

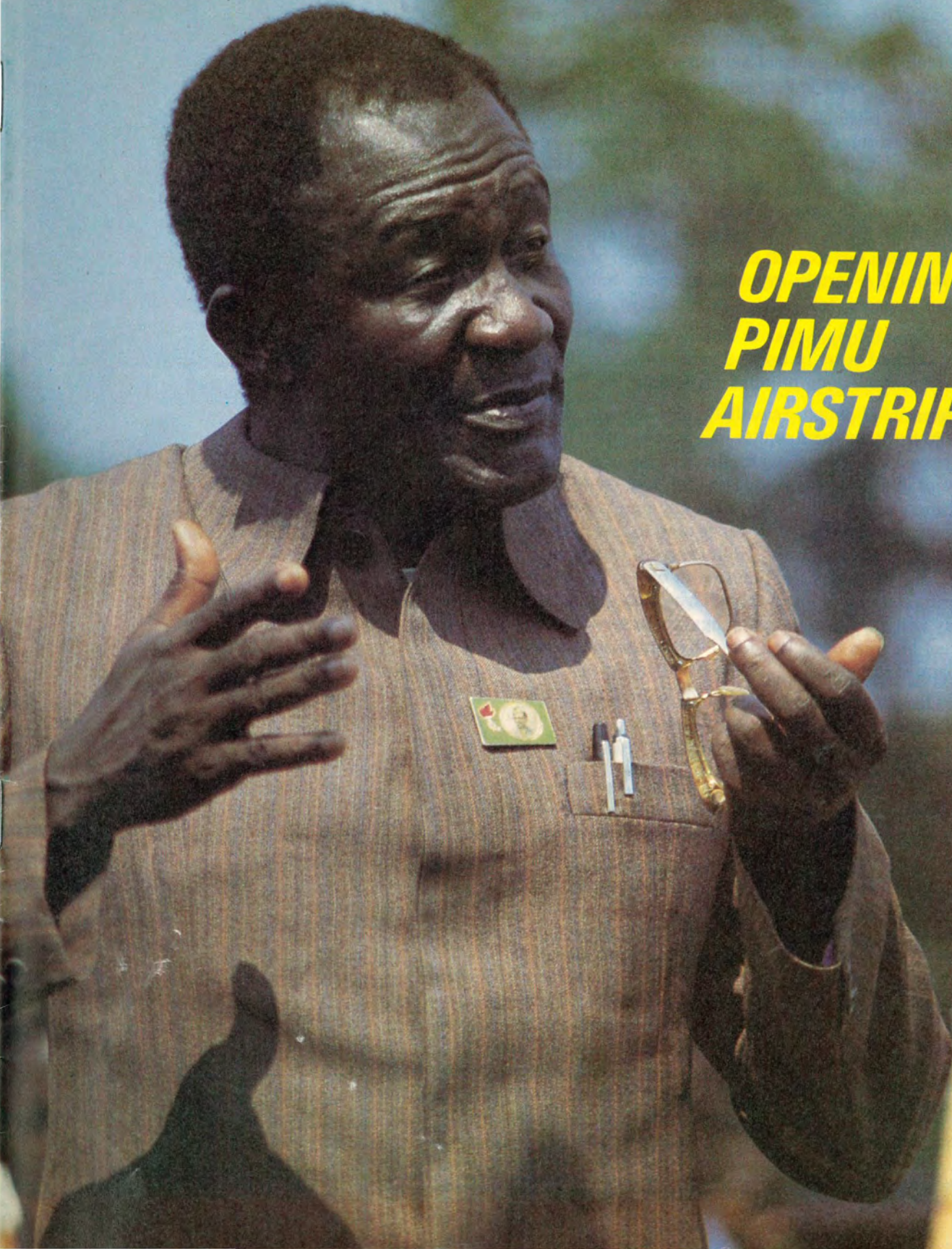
MISSIONARY



HERALD

DECEMBER 1986 20p

**OPENING
PIMU
AIRSTRIP**



Editorial Comment

TRAVELLING, in Britain, can be tiring and often frustrating, but at least transport is available — most of the time. We don't have to make too many plans before we set out to work, to church or to the shops. The reality for so many of our missionaries and the people with whom they work is very different.

Travelling is a serious business. You cannot just hop onto a bus, or call a taxi at the last minute. If you are using a car or Landrover to get to your destination, then adequate preparations have to be made. It is unlikely that there will be a filling-station anywhere on your route, so enough fuel for the return trip has to be carried. There is no AA to sort things out if you happen to have a breakdown. So a full tool set and a knowledge of car mechanics is essential. A certain expertise in bridge-building, of the practical kind, is useful too.

Journey times are much longer than in Britain. Sand and clay roads are easily washed away in tropical rain-storms and it is quite an art deciding how deep puddles really are.

There are the hazards of people as well. On one journey, from Pimu to Bosondjo in Zaire, the hospital jeep was stopped by five men who had stayed in a village overnight because of a collapsed bridge. They wanted a lift to the bridge so that they could repair it and get their lorry across. There were already four people plus boxes and luggage in the jeep, but it was agreed to take four of the men. The fifth objected and he had the shovel, which he waved just half an inch in front of the nose of one of the passengers. Fortunately an elder of the village came along, took the shovel away and gave it to the passenger, who resisted the temptation to 'get his own back' and handed it to the men already seated at the back of the vehicle.

When you pray for missionaries and nationals working overseas for Christ, don't forget all the journeying they have to do, all the difficulties and dangers they often face, and how tired they can feel when they arrive and have to get on with a job of work.

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MISSIONARY HERALD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY



DECEMBER 1986

Features

- 223 CHINA
Growth, Suffering and
Commitment
- 227 MISSIONTALK
- 228 PIMU
— the changing face of travel
- 230 WORLD'S APART . . .
Life on the Road
- 233 FORWARD IN FRANCE
BMS and French Baptists
work together
- 235 BANGLADESH
Speaking loudly of needs
in the developing world
- 238 PRAYER DIARY
- 239 MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS etc

We share in the work of the Church in:

Angola	India	Thailand
Bangladesh	Jamaica	Trinidad
Brazil	Nepal	Zaire
France	Sri Lanka	

Front Cover:

A Zairian official at
opening of Pimu Airstrip



where suffering has dissolved differences — and the church is growing

XIAN, the capital city of more than ten Chinese dynasties, is located in the middle of the Shaanxi plain. Because of its deep cultural, historical and archaeological roots, many famous sites abound making the area one of China's most popular tourist centres for Chinese and foreigner alike.

