

MISSIONARY

JULY 1987 20p

HERALD



**BMS IN FRANCE? NOT YET STOP
 STILL WAITING STOP WHO WILL
 GO.....?**



Editorial Comment

ONE of the articles in this month's *Herald* is about evangelistic outreach in the French town of Gray. BMS personnel were involved, and the reporter, David Boydell, talks about its being 'the first fruits of the new BMS involvement in France'. Strictly speaking, however, the BMS has no workers in France yet. Those taking part are still in training, doing language study before leaving for work in Zaire.

The Society is in one of those in-between situations – between accepting a commitment to work in new locations and finding those prepared to work there. The new Young People's project, The French Connexion, is geared up to raising £18,000 in support of sending two pastoral couples to France. Attractive educational and publicity material, including a new slide-tape set, has been prepared. All we now await are those ready to go to work in church planting and evangelism.

We are also committed to a work in Thailand. Angus MacNeill, the Overseas Secretary has visited the country and talked with church leaders and representatives of other mission agencies. The BMS General Committee has agreed that we should enter into this new situation and send personnel to work in church planting, evangelism and lay training. But again we are held back because no one has yet come forward. There will soon be no BMS workers in Sri Lanka. The two couples working there at the moment are due to return home at the end of this year. Baptists in Sri Lanka still want us to work in partnership with them.

So, although we have been experiencing an encouraging up-turn in the number of those enquiring about overseas work and in the number of those being accepted as missionary candidates – more than for many years – there is still a great lack of workers for particular areas, and especially the newer areas. The BMS feels strongly that God is presenting us with many new opportunities to share the health-giving wholeness of His love within the world. We hope and pray that the churches feel this too and that there will be those within the churches who are hearing God's call 'to go'.

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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	

GRAY~ A rural church in France

'The first fruits of the new BMS involvement in France have been seen in the active involvement of BMS missionaries, Pam and Steve Seymour, in evangelism at Gray even before they leave for their official missionary assignment in Zaire,' says David Boydell.

THE town of Gray, in the Département of Haute-Saône, is situated about one hour's drive east of Dijon in the region of Franche-Comté. It is a small town with little industry and therefore has suffered recently from *exode rural*, or flight from the countryside to the towns.

Mission Post

Gray is one of four towns in this area, previously almost devoid of Evangelical or Protestant witness, where the Swedish Baptists have begun churches. The first missionary of the Swedish Orebro Mission began work in the town in 1971. A church grew, little by little, and now three successive Swedish missionaries have been replaced by a French Pastor, Jean-Claude Renouard. He and his wife, Sonia, lead the small church in both imaginative and aggressive evangelism.

There have been a good number of conversions over the past 16 years, but many of them have had to look for work elsewhere and so the church has remained small. Two families moved to Perpignan, in the south of France and form part of another new church where an American missionary has just gone to pioneer the work.

No building

The church is still without a permanent building, but what is being accomplished is really impressive. A small group of believers, which at the moment numbers 20 members as well

as their children and others who attend the services periodically, has been meeting for some years in a rented basement room in a block of flats. They still rent this room, but it is now used for children's clubs on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The clubs are led by a very enthusiastic church member. This particular man recently refused to leave Gray, despite being out of work, convinced that the Lord would find him work in the town so that he could stay and carry on these children's activities. His testimony is that the Lord was faithful and after only six weeks of unemployment he was able to find permanent work.

Practical ecumenism

There is a modern Protestant church building in Gray, built in 1968 by a group of German Lutheran volunteers and given to the local Reformed Fellowship. The Reformed church has dwindled considerably and does not hold services every Sunday. So the Baptists are allowed to use the building for the time being. This has been a great help in inviting people to a building which is recognizable as a Christian church. It helps the Baptists — often looked on as a sect in France — to gain a certain credibility in the eyes of outsiders and assists in reaching them with the Gospel.

Pam and Steve Seymour



Evangelism

A group of 14 students and staff from the Language School at Massy recently spent an extended week-end in Gray. Saturday was packed with various activities. In the morning, after the initial prayer meeting and discussion of tactics for the week-end between the students and the church, a group of students and church members sang scripture songs in different parts of the town centre. Others gave out tracts and invitations to a film that evening.

