of each catechist to work as a member of a team.

Others ought to be capable of running the Sunday School, training the choir, holding meetings for Christian women, etc. It would be useful to prepare programmes of study outlines, in the same way that Sunday Schools are provided with materials for teaching. If new Christians could be encouraged to learn to read, there would be fewer obstacles in their spiritual growth. To be able to read Lingala or Lokele is to have the key to open the door to the hymn books, with their carefully thought out words, which describe some of the deeper emotions of life. To know Lingala is to be able to feed oneself, for a person can 'search the Scriptures' for himself, and the Holy Spirit can interpret for him as he reads. Thus, Christians in an area will not remain forever tiny babies in the faith, relying on their catechist for spiritual food, but they will grow strong. Together they will discover the deep thoughts of God, who will lead them out to do great things for Him . . . and in this way, His church in Zaire will become adult, mature, responsible.



Classroom at the Bible School

MISSION TALK



WORLD MISSION WEEKEND

WHEN the Missions Committee of Colchester Baptist Church, Eld Lane, learned that Richard and Sue Hoskins would be leaving for service at Bolobo, Zaire, before the Baptist Assembly valediction, they decided that something special was needed.

The Rev Rodney Sawtell arranged the

Commissioning Service for March 16, when the Rev Albert Yorke of Headington, Oxford, and Miss Joan Maple, BMS Personnel Secretary, took part along with the church secretary, Mr George Hay.

As preparation for this a World Mission Event was planned for the previous

day. This enabled the church to include its interest in our other missionaries, Dr Hazel Salter, at Chandraghona, and Steve and Johanna Pilling serving with the Wycliffe Bible Translators in Kenya.

An exhibition was mounted showing many aspects of the work of BMS with special reference to Zaire and Bangladesh, by posters, photographs, models and artifacts. Other stands concentrated on Home Mission and some of the other societies supported by the church.

In other rooms a rolling programme of films, videos and sound strips was shown to broaden our knowledge of the work of these organizations and a constant supply of delicious cakes, scones and cups of tea was provided by one of our catering teams.

To end the day, the church's Youth Choir sang excerpts from Roger Jones' composition *A Grain of Mustard Seed* and other items proclaiming the theme of world mission.

FULLY BOOKED

A conference on missionary work to be held at Pitlochry this month has quickly been fully booked 'and there is a long waiting list for cancellations reports BMS Scottish Secretary', Ron Armstrong.

'So I am not appealing for bookings, but prayer would be very much appreciated.

We are also starting to plan a series of one-day workshop-conferences to cover the whole of Scotland in different regions. The first will be on December 6 at Erskine Baptist Church, Renfrewshire, and anyone interested should contact me for details — although people can just roll up at 10.30 and registrations are not necessary.'

The Rev Ron Armstrong's address is:

2 Moorcroft Road
Newton Mearns,
Glasgow G77 5AW
Tel: 041-639 6457

INTER-FAITH GROUP

FORUMS, peace centres, and councils at local, regional and national levels for discussion and dialogue between people of different faiths were urged by a group of academics, social workers and religious leaders in India in August, including Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians.

Sponsored by the National Council of Churches in India, the group considered problems related to communal harmony, peace and justice in the country. It met in a context of recent inter-religious violence and suspicion. Speakers argued that the basic causes of disharmony are socio-economic and political.

The 'divide-and-rule' policy of British colonial rule is being perpetuated today by politicians and the business class to further vested interest and power structures, the group said. It said 'human values of India as a secular state with impartiality to all religions must be sustained and promoted among all levels of society'. It recommended that all communities and the media take care not to use religious and communal terminology, in order to avoid misinterpretation and misinformation.

It also requested all religious communities to avoid ostentation, such as elaborate processions, and provocative slogan-shouting, in areas of communal tension. It condemned 'all forms of violence, overt and subtle, to achieve any ends. We urge exploring of ways and means to curb violence through meetings, discussions, dialogue and articulation of this concern through the media. We urge all religious communities to explore non-violent means to achieve social harmony and justice.'

EPS

BMS AT POP FESTIVAL?

BMS at a Christian pop-festival with 25,000 young (and not so young) people? BMS at Greenbelt? BMS at what is in fact one of Britain's major Christian education and spiritual growth events? BMS at a gathering together of the country's main groups involved in helping Christians come to terms with the challenges of our world? BMS wallowing in the mud and gale-force winds which proved to be the climax of this four day annual Festival of Praise and Challenge?

Yes, BMS was at Greenbelt, along with representatives of other mission agencies in the Christian Service Advisory Centre. A marquee was, for the four days, transformed into a Centre through which well over 2,500 people passed, to see videos of the work of the different agencies, to buy books dealing with different aspects of missionary challenge, to look at a selection of 'job vacancies' which illustrated the surprisingly wide range of

people who can be called missionaries. But above all to counsel and guide hundreds of young people, from various denominations and backgrounds, who believed that God was challenging them to give their lives to His Service at home or overseas.