The large Nestorian stone carved tablet recording the first arrival of Christianity into China in the 7th century now sits in the Shaanxi Provincial Museum in Xian. Many Christian tourists, having paid homage to this historical monument, also want to visit the present church in Xian.

The first church to re-open in Xian on Nanxin Street in the city centre is not far from the historic Bell Tower. On Saturday mornings the church is crowded, and on Sundays is even larger — over 1,000 worshippers at each of the three services held. A second church is located near the city's East Gate, and the Christian organizations in Xian now plan to open a third church in North Street and to rebuild a fourth one at West Gate.

House groups

Because the present two churches cannot accommodate all the believers, many Christians still meet in homes. There are currently 14 meeting points in the city with many more smaller home worship gatherings. The church organizations in Xian would like to minister to every Christian, but, because of the shortage of pastors,

many home gatherings depend on lay leadership. The upbringing of successors in Xian, like other places in China, is an urgent priority.

According to Mr Tian Jingfu, president of the Shaanxi Christian Council, the province has 183 pastors and elders, but many are too old to move around. The work of the church depends heavily on lay volunteers for the day to day ministry. In order to train such persons, the Shaanxi Church has conducted three Bible classes, each lasting four months, for volunteer church workers. A fourth course was scheduled for September this year.

Qualified young people go to Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. In the autumn the Yanjing Theological Seminary in Beijing was re-opened and the present seminary courses offered in Beijing and Tianjin incorporated into the expanded facilities. Shaanxi will send some students there. The church in Shaanxi would eventually like to have its own seminary in Sanyuan County, not far from Xian.

Optimistic

Mr Tian is optimistic about the future of the church in China. He said that during the Cultural Revolution all Christians suffered together for the Lord. Because of this, their differences with each other were dissolved; they gained the sympathy of each other as well as that of non-believers. When Christian activities gradually resumed after 1976, many grass-roots believers

came forward and prompted the leaders to re-open the churches.

'They prayed for us and supported us. They love the Lord more than we do,' said Mr Tian.

'I believe that God works through them. At the same time, the principles of the 3-Self movement give them the assurance that they are now masters in the house of the Lord.'

The church at East Gate belonged formerly to the BMS. During the Sino-Japanese War in the 1930's, refugees came to Xian from Manchuria and Henan, many of them with a Lutheran background. They settled down and established churches in Xian, Baoji and Tianshui in Gansu Province. While all three called themselves Lutheran churches, they had already become independent of any foreign mission board. Today, at East Gate Church, Pastor Feng and some elderly Christians remain true to this tradition.

1986 has been the 'Year of International Peace'. The church in China is seriously promoting this concern. Everywhere in China, the church prays for world peace. As Elder Sun Deren in Xian said: 'We want to run seminaries. We want to train more church workers. But without peace in China, in particular, all our plans will be in vain.'

Adapted from an article in the magazine *Bridge*. *contd. on page 224*



XIAN- Future & Present

BMS work in Xian (Sian) began in 1894 and although missionaries had to leave in the 1950's, at the time of the Communist takeover, the policy of missionaries 'working themselves out of a job' had helped to create a strong church with a deep-rooted faith.

'Missionaries have long declared that they looked and worked for the time when the Church on the mission field would be so firmly established and its members so filled with evangelistic fervour that their own presence would be no longer necessary,' reads the BMS Annual Report for 1951.

'The day of their departure from China has come sooner than they expected or liked. . . . Fortunately the missionaries

of yesterday sought to make tomorrow as well as today by basing the work on firm and enduring foundations, largely through the selection and training of young Christian men and women as colleagues and leaders in school, hospital and church. The onus of Christian witness now rests on the rank and file of the Chinese Church.'



WORKING IN CHINA

SIX Christian teachers from the United Kingdom are already talking like Chinese say reports from Nanjing. They have just been welcomed into China where they will be teaching English.

'We really appreciate your spirit of self-sacrifice, of foregoing the comforts and conveniences you are accustomed to,' they were told.

The group of six, representing the churches in Britain, are working with the Amity Foundation. Amity was created on the initiative of Chinese Christians for the promotion of health, education and social services in China. It is an independent Chinese people's organization and is non-government and non-church. Formally established last year, Amity welcomes the possibility of Christian and non-Christians, Chinese and non-Chinese working together for the humanitarian



welfare of the Chinese people. The teachers' project, which the six are joining, is just one expression of Amity's work. There are now 55 teachers working in different provinces of China offering courses in English, German and Japanese at 36 colleges and institutions.

'We really appreciate your willingness and readiness to offer help and

service,' said Ting Yen Ren, Amity Educational Consultant when he spoke to the teachers at Nanjing. 'There is much we can learn from you, and we look forward to our close co-operation and fellowship in the future.'

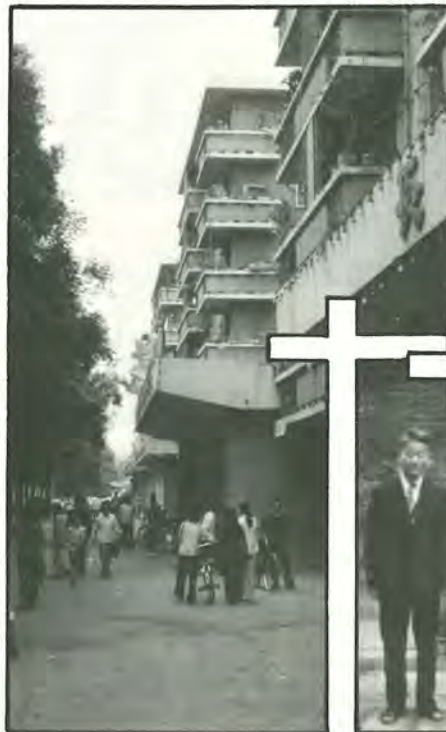
The orientation included presentations on the current situation in China, educational reform, language teaching, the work of the Amity Foundation and Christianity in China.

How strong that witness has been is now very apparent as Angus MacNeill, our Overseas Secretary, discovered on a visit to China earlier this year. He was able to visit Xian to renew contacts with the church leaders.

'In view of past BMS connections with Xian it seemed appropriate to make a gift to the church of a small plaque of the "Praying Hands" and assure the church that Christians in Britain prayed for them,' he said.

'This gift was welcomed and the pastor said that he was glad that together we worship and serve the Lord. While the church leaders were glad to welcome me, there was no hint of any need of BMS involvement again in the church in the province.'