In the afternoon, they continued a campaign, which had already been started by the church on a housing estate in Gray, an area hardly touched by the Gospel. Various activities helped to spread the Good News. The team went two by two into each block of flats to interview the local residents about their attitude to Christian things.

Although many doors were slammed in their faces, there were many positive contacts, notably with some young people of North African origin. Some students were invited into the flats and were able to talk at length with various people.

One lady poured out all her troubles and showed the visitors the basket of pills which she was intending to use to take her own life. The Pastor is following up this contact and the students were humbled to feel that they might have just been led to that lady by the Lord in the nick of time. Some people were happy to leave their names and addresses for further literature and a copy of the New Testament. These contacts will be followed up later by the church.

Meanwhile, in the play area in the centre of the housing estate other students were preparing their own version of the Muppet Show. This attracted a good group of children as well as some teenagers, who stood at a discreet

distance, but nevertheless seemed to follow everything that was happening. The Gospel was presented clearly through the puppet show and here again the church hopes to follow up these links which were made on the housing estate.

In the evening, the French version of the Japanese film 'The Shiokari Pass' was shown. Several outsiders came along to see the film and also heard the testimonies and songs presented by the students.

Sunday was also action packed, but this time based on the church building and to a more restricted audience. Students and church members gave testimonies in word and song and the Gospel was preached.

Prayer

The church at Gray values the prayerful support of British Baptists, as do other churches in France in the same position. The

students in Massy also count on your prayers as they prepare to serve the Lord in many parts of France and in French speaking Africa. Among those taking part in the evangelistic week-end were BMS missionaries Steve and Pam Seymour.

There will be another evangelistic week-end led by staff and students from Massy towards the end of June. This will be based on the church at Morlaix in Brittany. The Morlaix church was founded by the BMS in the 19th century and the witness is still carried on there. Another weekend is planned for the church at Saint-Quentin in the north sometime in the autumn.

The prayers of British Baptists for these as well as other churches in France would be greatly appreciated by your brothers and sisters in France.

Three students from Britain (Pam Seymour), Switzerland and Australia teach a Bible text using balloons!



Feudal superstition

IN recent years the number of Chinese Christians has doubled and redoubled, but most have been concentrated in the countryside where feudal consciousness is comparatively strong. Also, it is in the rural areas that the church's organization is weakest. Because of this, non-Christian feudal superstitions enter into Christianity, while the superstitious elements originally present in Christianity, meet with greater receptivity.

This problem deserves our serious attention.

The Lord Jesus said: 'I am the door of the sheep . . . if anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture . . . I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.'

Many Chinese become Christians because in their minds it is no different from consulting an astrologer or a shaman, or relying on a new Jiang Tai Gong for healing. Thus they do not truly

receive Christ's salvation, accept the Christ who died and was resurrected, or enter the door of the sheep. We cannot complacently believe that the circumstances of church growth in China are like those of the early church where 'the Lord supported those who had been saved and daily increased their number'.

In distinguishing Christian belief from feudal superstition, the church itself has a great deal of work to do. If we abolish the influence of feudal superstition, our faith will be purer, our understanding of



News of the Worldwide Church

DANGERS OF CHURCH GROWTH IN CHINA

Rural converts

CHINESE peasants are usually still under the spell of feudal superstitions. If a peasant decides to come to Jesus, it is often because he or she has no alternative.

The most perplexing problem for them is sickness. It is not true that they do not want to see doctors or take medicine. Indeed they go to a hospital or clinic first. But whether it is because of a general lack of sanitation or because medical and health work lag behind, they often

come back disappointed. In their desperation they then come to the church for help. Surprisingly, their illness is often cured or alleviated after praying patiently together with Christians.

Christians call this the working of the Holy Spirit. Others may describe it as a kind of psychological effect. Whatever it may be, the fact is that a whole family will turn its back on traditional belief and become fervent adherents to the new faith.

The foundation of these rural converts is, of course, shaky. Without follow-up work, they may confuse the Christian faith with expressions of folk religion or be misguided by a rigid literalism. As a rule, church workers in China are aware of this danger, but the question is how to find spare human resources in the city for grass-roots work where the need is just as great.

Deng Zhaoming writing in a recent edition of BRIDGE.

CONTRA EVANGELIST

SINCE the beginning of last year, Ruben Guerrero, a Baptist evangelist from the United States, has been working among the 'contras' who are fighting the Nicaraguan government.

