

MISSIONARY

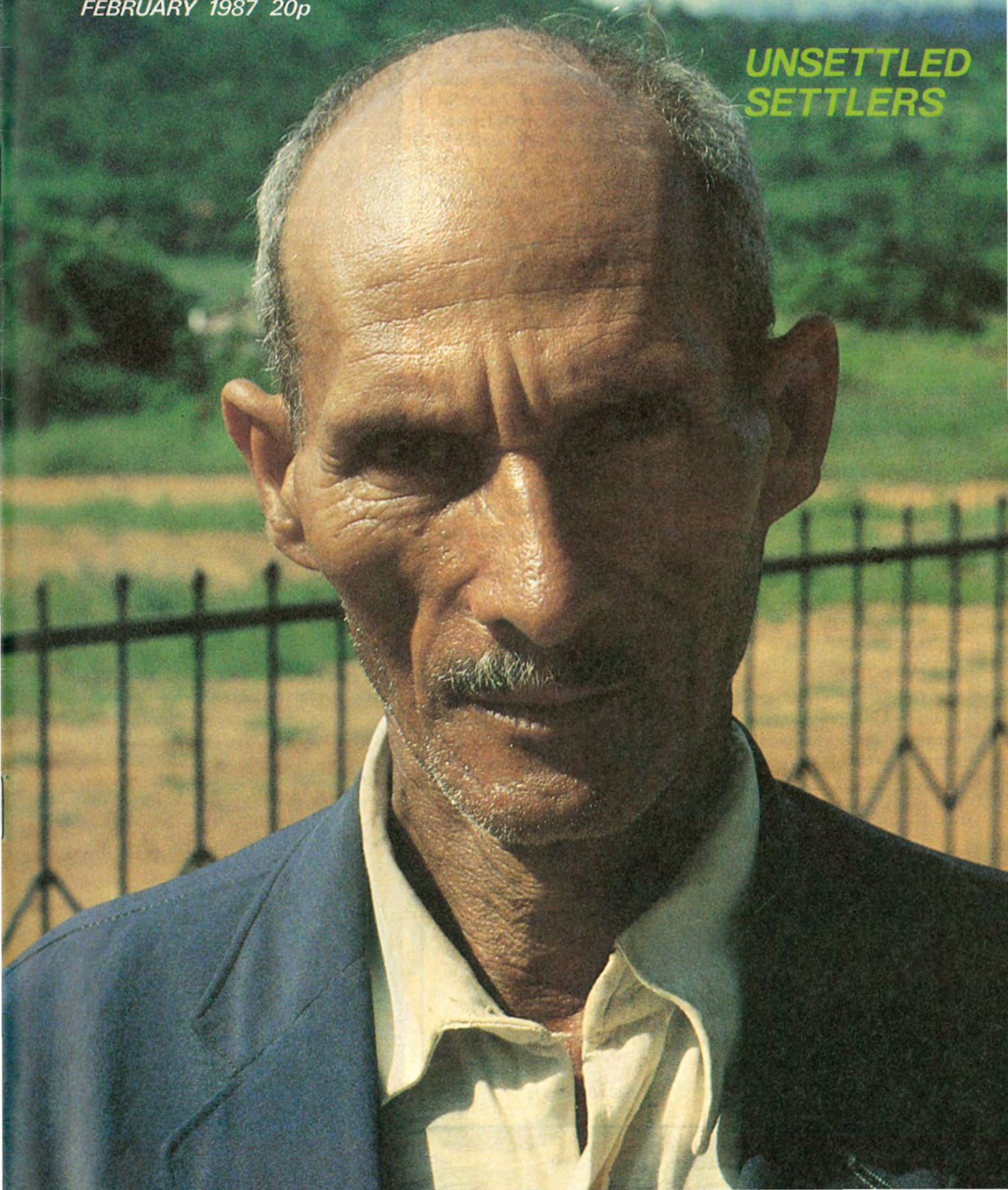
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# HERALD

FEBRUARY 1987 20p



UNSETTLED  
SETTLERS





# Editorial Comment

IN most people's eyes overseas mission has about it a sense of adventure and colour associated with strange and fascinating locations. Say 'BMS' and immediately there are thoughts of Zaire, Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Brazil, Bangladesh . . . tropical forests, broad rivers, mountain ranges . . . countries, places where missionaries work.

But mission is not about place, it is about people. So when the Baptist Missionary Society enters into a partnership with an overseas church it is not in order to go into a country but rather to work with people. It is to work, in the name of Christ, alongside national Christians to meet the needs of people by sharing the good news of the Gospel in all its wholeness. That is why, in this magazine, we are reluctant to print many photographs, especially on the covers, which do not show people.

This month we are printing the second of two articles by Peter Cousins about what he calls 'unsettled settlers and missionaries'. We can all share his sadness at discovering that a church, which he had helped to nurture, was virtually empty and the building neglected. There is always that kind of feeling when we see a building, once used for worship, now abandoned. But mission is about people and not places. The people Peter Cousins had been pastor to had packed their bags and moved elsewhere. They had moved many times before, but the difference this time was that many of them were now Christians. The church has not been abandoned it has moved with them into new situations in order to meet the needs of another group of people.

It is well to remind ourselves that God is not tied to a place. It was at those times when the Children of Israel were travelling through the wilderness or exiled in a foreign land that God became most real to them. Today in China, where Christians faced many difficulties during the Cultural Revolution, and in Angola, where the country is embroiled in a disastrous civil war, the Church is alive and growing because there is a people who have discovered that a loving, faithful, supporting God is travelling with them.

**MISSIONARY HERALD**  
THE MAGAZINE OF  
THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
93/97 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA  
Tel: 01-935 1482

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Photoset and printed by  
Stanley L Hunt (Printers) Ltd  
Rushden, Northamptonshire

Enquiries about service to:  
Miss J A Maple

ISSN 0264-1372

# MISSIONARY HERALD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY



FEBRUARY 1987

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We share in the work of the Church in:

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



# The Rural Roamers who trust in God

THE bus station in Cuiabá is a busy monument to the restlessness of South American life. A vast three-level wonder of modern functional design, it serves as a major cross-roads for the migratory poor of Brazil. The fast and comfortable buses, rushing in and out of its arrival and departure bay like clockwork mice, carry not only the usual inter-state travellers but also the poor on the move to new lives in the latest development areas.

Amidst the scurrying feet and booming Tannoy system outcrops of large white sacks protrude from the floor like rocks in the desert. They contain the belongings of the poor migrants relentlessly dragging themselves from state to state in the conviction that one day they will shed their poverty and make it rich. They stretch out, asleep on their sacks, waiting for the connecting bus, while their children drift languidly around chewing on rubber-like toasted sandwiches from the snack-bars.

Susan, my wife, was passing through the bus station last year when a woman detached herself from a white, lumpy perching post of belongings and ran over to greet her. It was Dona Joaquina from the congregation we had pastored some years before. Her husband, Maximiano, had been the evangelist leader of a thriving fellowship of believers miles from any town, each squatting on dozens of acres of rich, fertile land which they had wrestled from a rich landowner.

## MOVING ON

After less than ten years, Maximiano and family had sold out and moved on to the state of Rondônia to fight for squatters' rights over another stretch of

forest that they will slash, burn and plant like they did last time. Like they did the time before that. Exactly like the other 300 families who had lived around them in the *Grilo*.

'There's hardly anyone left now,' Joaquina announced, with no edge of sadness in her voice. 'The Church is almost empty on Sundays.'

How can I describe the pain that I felt when Susan told me the story that night? The church empty?

I can still picture it in my mind — a wooden building roofed with asbestos sheets and measuring some 30 by 20 feet. Not one joint was exactly square.

Planks and beams were nailed together at bizarre angles and the roof beams sagged unevenly. The walls were painted a light powder-blue, which the wood sap stained through in elongated concentric rings. A selection of gaudy free-gift calendars and old Christmas decorations completed the decor. A wooden gate in the doorway kept animals out and toddlers in. Pride of place was given to the railed pulpit raised so high that it almost needed a run-up to negotiate the step.