Contact was also made with the old BMS hospital at Xian, now a government hospital. It was wondered whether there might be ways in which the BMS could give some limited assistance.



'We appreciate the warm welcome and kindness the Amity foundation has given us,' said Cathy Hillman one of the British teachers. 'They have ensured that our preparatory week in Nanjing has been a most fruitful meeting of cultures aiming to support the work of Amity.'

Cathy has now left for her assignment at Hangzhou University. Her British colleagues are Rosemary Brookes, Jean and John Johnson, Jean Waudby and Mary White. Although the appointment, initially, is for one year, it is expected that they will be working in China for two years.

The British group is being funded by the Baptist Missionary Society, the Church of Scotland, the Church Missionary Society, the Methodist Church Overseas Division, the United Reformed Church Council for World Mission and the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Before leaving for China, they were commissioned at a special service at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak.

FRIENDS OF THE CHURCH IN CHINA

FRIENDS of the Church in China is a fellowship of individuals in Britain who are interested in learning about Christians in China. Inaugurated in 1984 to form a bridge between representative bodies in both countries it hopes to reach a membership of 1,000 by the end of this year.

The chairman of FCC, Dr George Hood, a former missionary to China, believes that there are many opportunities for Christians in both countries to come to know each other better. He sees the main task of FCC as one of educating the British constituency. The history of both missionary and British political involvement in China, is often

seen by the Chinese as a sour relationship. Many people are ignorant of the impact of the opium wars and British participation in unequal treaties with China.

An article in the FCC newsletter highlights the new relationship with the Chinese Church: 'In the West we inherit a tradition of feeling that we have a lot to give and much to do in the world. We need to cultivate the view-point that we are the recipients of the rich experience of Christians, both in history and in the world at large. The balance in our thinking needs readjustment, and it needs constantly to be kept under review.'

From Dorothy Whittaker

Perhaps this simple explanation could alleviate some of the anger and fury of Katherine Tubbs of Cambridge and help her to try to understand her fellow Baptists in Manchester.

The particular deputation to which our friends from Fallowfield referred had in it someone who misrepresented the people she was supposed to be passionately caring about.

Moreover, in the congregation were Indian Muslim students, and others from the particular

culture being misrepresented at the time, and myself, who was born and brought up in that culture as a missionary child.

We felt ashamed in front of our guests from abroad. We felt we couldn't advocate our missionary work among young people who mix with such a variety of people in Manchester and identify with the particular representation referred to previously.

Perhaps many more Baptists could benefit from the most excellent article 'An Indian

View of Commitment and Tolerance' in our October *Herald*, by the Rev Stanley J Samartha. It contains the essence of what was referred to by 'out of touch missionaries' and might just put Katherine Tubbs in touch with missionary work in 1986 both abroad and in Manchester.

DOROTHY WHITTAKER

Cheadle Hulme,
Cheadle,
Cheshire.

From Richard Venables

For a month or two now I have been intending to write and congratulate you on the excellent quality of the *Missionary Herald*. Receiving your September issue I knew that I could put it off no longer.

Where do you get your photographs from? Their combination of quality and relevance really is outstanding. Your September cover is a delight, a triumph of visual art in the service of wisdom and love. It made my week.

But I assure you that I am

sincere in saying that the quality of the contents matches that of the cover. The graphics seem excellent and the visual presentation very good (no doubt you have a tight budget to work to), but it is the content which I find to be most exceptional in its quality. Your recent summary of the international refugee problem, with its lucid presentation of facts and figures with down to earth comment, was a classic. It is invaluable to have a broad picture, backed up by comments of people on the spot. So much of what we hear has been filtered and distorted through the secular media.

Congratulations, too, on your open discussion of difficult questions such as that of whether we need missionaries in the current era. I know that these simple articles can only be produced through a great deal of research and careful distillation of a vast amount of data. The missionary and new candidate news is also very well presented.

God bless you and those who help you. Keep up the good work.

RICHARD VENABLES

Stafford.

From Dr Margaret Garner

I was interested to read Katherine Tubbs' response to your report, 'It is your business,' in the August issue of the *Missionary Herald* and I feel some background to the article would be helpful to her and your other readers, concerning Union Chapel, Fallowfield.

A recent contact with a BMS deputation speaker, who made certain comments, was distressing to many. It is probably not productive or helpful to repeat the remarks here, but they are still well-remembered by those present at the time. There was a feeling that the views expressed were not compatible with the aims and views of the BMS as we know it.

This unease, combined with a desire to use our resources to the best effect and act as good stewards, resulted naturally in a closer look at the BMS, initially in the form of a special church meeting on the subject. This was subsequently reported in our

church magazine and it was an unheralded surprise to find the minister's article reproduced virtually in full in your magazine.

The particular phrase 'out of touch', which Ms Tubbs wrote about with such feeling, refers to the unfortunate event mentioned above, which triggered our reflections and it communicated precisely its meaning to its intended readership — Union Chapel, Fallowfield. It is a pity that publication without discussion has rendered the phrase liable to misinterpretation in a way which is very far from Fallowfield's intention. The speaker seemed out of touch not with Manchester, but the country concerned.

We are in the fortunate position in Manchester of being a cosmopolitan community and having the opportunity to meet and share discussion with people of many nationalities (for example, an Angolan pastor currently worships with us). We

thus have the chance to be familiar with a wide range of diverse cultures.

We are firmly in agreement with Ms Tubbs' views that missionaries should not all be expected to be excellent verbal communicators and that they should not feel they have to defend themselves at home in addition to performing their valuable work abroad. We are conscious of the stresses of deputation work.

We are now helping to prepare for the 1986 Manchester Baptist Fellowship BMS deputation (held in November). The welcome meeting is to be held at Fallowfield and we are looking forward with enthusiasm to participating fully in the weekend.

MARGARET GARNER

Withington,
Manchester.



MISSION TALK

CELEBRATING A NEW BABY . . .

'Would you like to come to a service of thanksgiving for a new baby?'

At this time of the year, that question seems appropriate. But the question was levelled at BMS Chairman, Maureen Sleeman during her recent visit to Bangladesh. She writes,

It was my third night in Bangladesh. We had travelled for an hour by car to a place north of Dhaka, left the car in the care of the local police at a small township and continued some miles along a rough track by bicycle rickshaw to the village of Mullickbarri.

The rice had been harvested, so soon after dark we set off across the dry stubble of the paddy fields, our way lit by a storm lantern and our torches. Our destination was a farmhouse, occupied by a family of the Garo tribal people.