His Faith and Freedom ministry promises 'reconciliation through evangelism' as it wages a 'spiritual campaign through faith to reach and subdue the nation of Nicaragua, and to establish righteousness through the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

He says there are 'up to 20 thousand contra soldiers who need preaching' and that 'the contras see me as one of them in the sense that I'm helping them, but they know I'm not one of them. They treat me as if I were an officer, but I am always in civilian clothing.'

biblical truth clearer and our theology will transcend its former restraints. A more highly developed theology of greater practical significance will aid in distinguishing and eliminating feudal superstition. This will lead sheep to enter the gate, and cause the Chinese church to shine increasingly with God's glory.

Rev Su Deci, Dean of Studies at the Huadong Theological Seminary.

WE ARE IN JESUS! THAT'S WHAT MATTERS

Edna Staple and Jean Comber, former Angola missionaries, were hoping to visit Angola in time for Christmas, but the visas were not released until January. They left on 28 January and returned on 14 March . . .

HOW to describe those six weeks? We were often exhausted, frequently frustrated and mostly uncomfortable, but it was a thousand times worth while!

We arrived at the hottest time of year, but it mattered little beside the loving welcome we received from Alvaro Rodrigues, General Secretary of the Baptist Church in Angola, and his wife Linda. In fact the welcome we received everywhere far outpassed our expectations.

FEW RESOURCES

The general state of the country is lamentable. It is said that 80 per cent of the annual revenue is absorbed by the continuing civil war. The most visible evidence of this is the large number of young amputees in Luanda whose injuries have mainly been caused by mines.

Ordinary people see no hope of an end to the war, nor do they anticipate any reconciliation in the foreseeable future. The economic situation is appalling, with prices on the open market ten or even 20 times the 'official' price.

The government has few resources for anything except the war, so there is, for instance no system of rubbish collection in Luanda. The water supply is intermittent in some parts of the city and non-existent in others. Drainage systems are totally inadequate, and after a heavy rain, as we saw during our last week, the lower-lying parts of the city quickly become rivers and swamps.

Electricity, where it is available at all, comes and goes and a good rain is fairly sure to put the whole system out of action.

GROWING CITY

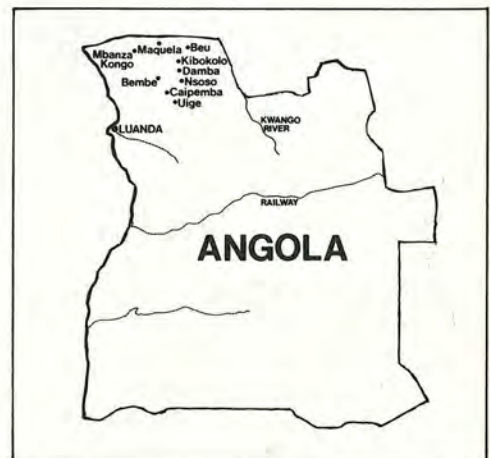
The city is now vast, with newcomers building at a phenomenal rate. As there is no way in the city to put up a temporary grass house, many people start off with a hut made entirely of metal roofing sheets. What must the temperature be like inside? Here they live while slowly getting money to buy materials, make cement blocks and build a house. Eventually the hut will be dismantled to provide the roof, or part of it.

In theory, primary education is available to all children and because schools have three daily sessions, most children in the city are probably getting some education. But there are not nearly enough teachers and most of them had their education in French in Zaire and are now having to teach in Portuguese.

HEALTH CARE

Medical care is available only in the cities and larger towns. Even there it is often inadequate or rudimentary because of lack of resources in personnel and finance. The diseases caused by insanitary living conditions are almost impossible to avoid. Tuberculosis is common and sleeping sickness has once again become a terrible scourge in the north of the country.

In the 1950's the Portuguese mounted an intensive campaign of case-finding and treatment and by the time the rebellion started in 1961, the disease was virtually wiped out. The present government is concerned about the situation, but economic pressures and the unsettled state



of the country make effective action impossible.

In the northern part of the country, where all the work of our Mission was based in the past, roaming bands of UNITA guerrillas

from the south make sporadic attacks on villages, shooting, burning and looting and sometimes abducting the children.

More than once someone said, 'We lost our house and all our things, but we are so thankful they didn't take the children.'