Some were just beginning to plan their future lives, others had already gained qualifications, or had years of experience. Some had just begun to hear God's call, others had wrestled with Him for years. Some will perhaps eventually spend a few weeks in voluntary service for Him. Others will be giving a life-time overseas. Some were waiting when we opened the tent flap on Friday afternoon. Others were blown there on Monday evening, but, throughout that time, come they did, seeking help and guidance.

Hopefully BMS will be at Greenbelt next year to work with those to whom God is speaking. Perhaps we will see you there!

AMITY TEACHERS

THE orientation programme for six British teachers of English in China has been so successful that the rumour is they are speaking like Chinese now.

The team, supported by BMS, CMS, USPG, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and the URC Council for World Mission, were commissioned at a special service held in St Andrew's Hall Chapel, Selly Oak, in August.

A fuller report of progress will be given next month.

REDISCOVERING EACH OTHER . . .

THAT was the unofficial theme for a Baptist World Alliance Conference held in Nanjing, China, in July. Two hundred Baptists from more than a dozen countries visited China to get a first hand account of the Christian situation.

Those who participated were able to develop a new awareness of evangelism as being more than talking to a person about Christ. The individual is a whole person, a human being in the context of his society and the neighbourhood, factory and family in which he lives.

Baptists have always been a people of proclamation. The danger comes in reducing the Gospel to its informational components, thinking then that in the sharing of the Gospel information we have shared the Gospel.

'These days of conference,' said Lewis Myers of the USA, 'reaffirm that the Gospel is primarily relational.'

Four Bible studies, led by Chinese Christians, opened the sessions each morning. Peter Han of Nanjing compared the usefulness of Caleb in his old age with that of China's pastors today. Men who have long since passed retirement age, yet with the press and joy of service, are doing more than ever in their lives.

Wang Weifan and Zhao Zhien of the Nanjing seminary brought out in different ways how God's bringing His people through suffering prepares them for whatever suffering and challenges they may face.

Peng Cui'an, a Nanjing seminary student from Fuzhou, told of her call to ministry. Leaving the good position and work she had was only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. Chi Renhua, a Korean seminary student, shared the work among her people in China's northeast.

Jiang Peifen, chairperson of the Jiangsu Provincial Christian Council, said, 'Christ is really the head of

the church in China . . . but in all the practical things we do not all have to do things in the same way. Our knowledge of Jesus is much deeper now than when we were in a divided church.

'We do not have mass evangelistic meetings. All the churches have different methods of evangelizing. Some of them have a few days of evangelistic services during the Spring Festival or New Year holidays. Others have one Sunday for such services each month. Our church is small but God has opened a wide door for the Gospel.'

The visitors were introduced to the work of a Chinese pastor, the development of the new hymn book, and what the Bible means to China.

Dr Noel Vose, Australian President of the BWA, noted that Baptists have paid enough attention to God's words on justice, but that there is now some movement in that direction. Dr. Vose reminded the participants when they shared the conference with their friends and church at home 'not to appear to be a China expert'.

The Secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, Samuel T Ola Akande, said he had experienced some growing pains during his time in China.

'I see the Three-Self Movement as a means of spiritual growth for a church in a developing country,' he said.

'Our government recently came out with an order that missionaries should definitely back off from Nigeria. I have gone to the chief government officer and pleaded with him to let the missionaries stay. I came away with the promise that the policy would change, but having heard all I have heard this week I wonder whether I am not working against the will of God. I just do not know.

A church historian from the USA, Dr William Brackney, commented: 'From a missionary context, I am chastened that church history up to now has been written for and by the western world. It must now be written to meet the needs of the entire world. I do not think we can begin to understand enough to rewrite it soon, but the chapter is unique.'

One interesting session was devoted to questions that the Chinese had for Baptists. They asked their position on creeds and the sacraments - no creeds but confessions of faith, which are not binding and which can be accepted or rejected. They also wanted to know how theological controversy is handled within and among Southern Baptists.

Adapted from an article by Britt Towery in the magazine Bridge.



For Your Prayer Diary

BANGLADESH – RANGPUR 2-8 November

We reported a few months ago that the New Life Convention, now an annual event in north Bangladesh, had been a source of encouragement to the churches and the means of bringing the light of the Gospel to bear on the lives of many people. Large numbers attended, but there were not so many children this year who were affected by what took place. Pray for the churches in north Bangladesh – of several denominations – who are already preparing for the next convention this coming February. Gwyn and Joyce Lewis are involved in a different kind of work since their return to Bangladesh after furlough. Gwyn is no longer Pastoral Superintendent and is concentrating on Bible teaching and training, while Joyce is doing Sunday School and Women's work. We remember Chuni Mondal, area superintendent for Rangpur and responsible for BBS youth work in Bangladesh.