The mud walled, single-storied buildings, providing accommodation for the extended family, were built around a central courtyard. The row of sandals outside the main house showed us that we were not the first arrivals. On the verandah, 40 or 50 people were sitting cross-legged on the ground. We sang several hymns — or at least, the others did! — in the typical music I was to hear so often over the next few weeks, and which, to my western ears, had no beginning and no end. Scripture was read and several of those present led in prayer. The pastor of the village church spoke, and at the end we were offered the traditional refreshments — hot, very sweet, spiced tea and "mishti" or sweetmeats. Before we left, we were invited into the house to see the mother and her tiny baby girl, a very welcome sister for a family of three boys.

It was the beginning of Advent, and in a world far removed from the commercial trappings of the West, in a setting surely much more akin to Bethlehem, two thousand years ago. As we returned across the fields, the full moon riding high, we spoke of the shepherds who also came down through fields to see a Child born in a stable.

The traditional greeting among many Bengali Christians, "Emmanuel" — God with us — took on a new significance that night.'

FRANCE — A PARTNERSHIP RESUMED

By the signing of an historic agreement with the Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches in France (FEBC), the BMS has resumed work in France.

'France is a great missionary field,' said Pastor André Thobois, President of the FEBC. 'There are 55 million people in France and only five million go to church. There are one million Protestants, but only a small proportion go to church.'

Speaking to the BMS General Committee in November, Pastor Thobois and Pastor André Souchon, Executive Secretary of the FEBC, outlined the nature of any partnership in mission with the BMS. The need for missionaries to pastor and nurture churches was made clear.

There will be an intimate relationship between your missionaries and us,' said Pastor Souchon. 'Any British pastor would have to become as French as possible, and the language training would need to be good. If the language is good, then the task will be easier. The missionaries will become part of the Federation, sharing in its life both at local and national levels. The end result we hope is the evangelization of France with the help of British missionaries who become more and more French — and that is not so bad! The coming of British Baptist missionaries will give French Baptist churches the impetus that comes from Britain. There are many believers in Britain who will pray for them. We French will be benefiting from your prayers!'

'Baptist work in France was started with the help of British Baptists,' said Pastor Thobois, 'and we have thought for a number of years that we were orphans abandoned by you! We are encouraged that our parents are now coming to work with us as our brothers.'

'Work in French Baptist Churches will not be easy. Thirty years ago, we began work through the European Baptist Mission in the Cameroons, Africa. Today, there are three times as many Baptists in the Cameroons than there are in France. Work in France will be difficult, and sometimes, very difficult. But the Lord is Lord of all things, and He can change even the hardest of hearts. Our prayers are that many will help us, so that many will come to know Christ as Lord.'

The articles of an agreement between both bodies were initialled by Pastor Thobois and Pastor Souchon, on behalf of French Baptists, and BMS Chairman, Maureen Sleeman and Rev Reg Harvey, BMS General Secretary.

Breakdown on Pimu road



FROM ~ TO

IT's not really a laughing matter. BMS Summer Schoolers may make jokes about BMS slide sets always having pictures of Landrovers stuck on bridges or bogged down in potholes, but that's the reality of life for so many missionaries and church workers overseas.

The frustrations of travelling in Zaire have been underlined many times in missionary prayer letters, but it was only when visiting the country last year that I really understood.

The hunting instinct

There was the time when I was travelling, at night, with the kilo clinic party from Yangambi back to Yakusu. The Landrover was full, because, apart from Susan Chalmers, the driver and the Zairian nurses, we had also picked up two expectant mothers to take to the hospital.

The driver was very good, most of the time. He seemed to know every pothole and bump on the road personally, taking the appropriate avoiding action in good time. Then, suddenly, his attitude changed. A civet cat ran out of the bush on the right hand side of the road to be caught in the vehicle's headlights.

'Meat,' thought the driver as all his hunting instincts came to the fore. Passengers forgotten, potholes and bumps ignored, the Landrover swerved and bounced after the cat. He missed! Although we backed up the road for several yards, there was no sign of the creature, which had returned to the relative safety of the jungle.

Then the inevitable. The rough treatment had been too much for the patched-up off-side front tyre. The wheel had to be changed. That was no problem even in the dark, with one of us holding a lamp with one hand and batting away the mosquitoes with the other, while the driver expertly and quickly exchanged the 'flat' for the spare.

But the spare was more patched up than the original and lasted about two kilometres before expelling its last breath of Zairian air. This time the tyre had to be removed and the puncture discovered on the inner-tube — no mean feat in the dark and without a bucket of water.

A long way round

This particular journey, however, was relatively trouble-free compared with one a week later. I was travelling from Pimu to Ngundji before crossing the river to Upoto. It took from 5.30 a.m. until 1.30 p.m. for a journey which, in Britain, would have taken no more than two hours.

Because of floods we had to take the 'long' route to Ngundji via Bosondjo. The journey was really slow. Nearly every bridge was difficult to cross. I hopped in and out of the jeep to guide it across bridges which were often no more than two tree trunks, sometimes running ahead to borrow a plank from the next bridge.

All seemed to be going well until we came to a stretch of road which was more like a causeway through swampland. The bridge was originally strong planks placed over a corrugated iron 'tube'. Some of the planks were missing and the earth on either side of the bridge had been partially washed away. We thought we could get across, but, as we tried, the wheels sank into the soft earth and, balanced on the sump, we see-sawed on what was left of the bridge.

Now there was absolutely nobody on the road when we stopped, but within minutes there were people everywhere. Where did they come from? There was water on either side, yet willing hands of both old and young were pulling logs and planks out of the swamp and helping with the jacking up of the vehicle. Others just stood there giving advice. Even so it took a good hour before we could continue.

After arriving at Ngundji, the next part of the journey was much more relaxed. We slowly crossed the Zaire river whilst moving upstream in a 'pirogue' (dug-out canoe) propelled by an outboard motor.

WHEELS WINGS

by David Pountain



Pimu from the air

A few days later the problem was how to get to Lisala airport in order to fly to Mbandaka. There was not enough diesel available for the Upoto Landrover and even while discussing the problem I could see the Missionary Aviation Fellowship Cessna circling overhead. The problem was solved by jumping on the back of Ian Wilson's motor-bike and hurtling along a typical Zairian road. I clutched a bag with one hand and held on with the other, whilst a local pastor followed on his scooter carrying my other case somehow under his knees!

Just after taking off we were over the river.

'They're building an air-strip at Pimu aren't they?' asked the pilot. 'Where is it? I'd like to take a look.'

Although inexperienced in aerial navigation, I decided to be positive.