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

It is against this background that the Church lives and grows. The Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola (IEBA) is one of twelve churches recently granted legal recognition by the government. One cheering fact is that, despite all the difficulties, there does seem to be communication, fellowship and mutual support between the churches in the different areas of the country.

The Baptist Church now has many more members, including large numbers of young people and worships and works in many more areas than the church we left in 1961. There are ten congregations, some large and all growing, in the capital city, Luanda, where the BMS had no work in the past.

Uige, south east of Bembe, is another new centre with three congregations. There is new work in the Ndalantando and Caipemba areas north east of Luanda and the church has its own mission outreach in Kwango-Kimbele, a very isolated, primitive area in the north east of the country, which until recently has been unreached by the Gospel. There are already 600 baptized members there and ten have been chosen to go to the Bible School at Kibokolo where, alongside the pastors-in-training, they will be prepared to be village catechists.



The Rev and Mrs Alvaro Rodrigues

TRAVEL

Travel by road is only possible in convoy with military escort, so we were not able to visit Kibokolo, Bembe or any of the villages. The government is in control of the towns, many of which can be reached by air, so we were able, though not without a great deal of frustration and hassle, to visit Uige and Mbanza Kongo (formerly San Salvador) not far from the frontier with Zaire. Here, as in Luanda, we met many of our old friends and found those we had known as children grown up and often leaders in the church.

It was a delight and joy to share fellowship and worship with a church now independent of its mission background, yet happily and gratefully recalling the work of the mission. They welcomed us as evidence of the continuing bonds of love and concern between Church and mission,

between Angolan Christians and missionaries they had known and still remember with affection, and through the missionaries, with Christians in the Baptist churches in Britain.

It is now a truly African Church, with totally Angolan leadership, developing its own patterns of worship, especially in music, alongside those learned from expatriate missionaries.

BUILDING

It is a generous church. We were amazed and humbled by the level of giving. The congregations in Luanda and Uige, and no doubt in the villages as well, all have plans for erecting their own church buildings. Some are well on the way to completion, others have barely begun. Some still meet on the verandah of someone's home, while waiting for planning permission, or to obtain a site.

There are no outside funds to help. Materials must be purchased and buildings erected and furnished by the congregation's own gifts. Money, time and skills are freely given.

In a number of places the congregation worships under a temporary shelter of roofing tins, or palm fronds, erected on a wooden framework within the partly built walls of the church. Temporary seating is provided by cement blocks waiting to be incorporated in the walls, or by the trunks of palm trees felled within the area of the building. One congregation had just bought a large tree and was collecting funds to pay



Edna Staple and Jean Comber with Angolan friends

for its sawing into planks ready to make benches. A sample bench was held aloft for everyone to see.

The original congregation in Luanda, and still the largest despite the fact that all the others have 'budded off' from it, meets in an empty, rented shop. You have to arrive an hour before the service to have any hope of getting a seat, or even getting inside. They are ready to build, but are waiting for the arrival of a BMS builder to supervise the work on this city centre church, which will be required to meet government specifications for such a site.

The church building at Mbanza Kongo, used during the war as a bar for 'other ranks' of the Portuguese army, has been repaired and refurbished. It is now classed as what we would call a listed building and must be preserved. The date on the foundation stone is 1894 so it may well be one of the oldest buildings outside Luanda. The roof, which resembles a colander, has to be replaced, which will mean roofing timbers. Regulations require the fairly elaborate pattern of the existing structure to be matched. The whole of the Baptist

Partially built church



Church in Angola intends to help with the expense of preserving this valued part of its heritage.

MEDICAL PROJECT

We were very glad to see something of the working of the pilot medical project which has been started by the church in Luanda. A small dispensary has been built on a site granted to one of the larger congregations on the edge of the city. (The church building was planned to accommodate 600. Not finished, it is already too small.)

The dispensary is staffed by nurses and laboratory technicians trained in Zaire. We were impressed to see how some who had trained at Kimpese had adapted methods and procedures learned there making them appropriate for this smaller and simpler set-up.

It deals only with out-patients and there is a good, and very necessary, emphasis on health teaching. Medicines, mostly obtained through the State pharmaceutical distribution service and limited to a range of basic essentials, are sold at minimal

profit. Patients needing hospitalization, special treatments or X-rays, are referred to State hospitals. It was interesting to see that these hospitals often refer patients to the dispensary for laboratory tests because they can be done so much more quickly there.