## HALLOWED GROUND

That building was hallowed ground. The congregation had met for years in Maximiano's rough shack, but the time



Continued on page 24



came when the numbers outgrew the cramped quarters. During the dry season we would meet in the shade of the fruit trees round the house, but during the rainy season we had to squeeze inside the tiny main room.

One day the leaders approached me and suggested a proper church building. They would pay for it and construct it themselves. Already the members were pledging materials and I knew that some help would be forthcoming from the main church in the town. We agreed to go ahead.

The next question was the location. Maximiano's house was central, but three miles away a little settlement was developing. A few ramshackle bars had been built. They doubled as shops, but mainly served drinks to the never ending stream of alcoholics who were delighted to have a watering hole so close to home.

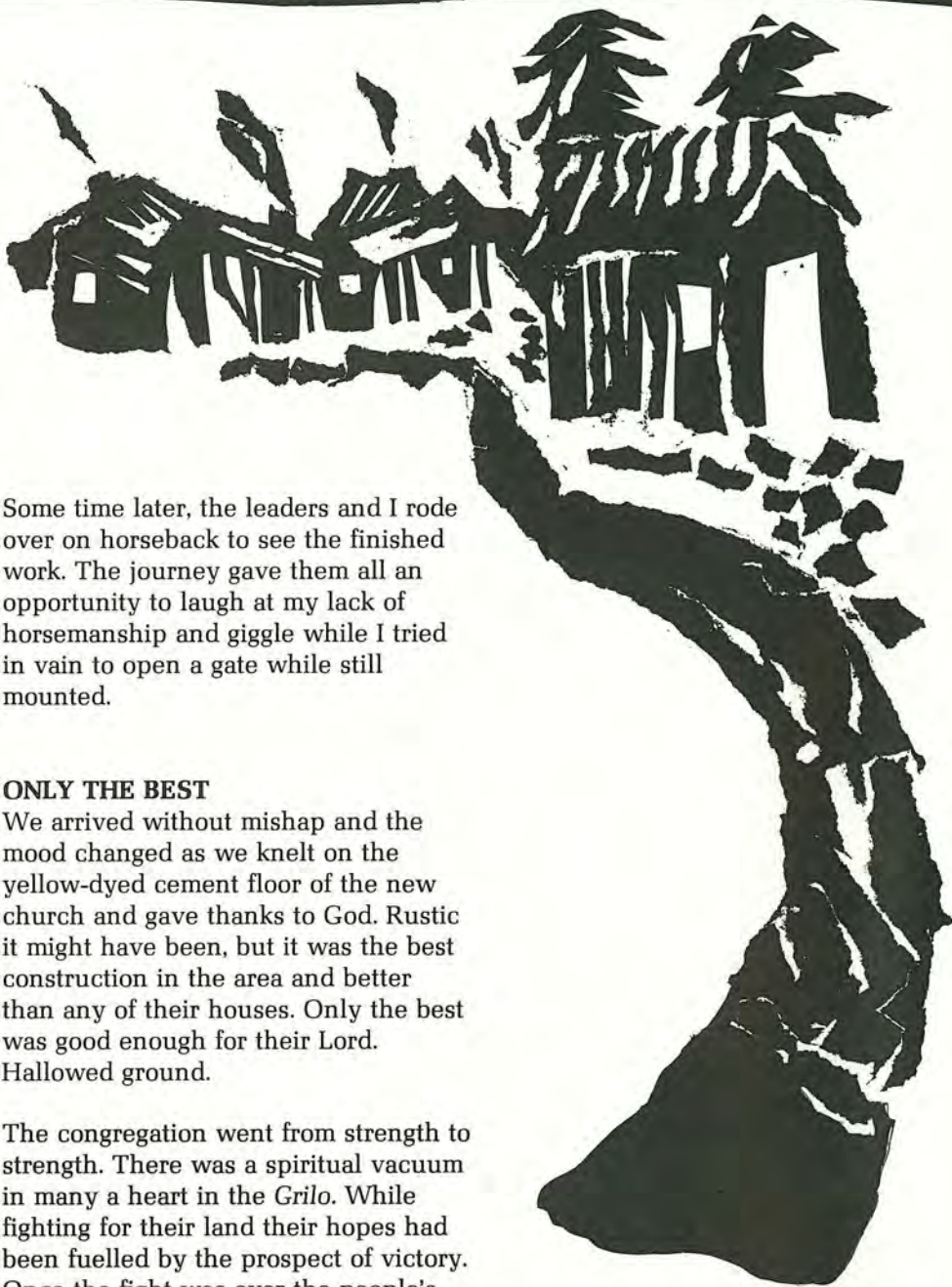
#### MEETING PLACE

Rickety shelves held a variety of foods and domestic items, spaced out so as to appear well-stocked. Behind the 'shops' some 20 houses peeped out from amongst the tall weeds, the smoke from their wood stoves rising lazily against the background of tall trees. Of course, there was also the football pitch. The result was to make the settlement a meeting place and an obvious site for our church.

However it meant a longer walk for most of our church members, who already walked miles carrying their youngest children. Were they prepared to make the sacrifice? Maximiano answered my doubt.

'Pastor,' he answered firmly, 'we've discussed it and have decided to build at the settlement. Around here everyone has heard the Gospel, but there no-one has preached yet.'

It was true. Every neighbour had been visited. Long conversations about Christ had gone on for hours and all had been challenged to follow Jesus. Some had followed, others had not, but it was time for the fellowship to move on.



Some time later, the leaders and I rode over on horseback to see the finished work. The journey gave them all an opportunity to laugh at my lack of horsemanship and giggle while I tried in vain to open a gate while still mounted.

#### ONLY THE BEST

We arrived without mishap and the mood changed as we knelt on the yellow-dyed cement floor of the new church and gave thanks to God. Rustic it might have been, but it was the best construction in the area and better than any of their houses. Only the best was good enough for their Lord. Hallowed ground.

The congregation went from strength to strength. There was a spiritual vacuum in many a heart in the *Grilo*. While fighting for their land their hopes had been fuelled by the prospect of victory. Once the fight was over the people's lack of spiritual life began to be more evident. Drunkenness, family breakdown and quarrels with neighbours became increasing problems.

By contrast, in the Baptist church, the Bible was read, studied and applied. Here a man discovered how much he was loved by God. Nothing gives a man dignity like the Gospel of Jesus Christ and in ones and twos people drifted in and stayed to be changed by the power of Christ. Hallowed ground.

#### FAREWELLS

A year later, my tears fell there as I visited the *Grilo* for the last time. I was moving on, deeper into the developing region of the southern Amazon basin.

One Wednesday night we met for prayer and farewells. We wept and embraced, tears ringing down the curtain on two years of co-operation in a salty-stained veil of sadness.

Now the building was strangely empty, with just a few attending on Sundays. Even they, according to Maximiano's wife, were selling up and moving away. The reason why is hard to understand and difficult to explain to anyone unfamiliar with the restless romanticism of Brazilian migrants for whom the grass is always greener on the next frontier.

When we were visiting the *Grilo*, access was difficult. The nearest road and bus route was 20 miles away. The



main road itself was precarious in the wet season. The tracks linking it were worse. On one trip we had to push the car out of the mud ten times and on another were forced to sleep overnight in the vehicle, hopelessly stuck.

Once a month Susan, who is a nurse, ran a small vaccination clinic for the children who could not be expected to make the journey into town in their mothers' arms. Often, though, a child succumbed to pneumonia or other diseases far from medical assistance.

### A BETTER LIFE?

Despite the isolation of the region, these squatters had political clout and could use it. In the scramble for votes the local politicians tried hard to 'woo' them. After we moved away, the main road was asphalted and a gravel-based road carved right into the heart of the *Grilo*. Believe it or not, even a daily bus service began, bringing folk into town on an ancient old bus that had seen better days.