'You see that road down there. Follow it and it will lead to Pimu.'

It did! Within minutes we were circling the village. The pilot swooped over the landing strip, scattering the workers as he did, in a kind of mock landing, and then pulled up over the trees and made for Mbandaka.

Only a few days before I had walked the landing strip with Sylvia and Adrian Hopkins. It was not quite ready. Although some enormous termite mounds had been levelled to the ground, and the ancient moat that once surrounded the old Pimu village had been filled in, there were still several weeks of work left before an aircraft

could land. That was a day everyone was looking forward to. The day when Pimu and the hospital would no longer be isolated. The day when essential drugs and equipment could be flown in without all the hazards of road travel.

Flying out

The actual opening was 11 August, 1985. The Regional Secretary cut a symbolic ribbon after the MAF plane from Karawa made the first landing amid much cheering and rejoicing after four years' hard work with pick, shovel and axe.

'In the first three months,' says Dr Adrian Hopkins, 'we averaged more than one and a half flights a week. This was just as well, because there was no

vehicle at that time capable of making the 70 miles trip to Bosondjo, the plantation airstrip, without considerable difficulty, taking two to five days for the round trip.

'The first flight out of Pimu was to Lisala taking our Regional Secretary home and returning with vaccines from the depot in Lisala. It was a good demonstration of the use of a plane in church and medical work. Our village chief could not believe that the plane had been to Lisala and back in one hour. He hadn't finished his meal. This is a journey by road and canoe that would take two days for the round trip.'



Official Opening of Pimu airstrip



Worlds Apart...

GOING 'HOME' AFTER FURLOUGH . . .

The journey back to India after a short furlough caused Carole Whitmee just a few problems . . .

'Having arrived in England on 7 June, it seemed no time at all that it was 14 August, and time to take leave again in order to be back in India before my permit expired. There were several hours delay in Dhaka, as there was no plane available to take us on to Calcutta. I finally arrived in Calcutta

late on 15th night. I stayed in Calcutta for several days and then left by train for Balangir on 19 August. I was anticipating that the car would be in Sambalpur to meet me at 10 a.m. on the 20th and that the journey on would be much quicker and easier. However on arrival in Sambalpur the car was not to be seen.

'There was no way of knowing the reason why and while pondering what to do next, a family from Balangir, members of the Pentecostal Church, appeared and insisted that I wait with them for the passenger train and so they helped to take my luggage to the waiting room. They were much concerned for my welfare and I was most grateful for all the help they gave me. It began to rain quite heavily, and the passenger train was not due for several hours. The time for it came and went and still the train did not appear. I was wondering how the luggage — plus what I had collected in Calcutta would get on the train and without getting wet.

'At about 3 p.m., the train arrived. It was a miracle how everything was put on the train and nothing got wet, even though there was no glass in the windows and the train was as wet inside as out! We had not been on the train for long, before people began crowding in who had earlier left by bus. The rain had been so heavy for days together and everywhere was so flooded that the road was closed.

'I then knew why the car had not come. As we looked from the windows of the train all we could see on both sides was water. The trees were the only indication of where the land and fields were supposed to be. Rivers we barely knew existed were rushing torrents and as the train slowly moved over the single line — surrounded by water, everyone was crowded around the windows to watch the water rushing under the track. As there were several of these rivers to cross in this manner, it was not without a prayer of thanksgiving to God that the train finally pulled into Balangir about 8 p.m. — some seven hours after I had hoped to be there. It was dark and still raining, yet for the next hour or so,

...Travel!



people were coming to greet me including all the hostel children loaded with garlands and singing their welcome song.

WHEN THE ROAD RUNS OUT ...

Martin and Kathy Hewitt write of their first experiences travelling into Brazil.

'We have been on a field trip to meet some of our colleagues and to see something of their work. In doing so we have visited what many people call "the real Brazil" — interior Brazil, developing Brazil, underdeveloped Brazil, poor Brazil the land of opportunities.

'Seventeen hours on the overnight sleeper coach from São Paulo took us to Campo Grande, an attractive city with tree-lined avenues. It is the capital city of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul so the people of the state who have money come to this city. Yet with one of our colleagues — Frank Gouthwaite

— we visited favelas (shanty towns) where people had very little, a wooden shack with a dirt floor, it might have one or two rooms. On the edge of each plot was built a small toilet with a pipe into the open sewer.

'Yet these people were doing quite well, especially compared to those in favelas in the city of São Paulo. They have running water and the authorities will soon close in the sewer, build a road, and bring in electricity to those still without. As we talked to them, it was clear that the Government's social aid schemes were improving the situation. Yet the difference between the living conditions of these people and those of most of the people in Campinas was enormous.

'During our trip we visited three state capitals: Campo Grande (Mato Grosso do Sul), Cuiabá (Mato Grosso) and Porto Velho (Rondônia). As we travelled north it was more and more evident that we were heading away from the industrial and financial centre of Brazil in São Paulo state.

'We spent five days of our trip visiting the towns and churches along the road through Rondonia. The state is roughly 790 miles N-S and has a main asphalt road running through it with other roads off this on either side, few of which are asphalt. It would be fair to say that culture shock became much more of a reality here as we stayed, ate and slept in the homes of Brazilian pastors and church members.'

SO YOU THINK YOUR BUS SERVICE IS BAD?

Valerie Hamilton illustrates the problems of travelling in Bangladesh with this story.

'Just recently when on a visit to a Sunday School in Rangpur District, I arrived at the bus-stand on a rickshaw. Being July and mid afternoon, it was extremely hot and sticky. I was glad it was to be only a two hour journey. As I approached the Dandpur bus, the conductor said, "This bus will be very late. You had better come back tomorrow!" I began to feel like the tourist who asked an Irishman how to get to a particular place, to be told, "If I were you, I wouldn't start from here!" It seemed I had just missed a bus. I was recommended to take a mini-bus instead and catch



another bus half way. The man failed to point out that the one I would catch was the very one I was standing beside. Four hours later, that bus flashed by me at the half way point, because it was overflowing with passengers! The Lord guided me to a Christian home, where I spent the night

before travelling on. This is only part of the story, but it is a reminder that my work here entails a lot of travelling and I am very grateful for your prayers.'



The frustrations of travelling are reflected in the experience of Sue Evans, BMS nurse at Yakusu, Zaire.

WHEN THE JOURNEY DOESN'T GO AS PLANNED . . .

'The chain of my canoe was stolen, thus allowing the canoe to float away — thankfully, it was retrieved.