A government official, speaking with Alvaro Rodrigues about the project, expressed surprise that the Church should be offering this service to anyone who wished to use it, not just to church members. Alvaro's reply was, 'We are just as concerned as you are about the well-being of the people. Our hopes for them are the same as yours. The difference is that we are not only working for this life, but also for the life to come. When this life comes to an end, you are finished, but we go on!'

SHINING WITNESSES

We were accompanied on our visits by two women pastors. We had known one of them when she was a schoolgirl at Bembe. Her husband had pastoral training in Zaire. They returned to work at Mbanza Kongo and there Fernandes was killed by a bomb. Gloria returned to Zaire with her children, went back to the Bible School, and trained as a pastor. When she returned to Angola she was ordained and after three years as organizing secretary for women's work, she has now been given pastoral charge of the 'parish' where the church building is already too small for the growing congregation.

There are many who, like the Rev Maria Gloria Fernandes, are shining witnesses to the Christian faith which sustains them. It seems that over 26 years of hardship, suffering and repeated disruption of their lives, they have found that the one stable thing is their faith. They have learned from experience that our God is 'a very present help in trouble', even when there appears to be no way out of it.

One woman, typical of many, told us in a matter-of-fact way of the troubles and problems she and her family had experienced. She ended with a smile, 'But we are in Jesus and that is what really matters.'

We found our own faith challenged, and returned to Britain with that faith deepened and strengthened. We give thanks to God for what He has done in his Angolan people over these years and have been greatly encouraged to see the fruit now borne where we were privileged to have a small part in planting the seed.

Volunteers in India

Lynne Nicholson recently went as a voluntary worker to India. She spent six months in Berhampur, Orissa, with Dr Betty Marsh.

I FELT the Lord's calling to go overseas for a time after finishing my degree course in electronics. Of course the work in India was far from related to electronics and Berhampur has very few of the many technologies that we use in England. However, I found the time spent there very rewarding and it especially developed my spiritual dependence on God.

At the hospital I did statistical work and also gave lessons to student nurses in English, Physics and First Aid. Teaching was a new experience and one I enjoyed largely because of the girls I taught.

They really appreciated the lessons and were glad of the chance to learn. Education in India is a privilege and is not taken for

granted. The nurses spend six years training at the hospital and live in a hostel on the hospital compound. They are lovely girls and really make the most of everything they have. Their daily lives are quite monotonous (hospital, duty and study), very different from the varied and exciting social lives that young people in Britain have. But they accept things and are happy.

Each day started with a short service with the Christian staff. This consisted of a song, a reading and prayers. Betty had taken out some copies of *Mission Praise* a few years ago, so it was nice to hear them worship God with the same songs and hymns we sing here. I was often asked to sing a song or to teach them a new one. We also sang songs in Oriya, the language of Orissa.

On February 1 I attended a baptismal service, but it was no

ordinary one! It took place in the hilly, green countryside of West Ganjam, which is scattered with little villages. The people were baptized in a small lake in quite a remote area and, most amazingly 156 were baptized.

It was a very moving and exciting experience. I was part of Bishop Mohanty's group. He is Bishop of Cuttack. When we arrived we were given a tremendous welcome by hundreds of people. Many of them had walked for hours and even days to get there. The service started with a short prayer and then they got down to it, with three local pastors baptizing simultaneously. So the service only took an hour.

Many of those baptized came from Christian families, but some were recent converts. All however had been visited by pastors and prepared for baptism.

There is a large area in Orissa, mainly Phulbani district, which has a predominantly Christian population, so baptisms like this are quite regular occurrences. The ancestors of the people were not Hindus, but animists and so they rapidly turned to Christ when the missionaries arrived. Although it is great to see such a high concentration of Christians, many of them are suffering at the moment from those opposed to the churches. Many buildings have been burned down and some people have been attacked and threatened. They need our prayers.

ALCOHOLISM

ALCOHOLISM is growing in Brazil among women and at work, according to experts who organized the Fourth Iberoamerican Congress on Alcoholism in May. Nearly ten per cent of all Brazilians over 15 years old are alcoholics, they say.

The country's hospital admissions records show that the female : male alcoholic ratio in 1983 was one to eight, but that today it is one to five. Alcoholism is growing fast among women, but it is not declining among men.