The way was open for a better life. The town provided a ready market for vegetables, chickens, indeed anything that could be produced. Then, after years of stalling, just before election time, the land titles were handed out by the government. The people were no longer squatters on the margins of society. They were now legitimate landowners, integrated into Brazil.

They sold up and moved out. Far from stabilizing the society in the *Grilo* the title-deeds destroyed it. The land was much more valuable with title-deeds and the rich farmers for miles around had long had their eyes on the farms of the *Grilo*.

Why, you may ask, should a man so readily give up what he has fought to win and sweated to improve? Especially puzzling because they left for Rondônia to bury themselves in the backwoods and begin the whole process of squatting and land clearing a day's walk from any town.

### THREATENED

The truth is that life had become too civilized. They felt uncomfortable rubbing shoulders with townspeople and wealthy businessmen. They felt threatened by the encroachment of law and order. The town was a great place to visit at weekends, but they never felt at ease. Living was more straightforward out in the calm of the fields.

They felt no great attachment to their land and had no idea or interest in administering it effectively. They were

rather thrilled by the idea of some cash in their pockets, although they must have known in their hearts that it would not last long in their possession. Soon, their belonging were packed up in these white sacks and they headed for the bus station.

The congregation declined quickly. Doctrinal differences arose, tempers frayed and frustration mounted. They were anxious to go, and now, I imagine, that no one is left any more.

It seems a shame that what they worked so hard for was given up so easily. Perhaps I was guilty of wishing my security crazy, Anglo-Saxon mentality on them. Certainly I had a pastoral concern to see them healthy and released from the constant brink of financial disaster. I wished that they would make life easier for themselves.

I concluded that they are unsettled settlers — rural roamers with a trust in God to see them through. I must confess that my life is richer for having shared with them. Wherever they are now, I hope they feel the same about me.





# IT'S AN EXCITING TIME

It is six months now since we six Amity Teachers supported by churches and missionary agencies in Britain, including BMS, first set foot in China, at Beijing airport, after a pleasant 16 hour flight. Eight hours later we were most warmly welcomed at Najing airport by Stephen Ting, son of Bishop Ting, and some young men from the Theological Seminary, who came to help us with our luggage. We were immediately driven off through the tree-canopied streets of Nanjing to an elegant guest house in the scenic eastern suburbs.

Here we stayed for five days on an orientation programme. We had talks, on the social scene, from a professor of sociology, who had been rusticated, with his wife, for about six years during the Cultural Revolution, which the Chinese tend to refer to as the Cultural Disaster. The Director of the Jiangsu Provincial Bureau of Higher Education spoke on higher education and its reform.

'The aim of the current reforms,' he said, 'is to expose present educational methodologies to new systems of thought, while retaining what is considered best in traditional educational practice.'

## LIVE AND LET LIVE

The absorbing question of Christianity in China was taken up by Bishop Ting, Chairman of the China Christian Council and a Director of Amity Foundation. He defined the Chinese Government's attitude to religion as 'live and let live'. He declared that the Government's main aim was the unity of all Chinese and to make China prosperous.

China feels itself to be backward compared to the west and wants to catch up, so, in order to build socialism, they must put differences aside. Minority characteristics must be respected. This is the basis of religious tolerance in this Communist country. The 1983 document on religion, for party members, stated that 'to believe in religion or not is difference (to them) of minor importance.'

In the 50's the leaders of the Chinese Church initiated the 3-Self movement to de-westernize the Church, which was still seen as a foreign import. It has striven to make the Church in China self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating and has largely succeeded in establishing an authentically Chinese Church, which can only be for the enrichment of the worldwide Church.

## CHURCH GROWTH

During the period when China was 'closed' the Protestant Church grew as never before – from fewer than one million members to about three to four million at present. This is twice the rate of population increase. There are also about four million Catholics.

This rapid growth has outstripped the ability of existing pastors to cope, so there is widespread lay leadership, particularly among the tens of thousands of Christians who still meet in homes. Over 4,000 churches have been re-opened, but meetings in homes will continue for a long time to come.

Finance for the Church comes from the offerings and rents of church buildings. The Government is paying rent now for the use of church buildings, usually as factories, during the Cultural Revolution.

It was stressed that Christians from abroad should refrain from evangelizing. That was the responsibility of the Chinese Christians. But it was also stressed that the presence of us Westerners worshipping in church with Chinese Christians was extremely significant and important.

## DELIGHTED

It is very obvious how delighted people are to see us in church with them. There are three churches in Nanjing and I usually go to the one in Mochou Lu. An old man usually stands on the pavement in front of the church to welcome arriving members. He beams at me and shows me where to leave my bicycle.

Inside a little lady with a very sweet face shows me to a seat where other little ladies also beam a welcome with little nods of the head. The older people in particular, who have all endured the bad times of the Cultural Revolution, show such joy to see us there. We shake hands, smiling our pleasure to one another as we exchange the regular Chinese greeting 'Ni hao!' These older people, men and women, are mostly dressed in the usual Maoist blue suit, but the young people in the congregation, of whom there are many, dress quite smartly in colours of their own choice.

What a thrill it was, on my first Sunday at Mochou Lu, to hear the congregation strike up a hymn that we sang, in Lenzi, at the church in Chipemba in Zambia. At the Communion service the bread and wine, in separate glasses, was first distributed, then we all stood and partook simultaneously. The Church describes itself as post denominational. Of course I don't



# TO BE IN CHINA

understand a word that is said, but sometimes I sing quietly the English words to a hymn tune I recognize and we always close with the Lord's Prayer.

## ROLE OF WOMEN

Mochou Lu was reopened as a church in 1980. It was then lovingly cleaned, repaired and furnished by local Christians. It is noticeable that women play a leading role in the Church's life here. More often than not it is a woman who leads the worship and another who preaches, although it is not always the same person who performs these functions and men of course also lead and preach.

The Chinese lady who plays the piano for the singing is now teaching me Chinese, which is a very happy arrangement since we also do some English and she wants us also to do some Bible study together. I hope to learn more from her about the Church here.

Life here is not all work. We have been entertained to a superb display of Chinese acrobats; have feted the moon at a party on the roof of the University library, according to Chinese custom; banqueted in the vegetarian restaurant of a Buddhist temple, and have made a memorable trip to the Yellow Mountain (Huang Shan) a magnificent mountain range famed throughout China for its beauty and its pine trees. I also had the great pleasure and privilege of meeting and talking to the Queen at a small reception held in the British Consulate in Shanghai.

**Mary White**

**O**UR Chinese hosts are looking after us very well. The atmosphere is surprisingly relaxed, none of the mad form-filling, fingerprinting, photo-stamping and general rushing around to sour-faced bureaucrats that I had expected. I suppose we will get cards and so on one of these days, but nobody seems too bothered. We take each day as it comes and something seems to happen each day.

Yesterday we bought our bicycles. A major advance, although we think the URC might be on to a good thing if they could take out life insurance in our name. The way folk drive on narrow streets sharpens concentration in the way that hanging was once supposed to do — cyclists on either side of the road, going in opposite directions, as many abreast as you like, and motor traffic in the dead centre, whichever way it is going. Violent swerves split seconds before the moment of impact have so far saved us, but we couldn't take much more and thought we'd better take our chances with the cyclists, who seem to move about instinctively like shoals of fish.

On Sunday we went to Flower Lane Church in down-town Fuzhou and found it packed, even at 8 o'clock, one hour before the service proper. There's an hour of hymn and language practice from 8 to 9, but of course we didn't know that.

We were told that the church seated around 1,200 people and that several hundred more were accommodated in an overflow meeting out in the courtyard where a loudspeaker had been set up. There are about 6,000 registered church members in Fuzhou and more than 500 churches now open throughout the province.

The sermon was given by a visiting speaker, who spoke the national language, and his words were translated, sentence by sentence, into the local dialect. This language diversity must be a major headache for the central government, which is trying to press ahead with major reforms and redevelopment.