'Our new specially ordered motor bike (which had taken over a year to import) was stolen and hasn't been seen since.

'In mid June I parted company with the hospital motor bike in a hole, and ended up with a fractured collar bone and ribs. Following a traumatic journey of the 50 kilometres back to Yakusu, because Dr Likwela suspected a dislocated shoulder joint as well as the other injuries, I was then sent to see our orthopaedic specialist in Kimpese (over 1,000 miles away). However, there was no dislocation and, strapped up, I was able to return to Yakusu and work one-handed!

'Two weeks later a goat knocked Margaret Bishop off our small road bike. Thankfully, she was not badly hurt and a week later went hobbling off to Kenya on holiday. But the bike's steering was buckled. We are now not sure what to do with this bike, having lost our new one. It may be possible to buy another trail bike locally, but they are over twice the cost of bikes at home. We rely greatly on motor bikes as other means of transport are expensive and slow, due to a ferry between us and Kisangani.'

'MISSIONARIES IN FRANCE?'

'Wherever next?' David Boydell explains the background to the BMS's return into France



André Souchon, General Secretary, André Thobois, President, French Baptist Federation

READERS of the *Missionary Herald* may have been surprised to learn that the BMS is preparing to send missionaries into France. We are used to the idea that technicians, doctors, nurses, teachers and even pastors are needed in the Third World countries, but whoever heard of sending missionaries to Europe?

But it is not a new idea. Many missionary societies already work in France and the BMS itself worked in Brittany long before it had missionaries in Zaire. In fact some of the oldest Baptist churches in France owe their existence to former BMS work.

A Bible and a Soldier

Baptist work in France has fairly recent origins. During the Napoleonic wars, in 1808, in the little village of Nomain in the North of France, a farming family found a Bible and began to read it.

They were also impressed by the witness of some British soldiers in France and partly because of these men the first Baptist church in the north of France was later constituted.

Also in the first half of the nineteenth century BMS missionaries were working in the town of Morlaix in western Brittany and that link continued through to the 1950's.

Spiritual problem

Yet it may still seem strange to some that the BMS is to work in France once again. When one realizes that there are more spiritualist mediums in France

than Roman Catholic priests, Protestant pastors and doctors put together, the size of the spiritual problem of France might begin to be apparent.

Despite priding themselves on their Cartesian and rationalist spirit, many Frenchmen seem very ready to give credence to all sorts of irrational beliefs, but not to the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Indeed, for over a generation now, the Roman Catholic church itself has looked on France as one vast mission field.

Although 80 per cent of French people are baptized as babies in the Roman Catholic Church, the number of practising Catholics is under ten per cent, and in some areas much lower than this. Protestants form officially just under two per cent of the population, and even this rather generous estimate places them as the third religious group in France after the Roman Catholics and Muslims.

The most numerous churches however, the Reformed and Lutheran churches, have large memberships, but only about ten per cent of their members attend church at all regularly. The smaller denominations, most of which would be termed conservative evangelical, are heavily outnumbered by such sects as the Jehovah's Witnesses. The largest single evangelical grouping, the Assemblies of God, has a membership of round about 60,000, whereas there are over 100,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in France.



Language School, Massy

contd. on page 234

Baptist groups

There are several Baptist groups in France, but altogether their membership is only round about 7,000. Several groups have been formed by different American Baptist Missions, and although they have a separate existence from the main body of Baptists, the relationships between them and other Baptists are usually good.

The majority of French Baptists are grouped together in the French Baptist Federation, which is in membership with the French Evangelical Alliance, as well as with the French Protestant Federation. This is the body with which the BMS intends to work, and indeed there are already some Baptists from the United States, Swedish Baptists from the Orebro and other missions, and Brazilian and other Baptists working with the French Federation as well as some missionaries from inter-denominational societies.

The Federation has 77 churches, some of which have one or more mission posts, where services may be held weekly or fortnightly. These churches are found in the coal-mining areas of Northern France, with a good sprinkling in Paris and Northern Brittany and, increasingly since the last war, these churches are spreading to the larger towns of central and southern France.

These churches have about 4,500 members and, despite the evident

missionary presence, 80 of the 100 pastors are of French origin.

Outreach

The recent spread southwards of the Baptist Federation has been thanks to a constant missionary push in planting new churches mainly in large urban areas. This is the area where foreign missionaries have been mainly used in the French Federation, but there are also French pastors in these new mission posts.

As well as pursuing a programme of evangelism and church planting, which has been helped in many ways by the Billy Graham campaign in Paris last September, the French Baptists are aware of social needs around them. For some years now they have run a children's home and a home for senior citizens in the North of France, and many local churches are seeking to meet the social needs around them.

More obviously spiritual work is done through the denomination's printing press, recording studio, and language school for missionaries at Massy. The language school has eight teachers and about 60 students. Its director is former BMS missionary David Boydell.

The Baptist community in France desperately needs the fellowship in prayer of British Baptists and is looking forward with eager anticipation to the contribution which the British churches will share in the outreach through the missionaries who will come under the BMS.

AT 11.30 pm on Monday, 14 July the Biman-Bangladesh flight from Bangkok touched down at Dhaka Airport.

As the aircraft whined its way across the tarmac to the brightly-lit terminal my thoughts were racing.

What would Bangladesh and India be like? Over the years I had seen these lands through the pages of the *Missionary Herald*, television news, the reports and slides of missionaries on deputation. Now I was to savour it for myself. Would it all live up and down to my expectations?

My first impression was plainly physical – heat and humidity. To jostle my way through the crowd of men and boys, some trying to grab my case to earn a tip, others with hands outstretched begging for *baksheesh*, was to perspire profusely. And it was to remain that way over the next fortnight with temperatures in the 80's to 90's and humidity frequently over 90%. A leisurely walk could be an exhausting experience, let alone maintaining the work pressure of a missionary in this climate.

People!

My second impression was people – hordes and hordes of people. They crowded round the airport, thronged the streets, packed themselves in and on the taxis, ferry boats and buses, or jingled their way on bicycle rickshaws across busy intersections. It was particularly noticeable how many were children and young people. So many people – how to reach them for Christ?

My third impression was poverty. I had seen poverty before but never on the scale I saw it in Calcutta in particular. In this city of over nine million people, 300,000 live on the pavement, either under a ramshackle shelter of bricks and tarpaulin, or with just a blanket for cover. To see skeleton-thin women picking their way through a heap of rotting garbage was to be shocked at the desperate need of the starving Third World. It was even worse than I had anticipated.