BRAZIL – MATO GROSSO DO SUL RONDONIA AND ACRE 23-29 November

Several churches in the UK had the opportunity recently to meet the Rev Williams Balanuic, the state secretary of Mato Grosso do sul. He was able to communicate the vigour of Brazilian church life and share news of the way the church there is growing. BMS missionaries involved in the work in this area are Robert and Christine Draycott at Paranaiba in the north east. They related to seven Baptist churches, encouraging, teaching and stimulating, Christine has recently been unwell and in hospital (September). George and Joyce Wieland have had to return to the UK for the time being because of Joyce's illness, but they are engaging in deputation work. Pray for Joyce's complete recovery. In Campo Grande, John Clark is Principal of the Seminary, and Norma Clark is the Seminary librarian. The college has grown in numbers. John has been working with the students on a vegetable garden project, but this is now being overseen by Frank Gouthwaite who will also be engaged in social work in the area. At Porto Velho, David Brown is co-ordinator of an extension course programme and Sheila works in a mother and children's clinic.

ZAIRE – KINSHASA 9-22 November

Kinshasa is one of the fast growing cities of the world. People continue to flock there from the different regions of Zaire looking for a better life. Some succeed, but most only just manage to survive in the urban environment, crowded into the new areas growing up on the outskirts of the city. Poverty is much more acute here than in the villages where at least you can fish, or grow crops in the garden. Unemployment is acute, and many people try to earn a penny or two by engaging in trading, setting up their wares on street corners. The Church of Christ in Zaire (ECZ) which groups together all the Protestant communities, including the Baptist Community of the River Zaire, has its headquarters in Kinshasa. Pray for the Secretary, Bishop Bokoleale and the officers of ECZ. Remember too the CBFZ churches, which are not only maintaining a worshipping witness, but also are involved in a caring ministry of outreach. The CBFZ too has its headquarters in Kinshasa. We remember Pastor Koli, the General Secretary, who has been unwell recently, Owen Clark, the Assistant General Secretary, Deanna Clark, who is responsible for the Christian Education programme and the rest of the CBFZ office staff. Andrew North works, with Citizen Wangoy Ikamba in the CBFZ Protocol Service, arranging travel and supplies for church leaders and missionaries. Also in Kinshasa is the hostel for missionary children, with hostel parents Janice and Alan Brown; the Zaire British Association School, with headmistress Ruth Montacute and other BMS teachers; the Protestant Theological Faculty, where Tim and Barbara Bulkeley teach; and the International Protestant Church with French and English speaking congregations, including members of the diplomatic and international business community. Remember also the Rev Enguta, the CBFZ Regional Secretary for Kinshasa, and all of the pastors and church members.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Mrs M Bafende on 6 August from Kinshasa, Zaire.

Rev N B McVicar on 11 August from Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Miss E Gill on 20 August from IME, Kimpese, Zaire.

Miss A Flippance on 21 August from Binga, Zaire.

Rev A & Mrs Ferreira on 27 August from Portugal.

Departures

Miss W Aitchison on 3 August to Tondo, Zaire.

Miss C Whitmee on 14 August to Balangir, India.

Rev D McClenaghan on 14 August to Cuiaba, Brazil.

Dr & Mrs S Green on 21 August to IME, Kimpese, Zaire.

Miss A Isaacs on 21 August to Upoto, Zaire.

Miss R Montacute on 21 August to Kinshasa, Zaire.

Miss S Shields on 21 August to Kinshasa, Zaire.

Miss V Watkins on 21 August to Upoto, Zaire.

Mrs E R Frame	500.00
Miss Elizabeth Kienzle	50.00
Rev C A Missen	10.00
Mrs Gertrude V A Vance	50.00
Miss W M Wale	100.00

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies, and gifts sent anonymously (to 29 August 1986).

Legacies	£
Miss Dora May Atkinson	453.82
Mrs Gwen R Debney	500.00
Miss W A Dodwell	34,776.68

General

Anon: £15.00; Anon: £16.00; EE: £25.00.

Medical

Mustard Seed (for Bolobo): £20.00.

Angolan Refugees

Anon: £5.00; OAP Lewes: £5.00.

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NOTICE BOARD

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BETTER**

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Ministers for pastoral training in Zaire.

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Physiotherapist for Chandraghona Hospital in Bangladesh.

House Parents for missionary children's hostel in Brazil.

BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY General Committee Nominations

All personal members of the Society and all subscribing Churches are reminded that nominations for General Committee should arrive at Mission House no later than December 31.

Nominations may be for **ELECTION** or **COOPTATION**. The names of those nominated for election will appear on the voting papers and sent to the Churches of their respective Associations. If a person is not elected by the Churches, his or her name will be considered also for cooptation. The names of those nominated for cooptation will appear only on the list of those nominees to be considered for cooptation.

In each case, nominations should be addressed to:

**The Administration Secretary, BMS
93 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA**

and should include relevant biographical details of the nominee.

BMS SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Write in to David Martin for further details

PENZANCE

25 July – 8 August

EASTBOURNE A

1 – 15 August

EASTBOURNE B

15 – 29 August

PITLOCHRY

1 – 8 August

PHAB

Llandudno
18 – 25 July



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