One of the most impressive things we have seen is the amount of construction and building work that is going on often with a minimum of heavy equipment and with a great deal of basic material being transported by hand or tricycle cart — bricks, cement, steel reinforcement rods, etc. The work of modernization seems to be proceeding steadily without a great deal of noise or fuss.

I had expected far more printed slogans and loudspeaker exhortations to get a move on. But the folk in the blue dungarees and the pointy hats totter along with their baskets on carrying poles; as they have always done. Piles of boxes or small mountains of sacks seem to drift along without any obvious means of propulsion and young blades weave in and out on their smart Japanese motorcycles to take advantage of the non-existent speed limit.

It cannot last. The speed of change is obviously very rapid and I think that means that this is an exciting time to be in China. Will the authorities manage to keep everybody more or less happy as living standards improve and will they be able to avoid some of the more obvious problems that rapid development and tourism, have caused elsewhere?

Extract from a letter from  
**John and Jean Johnson,**  
Fuzhou University, Fuzhou, Fujian.



I HESITATE to write this article, but do so in response to a specific request. More importantly I sensed God was asking me to share this experience in order to draw attention to the needs of His children in Zaire for Christian Literature of a devotional nature.

When the Ethiopian Eunuch was reading Isaiah, the Holy Spirit prompted Philip to ask the crucial question: 'Do you understand what you are reading?'

'How can I,' he replied, 'unless someone explains it to me?'

I have written a devotional book on Joshua in Lingala, sharing what God has taught me through reading Alan Redpath's book *Victorious Christian Living*. It is a study on the book of Joshua. Obviously one does not embark upon such an enterprise unless one is commissioned. So how and where did I receive that commission?

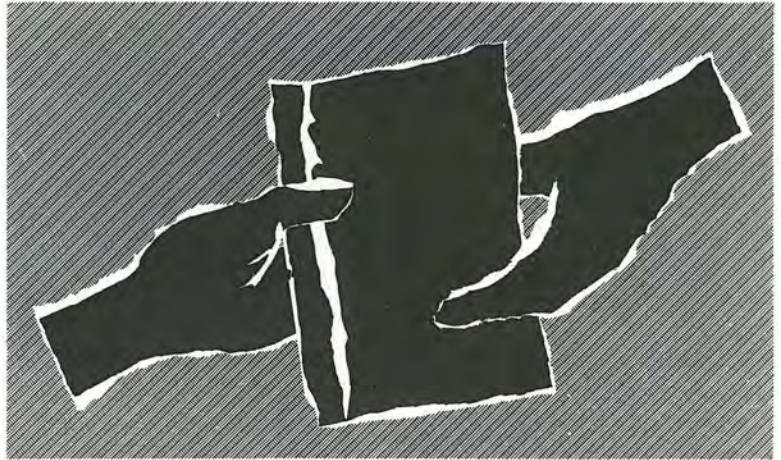
Month by month my husband Lyn, who is a doctor, travels round our Health Zone in conjunction with others, visiting dispensaries which Yakusu Hospital is responsible for — to restock with drugs, to see patients and to deal with administrative matters. Whenever possible I accompany him and it was during one such trip that my commission to write Joshua came.

We had just visited an isolated village, accessible only by a long river journey because the roads were flooded at that time. While there I had the opportunity to chat with the pastor's wife, who shared something of her frustration with the spiritual inertia which gripped her village.

Even before she had said anything, we felt this oppression. As we left by dug-out canoe, I held a burden in my heart that it simply was not enough to distribute Bibles and booklets, worthy and valuable though they are. It seemed too easy and a hypocrisy to sell them these things, when I knew they were crying out for something more to help them understand what they read.

The Bible can and does speak for itself in order to meet a person at the point

# PARTNERS IN



# UNDERSTANDING

## Carol Bulkeley talks about the need for Christian literature

of need. Pastors and evangelists are continually giving out and their faithfulness is an inspiration. However, they also need spiritual food. Roz Williams has been doing a magnificent job in her 'spare time' teaching the lower levels of church workers around Yakusu, writing devotional helps for

them and organizing seminars so that they in turn can share what they have received.

So, when we left the village, I was in a very thoughtful mood. Speeding along the mighty Zaire River to our next destination I began to feel that God was



Lyn and Carol Bulkeley



saying, 'Well, go on then. You write something.'

A few days later Lyn left for a three week 'conference' in Kinshasa giving me the ideal solitude that is helpful when trying to produce a literary work. I finished typing it the night before Lyn arrived back and broke the shattering news to me that my brother, Mike, had been tragically killed in a cycling accident ten days previously.

Had the book not been finished I doubt it ever would have been. Furthermore I believe it was the very prayers of many for me at that time, which enabled *Joshua* to be written and to be completed in just three weeks.

Paper was obtained in Kinshasa. It took six months to arrive up river by boat and is currently being printed at the old Yakusu printing press. It will hopefully be ready for distribution early this year.

It is not just our Zairian friends who need devotional literature. If growth is to be an on-going experience, then faith has to be fed and nurtured. I know I am not alone in finding that Christian books are immensely valuable. Not just those that directly amplify the Word of God, but perhaps more especially those books that are the product of another's experience of God's power and love as tested and tried in the crucible of daily life.

In any witness for Christ each of us can only share what God has first ministered to us. If you have recently read a book which you have found helpful or relevant, why not post it on for a missionary on the field to read? Who knows what repercussions can come from something so seemingly insignificant as reading a book — your book perhaps. When it comes to service, we are all links in a chain.

'Each one of us does the work which the Lord gave him to do. I sowed the seed. Apollos watered the plant, but it was God who made the plant grow . . . for we are partners, working together for God,' says Paul. Yes I believe we are partners in understanding too.

## READING ROOM

Wait for a bus at any time of the day in the main bus station at Diptipur in India and you will find yourself one of a crowd — farmers, students, hospital workers, not to mention hundreds of the general public. Some of them are committed Christians. Many are not. But they all have access to the Diptipur Reading Room, open every day of the week from 8 to 12 and 3 to 7 standing right beside them.

The BMS in Diptipur is known for its contribution to agriculture and to the hospital which is also close by, but no less important is the Reading Room which the BMS started in 1960. It was seen as the church's tool for education and outreach, and a great deal of the work which went on was among the poor.

In 1971 the work was taken over by the Church of North India and is under the supervision of Bishop Tandy. The purpose is still the same: to present the word of God through literature. So people standing

waiting for a bus (which could sometimes be for a long time!) are encouraged to drop in and read. And there is one member of staff whose job is to travel out to the surrounding villages and conferences with Bibles, tracts, books and pamphlets.

But the Reading Room also serves a wider educational purpose in that there are books on agriculture, rural health, rural development, history and geography as well. And so successful has it been that the Bishop has now managed to open a similar Reading Room in Balangir.

For many years both rooms have been 'regulars' on the list of FEED THE MINDS because they cannot exist without support. FEED THE MINDS therefore helps with new book supplies and a contribution towards the salary of one staff member.

Rev Alec Gilmore



## WANTED: HELPERS

**Typing skills? Clerical experience? Handy?  
Live in London area? Able to give a few  
hours each week?**

**The busy Mission House Team needs regular help in such vital tasks as typing prayer letters and sending out literature to supporters. Could you offer a few hours on a regular basis?**

**Travel expenses and lunches provided.**

**Contact: Mr Claud Turner  
Baptist Missionary Society  
93 Gloucester Place  
LONDON W1H 4AA**

**Tel: 01-935 1482**





## NO CASINOS

CHURCH leaders in Jamaica have joined Michael Manley, head of the People's National Party, in supporting a government decision to stop plans for construction of gambling casinos on the island.

The Caribbean Council of Churches has headed a vigorous campaign against the casinos and urged the government to search for other ways to attract tourists.