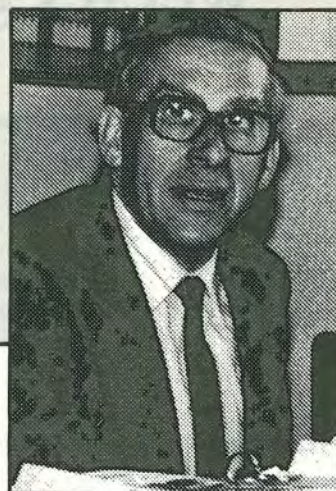
My fourth impression was pressure. To be western, and certainly to be a missionary in these countries is to be under pressure. In addition to the



Initialling Agreement between BMS and French Baptist Federation
Left to Right – André Thobois; André Souchon; Maureen Sleeman; Reg Harvey

'I CAN NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN'

says Peter Barber as he shares his first impressions of India and Bangladesh



pressure of living with the climate, the sanitary conditions and the 'creepy-crawlies' there is the pressure of Government resistance to the missionary presence in India in particular, but also, to a lesser degree, in Bangladesh. A certain degree of harassment at customs, delayed approval for requests and other irritations have to be accepted as a way of life.

Then there is that other pressure I never anticipated. Wherever you go as a Westerner, in Bangladesh especially, people are mesmerized by your presence and crowd around your van just to stare unashamedly. A few add to the pressure by pleading for alms for the sake of Allah. Privacy becomes a rare phenomenon. And that remains so at the hospital or school or guest house for the missionary lifestyle has the feel of a fish bowl.



Market scene, Bangladesh

Gifted Nationals

My fifth impression was of partnership. To visit Chandraghona was to see an outstanding hospital under the direction, not of an ex-patriate, but of Dr Chowdhury whose home was in the hill tracks near Chittagong. Others of the staff were gifted Nationals.

Yet ex-patriates had their place — and an important place — in the team whether it came to health education, child care, village evangelism, education of surgical and medical care. In Dhaka too the vital role of the Mardells and Passmores in maintaining links between the BMS and the local Baptist Union and in giving pastoral leadership and service to the churches was too obvious to miss. The regard in which Neil McVicar is held and the

value the local Baptists both in Bangladesh and in India placed on his advice were evident. But it was partnership, not paternalism, a mutual acceptance of each other in the cause of Christ's kingdom for the sake of a people in need.

The sixth impression I have space to share — and there were many more — was of perpetuity. During our visit to the Calcutta area we met no BMS ex-patriate missionaries, but there was no doubting the huge investment BMS continues to have in the work of the church there. To see the college at Serampore, with its special Carey connections, was to see a college with a major role in training the young

leaders of the church and nations for the future. A visit to the boys' and girls' schools in Barisal, Bangladesh, confirmed the same impression. These great institutions, established by BMS initiative, remain both a monument to the vision of the leaders of the past and an instrument of service to the church of today. The BMS had laid the foundation, others were building on it, and building well.

When I headed home on 28 July I realized I could never be the same again having seen first-hand the work of our Society. It confirmed my conviction that as British Baptists we still have a vital part to play in the life of the developing churches overseas. Who will go for us?

'I learned more in three and a half weeks than in all my previous years,'

MY missionary education began, I suppose, when I was four years of age. In Sunday School we gave our pennies for the missionaries as we sang:

*Hear the pennies dropping,
Listen as they fall!
Everyone for Jesus.
He shall have them all.*

Within a few years I was receiving regular copies of the missionary magazine *Wonderlands*, and every so often we had news, pictures or furlough visits from church members serving in India.

This was a good foundation on which my missionary interest was steadily built. College friends serving with the BMS, marriage to a missionary's sister, deputation weekends, prayer letters and films, members of churches where I was minister, who answered the call to service abroad — all these added to my knowledge. Then came my own call to leadership within the Baptist Union, bringing close partnership with the BMS.

I like to think that I was well-informed and aware of missionary affairs. Yet three and a half weeks in Bangladesh and India in July taught me more than I had learned in all my previous years!

Greater than expected

The culture shock I was prepared for, but it was so much greater than I expected. The teeming streets of Dhaka, with their countless cycle-rickshaws and three wheel taxis, have to be seen to be believed. There is an immense contrast between the affluent extravagance of London's Oxford Street and the little open shops and pavement traders in the Bangladesh capital. People throng the pavements, but where are the women?



says
**Bernard
Green.**

Shut in at home presumably, 'under Islam's sway'. It does not take long to discover the oppressive weight and fatalism of such a religious culture.

It was also good to see the evidence of improved crops, fish breeding, equipment sharing, clean water projects and education programmes developed by our agricultural missionaries with the support of Operation Agri, Baptist World Aid, Christian Aid and Tear Fund.

Wholeness of Mission

I was impressed by the wholeness of mission at the heart of all the work. Local and national Baptist leaders are encouraging the churches forward. We heard of over 20 new churches formed in North Bangladesh. But there are the inevitable limitations of resources. Some people are eagerly facing the future with vision; others show caution and concern lest they be overstretched. None of them have doubt about one aspect of their work — that is the need for more BMS personnel as partners in mission.

'Please send us more,' they say. The priority need is for teaching and training programmes for pastors and church

leaders. They are asking for Bible teachers, theologians, people with training skills in evangelism, church planting, spirituality and literature development. At one stage we even heard the plea, 'And no more projects, please!' Many excellent schemes already exist and the various world aid and development agencies are involved.

It was an immense pleasure to travel with Reg Harvey and Peter Barber. It was a privilege and inspiration to stand and sit alongside missionary and national colleagues in the work of the Kingdom. They are doing a fine job and deserve our prayers and support in every way possible.

How I wish I could have had with me those who believe that our only task is the saving of souls, those who doubt the need for overseas mission, those who question the 'soundness' of the BMS, and those who take no interest in and remain unmoved by the vast need and opportunity in the world. Perhaps, like me, they would have felt the touch of the Lord and heard His voice through what they saw and heard.



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Baptist Missionary Society, 93 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA

As we travelled through remote villages with their open markets, primitive housing and surrounding rice paddies and jute crops, so utterly dependent on water, it did not take much imagination to sense how precarious life is for millions of people.

The sights of Calcutta with its open sewers, unbelievably bad roads, thousands of homeless folk scraping a living on pavements or in filthy little shacks, still haunt me. What a struggle developing countries face! Bangladesh and India have such vast populations, growing rapidly and predominantly young.