## YOUNG INDIAN BAPTISTS ALL SET FOR GLASGOW '88

A group of 30 young members of the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India are planning to attend the 11th Baptist Youth World Conference in Glasgow in 1988. They will bring with them various cultural items, songs and testimonies of what God is doing in their lives in India.

Bonny Resu, Youth Secretary for the CBNEI writes, 'When our youth come to Glasgow, and see that Jesus Christ Rules in the lives of youth from all over the world, it will also challenge them to affirm the same in their lives and go with a desire to be witnesses in their own homes and churches. We pray that Jesus Christ may rule and work so that every knee will bow and declare that He is Lord. It is my desire that Glasgow will have that effect.

The young people aim to cover as much of the travel expenses as possible themselves but, as with most delegates from the Third World, they will also depend on travel scholarships. A Travel Scholarship Fund for delegates from currency restricted countries has been established and all donations can be sent to: Glasgow '88, Travel Scholarship Fund, 4 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AB.

## THE GROWING CHURCH

**THE First Baptist Church in Niteroi, Brazil, has a membership role that now tops 5,000. Founded in 1892 with seven members, the church has always been outward looking and over the years has founded 14 daughter churches. It now heads a 'family' of 28 grand daughter, 12 great grand daughter, eleven great great grand daughter, and three great great great grand daughter churches – representing a total membership of 26,000.**

**Pastor Nilson Fanini is the senior minister of the church. He is internationally known as a dynamic evangelist, often referred to as the 'Brazilian Billy Graham'. Within Brazil he heads TV Channel 13 and also exercises a wide radio ministry.**

**The Niteroi church has a non-stop programme of activities. A team of workers is involved in ministry of evangelism and visitation, leadership training, pastoral care, social concern, and follow-up of new converts. Its Sunday School has 18 departments and 51 classes. Its School of Music has 11 choirs and 22 vocal and instrumental groups. Last year's Holiday Bible Club registered 21,600 participants!**

**Today the church has six branch churches, 45 preaching points and its own Theological College with 164 students preparing for degrees in Theology, Sacred Music or Religious Education.**

**At the last count, the church had 5,046 members – but by the time you read this, who knows?**

## THE HUNGER IN ANGOLAN CHURCHES

Despite the long-running Civil War in Angola, churches there are finding many opportunities to share their faith.

There is freedom to distribute the Scripture within the country and supplies are being sent in, by the thousand, from Portugal, Korea, Hong Kong and other sources. However great the flow it is always outstripped by the demand. The Bible Society is distributing Scriptures in Portuguese (the official language) and a variety of tribal languages and also in French, English, Spanish and Russian.

A recent letter from an Angolan Christian says, 'The churches are full as never before. There is hardly a church with premises big enough to contain the great numbers of people hungering and thirsting for God's Word.'



# What's happening in the Church around the World

## **RUSSIAN HELP FOR NICARAGUA**

BAPTISTS in the Soviet Union have raised enough money to purchase approximately 15 tons of medicine for the Baptist Convention of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan people.

The Rev Valter Mitskevich visited Nicaragua to present the medicine and to convey greetings to the Convention's Council. Valter Mitskevich is Superintendent of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the USSR for the Kalinin and Smolensk regions.

In response, the Nicaraguan Baptist General Secretary, Thomas Tellez says: 'This gift of fraternal support was received with gratitude. . . . Be assured that your efforts will be a blessing for thousands of Nicaraguans who are in desperate need and who will be helped in the name of Jesus Christ, thanks to these medicines.'

## **GAS DISASTER**

**THE gas disaster in the Cameroons has had a positive effect on the church there according to an American Baptist missionary serving in the country.**

**'Since the disaster Baptists have provided aid for the victims,' writes the Rev Ken Priebe in the magazine of the North American Baptist Convention. 'Everyone has shown love, concern and a visible caring spirit.'**

**He said that on the first Sunday**

**after the disaster last August attendance at church was higher than ever before. 'This is the time for witnessing, evangelism and church growth.'**

**Ken Priebe talks about helping to bury numerous bodies, including seven of nine people who occupied one house.**

**'One young man was found dead in his room, kneeling in prayer beside his bed . . . an astonishing, yet peaceful sight.'**

## **LIBERATION**

BAPTIST churches around the world will be linked in prayer and spiritual concerns during the first weekend in February. During 1987 the Baptist World Alliance emphasis is 'Liberation Through Jesus Christ' and a special booklet has been prepared for churches to use.

In his introduction BWA General Secretary, Gerhard Claas, says that we should not think of liberation only in relation to developing countries.

'Most of us are not very persecuted; few of us experience real sufferings,' he says. 'At the same time our own circumstances may point to a need for liberation through Jesus Christ.'

According to the Baptist World Alliance there are 33,190,977 Baptist church members world-wide, the majority - 27,840,016 being in North America.

## **CHRISTIAN TEACHERS FOR CHINA**

**Qualified and experienced teachers of English, preferably with a TEFL qualification, are needed for a two year appointment in China, commencing in August 1987.**

**Please contact:**

**The Personnel Secretary  
Baptist Missionary Society  
93 Gloucester Place  
LONDON W1H 4AA**



# MISSIONTALK

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## WELSH REPS

**AFTER serving since 1970 as one of the two BMS Representatives in Wales Miss Mary Powell has retired. At the November meeting of the General Committee, several members spoke, both in English and in Welsh, in appreciation of her 17 years of service for the Society.**

**Before coming to work for the BMS Mary Powell served for nearly 20 years as Secretary for Women's Work in Wales with the Bible Society.**

**The Rev Gareth Hutchinson has been appointed to succeed Mary. Gareth, a member of the BMS General Committee, has been minister of Mumbles Baptist Church since 1975. He will be working alongside the Rev Carey Garnon.**

*Photo Caption*  
**Mary Powell**  
**BMS Representative in Wales**



A playlet was performed by the young people of Erskine Baptist Church. This brought home the moral that it is all too easy to get priorities mixed with the Church concentrating on all kinds of activities to the neglect of the Christ-given priority of world mission.

'How to get your church missionary minded' was the theme of the second session. The BMS Scottish Representative, Ron Armstrong, took the participants step by step through a possible scenario designed to get everyone in the local church, from the primary child to the pastor, 'thinking mission' in the hope that this would lead to more participating in the ongoing world missionary programme of the BMS.

The Rev Jim Kirkland from Paisley chaired the final session and introduced new missionaries, the Rev and Mrs Chris Collict from Dunoon Baptist Church. They spoke briefly of their calling and the work to which they would soon be going in Brazil with the BMS.

BMS General Secretary, Reg Harvey, then brought the Lord's message, taking the theme of 'Doors'. From his own considerable experience of world travel in recent months, he brought the challenge and responsibility of open doors for the Gospel.

In all over 100 people from about 15 churches attended the Conference. Afterwards visitors from other churches showed an interest in transplanting this One Day Conference programme into their own churches. It is hoped that other churches and associations will take up the challenge and opportunity such a new initiative offers.

Anyone who would like to know more about planning a one-day conference should contact their local BMS Area Representative.

## A NEW INITIATIVE

**E**RSKINE Baptist Church, on the west side of Glasgow, was the scene of a new initiative in BMS promotion and education at the beginning of December. A one day conference was sponsored both by the church and the BMS.

Invitations and publicity was sent to over 60 churches in Renfrewshire, Glasgow, Dunbartonshire and north Lanarkshire. This was something of an experiment so the planning group waited with some apprehension for 11 a.m. on December 6.

No need to worry. Nearly 50 people of all ages came to engage in the missionary 'games' of the BMS Roadshow under the leadership of Miss Glenda White. A new understanding was gained of the missionaries' work and living conditions, with an introduction also to various fields, focusing especially on the Scottish BMS missionaries.

While people opened their packed lunches and enjoyed fellowship over a meal, two missionary videos were simultaneously screened in different rooms. This was then followed by the second session, with new attenders joining the group which had come in the morning.

## THANK YOU

**Gordon Soddy has written to say how much he has appreciated all the letters of sympathy received following the tragic death of Nesta early in December. He says that he has received so many letters that it will be impossible to answer them all.**

**Nesta, who was knocked off her bicycle early in December, served with Gordon in India and Bangladesh for 40 years before retiring to Luton where Gordon is pastor of Markyate Baptist Church.**



# GALE FORCE 1987

## FURTHERING THE KINGDOM

**T**WO years ago the churches of the West Midlands Area met together at the Staffordshire Show Ground, Stafford, to share fellowship. They will be meeting again on Saturday June 20. Chat shows, seminars, workshops and fringe events will be accompanied by displays and competitions.

The day will begin with worship and the climax will be a communion service when it is hoped that the Rev Tom Rogers, the Baptist Union Secretary for Evangelism, will speak.

The theme for the day will be 'Furthering the Kingdom' and this will be reflected in the market stall displays prepared by the churches. These will include aspects of BMS work and a display of photographs of all serving missionaries from the Midlands.

Families will be arriving by coach from places as far apart as Nuneaton and the Forest of Dean.

Children will be specially welcomed as they will have their own sports and activities including riding on a model railway.

For the more seriously minded the seminar topics are World Mission, Inner City Partnership, Rural Ministry, Evangelism, and Youth Work. Derek Moon will be present with his electronic organ and his daughter, Hiliary, will accompany him on the piano.

An attendance of 5,000 is expected and, although we hope it will be fine, a wet weather programme will include the showing of BMS films and audio-visual presentations. Amongst them will be 'Adventures in Unity' the new film telling the story of the first 15 years of the Church of North India.

The incoming President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, the Rev Margaret Jarman, who has exercised two of her pastorates in the area, will be joining in Gale Force.

*Photo caption: The Rev David Taylor, minister of Rising Brook Baptist Church, Stafford, is chairman of the Gale Force Committee.*



**BMS**  
**SUMMER HOLIDAYS**

Write in to **David Martin** for further details:  
Baptist Missionary Society  
93 Gloucester Place  
LONDON W1H 4AA

<b>PENZANCE</b> 25 July-8 August	<b>EASTBOURNE B</b> 15-29 August	<b>PITLOCHRY</b> 1-8 August
<b>EASTBOURNE A</b> 1-15 August		<b>PHAB</b> Llandudno 18-25 July

## PACKED OUT!

**I**N Scotland they're keen on learning about mission judging by those wanting to go to the Pitlochry BMS conference last November. Such was the interest that it was fully booked four months in advance. Some managed to find bed and breakfast accommodation in other guest houses and came into the Atholl Baptist Centre for meals and the sessions.

Betty Gill was the missionary guest. Her first hand experience of serving for 30 years as a medical missionary in Angola and later in Zaire was a rich contribution to the conference.

Practical sessions were led by Dr David Cormack and Miss M Coleman. Dr Cormack tackled the theme 'Tasks and Targets' helping the conference members to focus on fixing goals, discovering how to measure achievements and how to maintain the missionary programme in the local church.

Miss Coleman, who served for many years as missionary secretary in a London Church, had many valuable lessons to share from her own experience.

Other sessions held were workshops, discussion sessions and prayer gatherings. BMS Scottish Representative, Ron Armstrong, led the morning worship in Pitlochry Baptist Church where the conference members made up more than half of the congregation. His sermon dealt with combating missionary apathy in the local church, beginning with ourselves.

A similar conference was held two years ago and was similarly oversubscribed pointing to the possible need for an annual missionary conference.

A particularly exciting feature this time was the presence of a group of young people in the teens to twenties range making up about one quarter of those attending. They made a valuable contribution to the programme and are perhaps a pointer to a new missionary interest being shown by the young people in our Scottish churches.

**MISSIONTALK**  
**MISSIONTALK**  
**MISSIONTALK**  
**MISSIONTALK**



# OF SNOW AND FAITH IN ZAIRE

## THREE MEMORIES OF ZAIRE Joyce Green

Watching the snow falling recently in large fluffy flakes I was reminded of Zaire. Zaire? There's no snow there! All the same it provided me with three memories.

One afternoon in Yakusu I went for a walk and met a student on the riverside path. We stopped and exchanged greetings. The young man was full of questions. Where was I from? Had I children? What was my country like? Was it hot like Zaire? How cold did it get? And then we got on to snow. How do you describe snow? Not having been in Zaire very long I had not seen anything remotely

resembling snow in its whiteness, its blanketing effect or its coldness. With limited French and even less Lingala I did my best. But I wondered whether, if this young man ever came to England my description would have prepared him for the real thing. Since then I have heard that a Zairian studying in Switzerland described it as being like foam.

My second memory was of some months later, I was travelling from Kimpese to Kinshasa along the main road from the port of Matadi. The International Church (which is English speaking and whose pastor is

alternately American or British, usually appointed for three years) organizes an annual weekend retreat around Easter, one for women just before and for men just after. They very generously invite all missionary personnel as guests. We were travelling to this retreat.

As we travelled, the four-hour journey became one of the most extraordinary experiences I have had, for at intervals we seemed to run into snowflakes drifting and whirling around yet there was not a cloud in the sky. It was not snow at all but clouds of white butterflies.

It must have been the time for all that species of butterfly to burst into flight – millions and millions of them – and even when we got to Kinshasa they were there. It was just as if snowflakes had suddenly received power to move at will. At the retreat, as we sat in the garden of our hostess, the butterflies drifted overhead settling on and



Street in Kinshasa



Typical village scene in Tondo, Zaire



around us. It was as if the blessings we were receiving as we listened to our speakers had taken tangible form and were descending gently like miniature doves upon us all.

My third memory of Zaire was of Kimpese market, a busy weekly affair where most people set out their wares on the ground though some people set stalls where cloth can be better displayed. The nearby Bangu Hills are very fertile so this is a good place for buying fresh vegetables as well as the usual dried fish, salt, sugar, mincattis (like small doughnuts, cooked on the spot) and household items. Here I was reminded of the shining whiteness of snow. In this lower river region manioc after it has been soaked (to remove the prussic acid) and dried, it is pounded and sifted. The resulting dazzlingly white flour was on sale heaped up in huge enamel or plastic bowls (it would make a good detergent advert), making the nearby mounds of salt and sugar look dirty grey or yellowish. I wish I had seen these two sights before I met my questioner.

This brought home to me how enormously difficult is the task of the translator seeking in an unfamiliar language for a seemingly non-existent word for a thing not known in the culture or background and more difficult still for an abstract concept. John Paton the great missionary of the South Seas translating the gospels into the language of the people could find no word for 'faith'. One day someone came into his cabin and threw himself bodily into a chair. It gave John Paton

a new concept of faith; to lay ones whole weight upon Christ. This is truly what all new converts have to learn to do; to trust themselves completely to this new way of life accepting that Jesus is the bridge from death to life, a bridge that will take their whole weight.

In Zaire there is a great variety of bridges, from the beautiful new suspension bridge built by the Japanese at Matadi which carries traffic continuously across the River Zaire from the new port at Boma and replaces the old ferry-boats, to girder bridges on the main road and the simple ones made of logs laid across the streams in the forest areas. These log bridges often get flooded or washed away or rot and give way so one needs to approach with caution. (It was by one such bridge some distance from Pimu that I witnessed the baptism of 70 plus candidates; it was a real public spectacle.)