Few resources

Most life is rural and primitive, yet both nations are seeking to come to terms with modern technology. Astronomic expenditure is needed on roads, hospitals, schools, housing, freshwater, sewers, transport and so on, but the resources are so small in comparison. Without decisive international and governmental action it looks an impossible task.

I have seen at first hand how the world's rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer. The gap widens day by day and it hurts people. If you have a heart that feels, the gross injustice of it makes you weep. It hurts so much that I wanted at times to turn my eyes away and run! But I'm glad I did not. The visit was in so many ways an unforgettable experience which I would not have missed for anything.

Stored away in my memory – as well as in coloured slides – are experiences of Bible literacy classes among village and tribal people near Rangpur, dedicated

nursing and medical care in Chandraghona general and leprosy hospitals and in rural clinics among the Chittagong Hill people and at Ruhea, the eager learning and spiritual enthusiasm of a pastors' conference, a baptismal service in Dhaka, and the important educational work of Christian schools in Dinajpur, Barisal and Bishnapur, or the school for blind girls in Dhaka, or such institutions as the Christian College of Theology in Bangladesh, the United Missionary Training College in Calcutta and Serampore College.



Typical street in Bangladesh



Bangladeshi children

For Your Prayer Diary

BANGLADESH – BARISAL AND FARIDPUR 30 November- 6 December

The districts of Barisal and Faridpur are in the delta of Bangladesh – an area of fenland joined by a series of canals. Hundreds of small villages are scattered throughout the region. The main source of income is in agriculture, with the production of rice. Flooding, which easily happens, can ruin a whole year's crop, so the people of the area live in the middle of uncertainty. Yet the area has over 70 living churches and many Christians in Bangladesh come from the delta region. The churches are looking for means of effective witness and outreach to the Muslims and Hindus in the community. Remember the Pastoral Superintendents: Solil Biswas for Barisal, and Martin Adhikary for Faridpur. They seek to strengthen the spiritual and practical life of the churches. The Gospel Bookroom in Jalkhati and the Bookshop and Barisal are being effective tools in outreach. The Boys' and Girls' High Schools, with Mr Shishir Halder and Miss Lila Halder as their respective Headteachers are striving to help young people achieve well academically, and become vibrant and able church members.

INDIA – ORISSA: CUTTACK DIOCESE 14-20 December

A visit to Britain earlier this year from Bishop D K Mohanty of the Cuttack Diocese underlined once more the privilege of partnership mission in India. He referred to a church which, with BMS help, was born decades ago as a small baby, and now stands like a 'strong young man'. Pray for him and the presbyters of the Cuttack Diocese. Pansy James teaches at the Buckley's Girls' High School. In a recent prayer letter, Pansy writes, 'It is now almost 18 months since I handed over charge as Principal of the Stewart School to Mr Ashok Kumar Patra. He has settled in very well and the school is running smoothly. There is a big rush for admission to the school – for every child who gets a place two or three others will be disappointed.' In Berhampur, Dr Betty Marsh is Medical Superintendent of the Christian Hospital for Women and Children and Mrs Renubala Patro is Nursing Superintendent. Pray for all education and health work, evangelism and outreach in the Diocese.

OPERATION AGRI, CHRISTIANS ABROAD AND THE INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP 7-13 December

Operation Agri have a vital role to play as a practical arm of development in mission. This Baptist Men's Movement Scheme has provided tools, seed, livestock and technical advice to many BMS personnel involved in development overseas. The Joint Harvest Appeal of Operation Agri and the BMS is a special occasion when churches focus on a need for food in the third world. Through Operation Agri, and the work of its Committee, many people in the world are able to feed themselves. Christians Abroad is an organization sponsored by the BMS and other mission agencies through which British Christians in secular jobs overseas can find International Fellowship is a branch of the BMS linking together those British Baptists who work abroad in secular employment.

ZAIRE – IME KIMPESE 21-27 December

The Evangelical Medical Institute at Kimpese serves the needs of many people. Its 350 beds are in full use. The Christian foundation of the hospital is a strong force in policy and staff and patients are encouraged to know Christ. Rev Kwenda pastors the patients and staff and encourages the growth of Bible Study groups. Cit Tuvingila is the church secretary and Mama Massaka is the church evangelistic worker. Cit Mandiangu is General Director of IME, with Dr Masukidi as Hospital Director, assisted by Cit Nzungu. Kivuvu is the nearby leprosy hospital. Betty Gill has been Assistant Director of the Nursing School but has recently returned home for a long furlough before retirement. Michael and Jackie Cranfield also serve at IME where Michael is a laboratory technician. Ken and Maureen Russell have served the BMS for 11 years. Ken is in charge of Kivuvu Hospital and is a specialist in orthopaedics. Stephen Green is responsible for the paediatric unit while his wife Carolyn runs the guest house. Pray for all these folk as they seek to heal the sick in the name of Christ.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Mrs N Clark on 1 September from Campo Grande, Brazil.

Departures

Mr and Mrs R Cameron on 10 September to Pokhara, Nepal.

Mrs I McClenaghan on 11 September to Cuiaba, Brazil.

Mrs J Westwood on 23 September to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Dr E J Marsh on 24 September to Berhampur, India.

Dr and Mrs S G T Bulkeley on 28 September to Kinshasa, Zaire.

Miss A. Horsfall on 28 September to Kisangani, Zaire.

Births

On 10 September, in Finland, to **Mr and Mrs S Little**, a son, Jonathan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies, and gifts sent anonymously (to 22 October 1986).

Legacies

Miss M M Brown
Miss M G Clark
Miss D Cooper
Miss Dora Flint
Mr F S Fry
Mrs H C M Hamlin
Miss Dorothy Hutchinson
Miss E C Ireland
Mr R A Jarvis
Mrs E E Johnson
Miss K E Latcham
Mr B S Lewis
Miss Elsie Lily
Mr J W Newell
Miss M W R Player
Miss Sarah Rees

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Mrs Margaret E Scott 100.00
Mrs Frances Skidmore 2,894.99
Miss L Teare 4,860.59
Miss Bertha Annie Thomas 1,000.00
Miss Elizabeth B Tittensor 1,000.00

General Work

FAE Aberdeen: £15.00; Cymro: £50.00; Anon: £2.00; Anon: £50.00; Peggie: £20.00; Anon: £15.00; Anon: £15.00; FAE Aberdeen: £10.00; Cymro: £30.00; Anon: £4.00; Anon: £78.00; Anon: £10.00; Anon: £5.00.

Women's Project

Anon: £5.00.

Relief Fund

EE: £25.00.

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MVW Leicester: £300.00.

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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.**