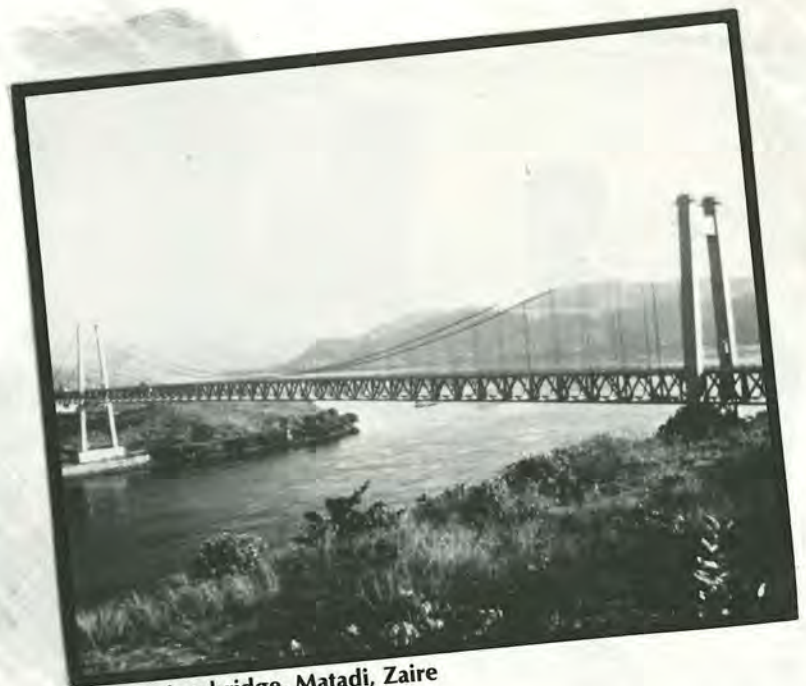
For this reason, besides a machete to hack away fallen trees, a rope and a spade to dig out an over-turned vehicle, all drivers make sure they have a plank or two with them in case a bridge needs repairing. Foot bridges are just as varied. I experienced several myself. Some were just a

smooth dead tree trunk laid from bank to bank, some were two tree trunks or even just thick creepers with pieces of wood fixed between the planks were rotten. The bridge on which I felt safest was a tree that was still living sloping across a stream which laid a long way below. It has the resilience of life, no dead branches, no brittle planks to snap under foot; it was a living way. It wasn't particularly easy to negotiate but there were plenty of hand-holds around me and it was firm to my feet; it took my whole weight without swaying or sagging, I knew it would not let me down.

For me, the words of Jesus in John 14:6 (Moffat) 'I am the real and living way; no-one comes to the father except by means of me' have taken on a new meaning: 'I am the living bridge to the Father; trust Me with your full weight; don't be afraid.'

Even my 'safe' bridge in Zaire will eventually die, decay and become unsafe, but Jesus is 'the same yesterday today and forever' (Heb. 13:8).

God is using the BMS wherever our missionaries are working to enable people to 'lay their full weight on Christ'.



Suspension bridge, Matadi, Zaire



# CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE

**This project will be finishing in April and we hope that contributions towards it will be sent as soon as possible**

TO be able to share in the training of lay people in Trinidad and of ministers in Jamaica – at an ecumenical college that draws students from many parts of the Caribbean – is a joy and privilege.

Stephen Jennings is one of the students at the United Theological College of the West Indies. His father is a minister who was trained at Calabar College, the Baptist College which preceded the UTCWI. When he was 15 Stephen accepted the call to full-time pastoral ministry. After leaving school he read for a BA degree before entering UTCWI.

Stephen describes life as a Baptist student at the United College as 'interesting, challenging and exciting'.

## INTERESTING

'It is interesting because of the various and varying kinds of persons one encounters.

'Each person is at college primarily because he or she is conscious of a call of God to serve His

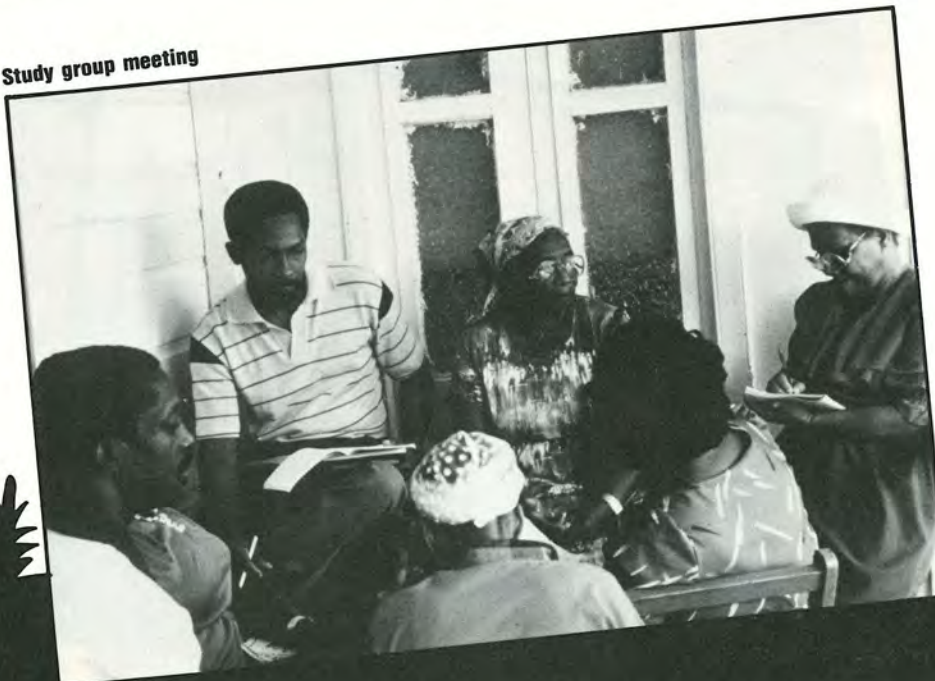
people in a particular manner. Hearing the different descriptions of this calling and the consequent effects on their lives is a constant source of interest and challenge to me. It also makes one recognize that one's own call to ministry is but part of a grand and great enterprise – the high and upward calling of God in Jesus Christ.

'I'm thankful for being Baptist. It provides a latitude which allows one not to be exclusive without having to worry about facing official censorship.

## CHALLENGING

'Life is such that one has to participate in order for it to become meaningful. It is around this issue of participation that life becomes challenging in a community of the nature of the UTCWI.

Study group meeting







Baptismal Service in local River

'Being a Caribbean person learning in the Caribbean context . . . is the challenge to make Caribbean theology viable to the region and the wider world.'

## EXCITING

'It is exciting . . . because of the prospect of exploring new horizons and of achieving new possibilities, . . . because of the dual process of ministerial training and formation. Such excitement, grounded in the faithfulness of God, fills one with hope in an age of despair. It is still possible for men and women to become new

creations of righteousness . . . as a result of the preaching of the Gospel. It is equally possible in a Caribbean Society . . . for the Kingdom of God to contrive to emerge in its midst as a logical outcome of the proclamation of that Good News of God in Jesus Christ.'

## A VISION FOR LEADERSHIP

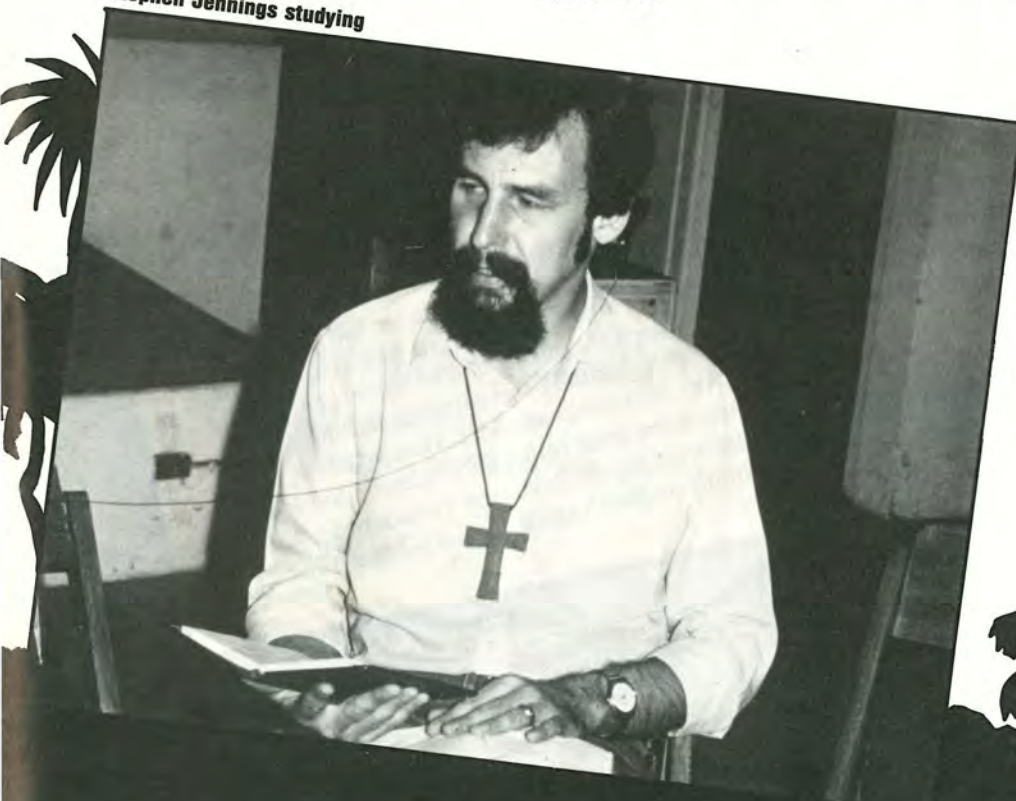
During their summer vacation last year the Bonser family, who work in Trinidad, were able to visit Jamaica.

'All of us were able to spend time at the Jamaica Baptist Union's Ministers and Families Retreat. It was a wonderful experience. It has to be admitted that there is a very different character about the JBU from that of the Baptist Union of Trinidad and Tobago in terms of its depth and maturity. Many believe this has resulted from the commitment to theological education from earliest times, first through Calabar College and now through involvement in the United Theological College of the West Indies.

'After almost two years in Trinidad it is my growing conviction that our real need is for a new depth of integrity in leadership. I have the beginnings of a vision for the Baptist Union Institute of Leadership Development. A basis for this already exists in the lay training that has been done in various forms since 1974, and more recently in my own work. Please pray for the creation and establishing of a centre such as this for the development of leadership of all kinds, both in terms of character development and ability training. Pray specifically for the revelation of specific ways in which to implement this as constructively as possible.'

We give thanks to God for all the signs of the coming of the Kingdom in the Caribbean. Let us continue to share in this work with our gifts and prayers.

Stephen Jennings studying





# PRAYER DIARY

## EVANGELISM IN PARANÁ February 8-14:

Although the church in Paraná is well established, with 130 churches, 'There remaineth much land to be possessed'. There are ten couples, and a nurse and a teacher – all Brazilian missionaries – who are supported by the Paraná Baptist Convention and the National Missions Board, working in the State. The couples are engaged in full-time evangelism. We are asked especially to pray for the nurse – Imir Neusa Terra – and the teacher – Angela Oliveira – who train workers to evangelize deaf and dumb people.

## CHURCH WORK IN BRAZIL AND THE CARIBBEAN February 15-21

There are three couples studying Portuguese at the Campinas language school – Vincent and Sadie MacDougall, Chris and Marion Collict, Mike and Jean Gardiner – remember them especially as they adapt and adjust to life in a new country and culture. Pray that they may quickly gain fluency in the language and learn to communicate. Later this year Keith and Jacqueline Riglin will be going to Jamaica to teach in the UTCWI – they will be spending some time at St Andrew's Hall. We remember them during these months of preparation.

## MEDICAL WORK IN AFRICA February 22-28

All the CBFZ hospitals have been named General Reference Hospitals, responsible for the setting up of health zones of 100,000 people. This includes the organizing of Health Centres and the provision of Primary Health Care for all by the year 2000 – if possible by 1990 – within the constraints of little finances, drug shortages and communication difficulties. Dr Likwela leaves Yakusu after seven years, latterly as the first Zairian Medical Director. Pray for Drs Chris and Mairie Burnett preparing to go to Yakusu following the completion of their Tropical Medicine exams in Antwerp in February 1987, that the necessary visas will be obtained.

## EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH March 1-7

The Baptist Sangha School for Blind Girls, Bangladesh, celebrated its 10th anniversary at the beginning of 1987. Mrs Monju Samaddar is in charge of the school, the adult blind carpet workshop and the Braille printing unit. It is a boarding school with 70 girls, so there are hostel staff as well as the teaching staff and the printing unit employees.

A new project of integrated education for the blind is planned to begin in 1987 at the Baptist Mission Dinajpur, two or three blind pupils will come into the hostel and school there, gradually the number will increase over several years. Mrs Marandy and three teachers from other BBS Schools have gone for training as Resource Teachers for the blind in South India January-April 1987.



## MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

### Arrivals

Rev D Rumbol on 20 November from Angola.  
Rev M and Mrs Bonser on 29 November from San Fernando, Trinidad

### Departures

Mr and Mrs R Smith on 6 November to Bolobo, Zaire  
Rev D Rumbol on 8 November for Secretarial Visit to Angola  
Rev N B and Mrs McVicar on 10 November to Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Miss J. Pullin on 10 November to Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Rev A T MacNeill on 14 November for Secretarial Visit to Brazil

### Births

On 13 November, at Perth, to Mr and Mrs C Price, a daughter, Rebekah Elizabeth.  
On 20 November, at Birmingham, to Mr and Mrs G McBain, a son, Frazer.

### Deaths

On 28 November, Mrs Nesta Soddy, BA (India and Bangladesh, 1934-74).

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies, and gifts sent anonymously (to November 27 1986).

### Legacies

	£
Mrs Alice Mabel Bennett	500.00
Miss A L Boyce	1,203.85
Mrs E C Bryden	715.00
Mrs Gladys Maud Bucknell	50.00
Miss G L M Edwards	250.00
Mrs D B Gebie	1,000.00
Miss Edna Mary Gray	100.00
Mrs Annie Medforth	2,561.46
R M Morrison	100.00
Kathleen France Puraglove	500.00
Mr William Henry James Stephens	50.00
Miss C M Storer	500.00
Mrs Gertrude V A Vance	100.00
Winifred Margaret Wale	17,623.55

### General Work

Cymro: £30.00; Anon: £30.00; Anon: £26.00; FAE Aberdeen: £10; Anon Durham: £15.00; Anon: £30.00; Anon: £100.00.

# BAPTIST HOLIDAY FELLOWSHIP

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(April-September 1987)

Our own seafront hotel — 31 comfortable rooms, some en suite facilities — excellent food and happy fellowship — games room — own car park.

Ideal for both individual and church family holidays.

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(April-October 1987)

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## FELLOWSHIP HOLIDAY — SPRING 1987

MALTA — 21-28 April

CYPRUS — 26 May-9 June

Please write to:

Baptist Holiday Fellowship Ltd (MH)  
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# NOTICE BOARD

## LES CÈDRES FRENCH BAPTIST LANGUAGE SCHOOL MASSY

### BRUSH UP YOUR FRENCH

Summer School  
July 27 – August 14  
(2 weeks also available)  
for details and application forms  
write to: The Director  
Les Cèdres  
17 voie de Wissons  
91300 MASSY, FRANCE



For further  
information write to:  
The Baptist Union  
14 Aytoun Road  
Glasgow G41 5RT

or

4 Southampton Row  
London WC1B 4AB

PLAN TO ATTEND THE

## 11th BAPTIST YOUTH WORLD CONFERENCE

27th-31st JULY

# 1988

## GLASGOW SCOTLAND

## TOP GEAR FOR ZAIRE and CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE

The current BMS Young People's and Women's projects end next month. Please send your contributions into Mission House as soon as possible.

## NEEDED FOR MISSIONARY SERVICE OVERSEAS

**Primary teachers** for Bangladesh and Kinshasa, Zaire – to teach children of missionaries and multi-cultural expatriates.

**Ministerial couples** to work in evangelism and church planting in France and Brazil.

**Administrators, development workers, health workers, and teachers** for Nepal.

## 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.