In Brazilian business with more male than female workers, nearly 20 per cent of the employees are alcoholics. A growing number of these businesses are offering alcoholic detection and rehabilitation programmes instead of simply firing those workers who are affected.



Baptismal candidate working on building

ACTUALLY the name of the town is Inocencia. Soon after arriving to live in Paranaiba Pastor Fernando took me out to visit the congregation of the first Church in Paraniaba, 90 kms away on the earth road. At that time the building that had housed the congregation now housed a young evangelist. Money for a new chapel had been made available from Southern Baptist funds and plans were made and building material bought.

Over the months I have visited Inocencia and seen some of the ups and downs of a work in its initial stages.

Such visits were not in any official capacity because the responsibility clearly lay with Pastor Fernando and the first Church. On the other hand it was good that Pastor Fernando encouraged my visits more recently on a Thursday night, often including the Lord's Supper in the service. Only pastors are allowed to preside at the Lord's Supper in Brazilian Baptist circles.

Slowly the templo began to rise, but when I visited just one month before the official opening, much still remained to be done. The building was a windowless, unroofed shell. What would it be like on the day of the opening.

Return to Innocence

... and an interesting day in the life of Robert Draycott.

We arrived on a hot Saturday afternoon to find that the finishing touches were still in full swing, but at least the roof was on and the concrete floor had been laid. Great efforts in the previous few days had seen to the plastering and painting of the inside walls. A small group of men had left Paranaiba at 3.30 a.m. that morning with the glass and electrical installations. That team had installed the wiring, but as the photograph shows, the glazing work continued until just before the evening service.

A bus-load of church people arrived from Paranaiba, but we were still chair and pulpit-less. These arrived a little later and willing hands soon unloaded the chairs purchased by the members of the mother church. The sun was sinking lower, but we still had time to pile into

the bus and drive 20 kms to baptize three candidates in a nearby pool.

On our return to the town, the church people were sent out to invite people to the evening service, while the five pastors present met to form an examining body with a view to ordaining the evangelist. This exercise completed we ate before returning to the evening service.

The small templo, 13 metres by 8 metres, was packed. The building, and a child, were dedicated, the evangelist was ordained, and Pastor Williams Balaniuc, the State Executive Secretary preached.

An interesting day in the life of a Brazilian missionary.

Inocencia before



From E Hickmore

FURTHER to the subject of the Birthday scheme, I wonder if this is a record. Victoria Road South Baptist Church, Chelmsford, Essex, had 32 names in one month. Sorry Derby!

*Mrs E Hickmore
Chelmsford*

From D L Bell

IN May, at Beulah Baptist Church, Bexhill, we had 22 subscribers to the Birthday scheme and this will also be the number for October, but each month varies from 13 upwards.

An important factor in considering this matter must be the proportion of subscribers to the number of those connected with the church.

Another factor is the number of church members who are senior citizens, as in our church, so we are frequently saying farewell to some of them. But we have a lot of young people, in addition to those in the Brigades, who do their share for the BMS's special projects.

In 1985 the total raised for the Birthday Scheme was £877, but that was a record year!

*Miss D L Bell
Bexhill-on-Sea*

We have just produced a new poster and a leaflet to advertize the BMS Birthday Scheme. Please write to BMS, 93 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA for copies and information about the scheme.



The new set of birthday cards to go with the scheme is also now available.

From David Boydell

IT was interesting to read the letter from A M Flint in the *March Herald* concerning the possibility of churches in France and Britain forming twinning links.

There are already several churches in our Baptist Federation in France which are linked with British churches, either through personal links or through the Mission England - Mission France link last year. In the case of our own church at Massy, we had two twin churches in Britain, which gave us considerable prayer support during Mission France, but neither of these was a Baptist church.

Church twinning could be a great encouragement to some of our French churches, although I do accept the Editor's point that this might favour French churches over against churches in such countries as Brazil or Zaire.



Nevertheless, many churches in Britain have a special interest in one particular church in Zaire or Brazil or in another country where BMS works, and in a way one could say that some sort of church twinning already exists with countries in the Third World.

One difficulty with such a scheme between Britain and France would be the sheer difference in numbers. Our French Baptist Federation numbers less than 100 churches, and even if half of our churches was interested in such a link with a British church it could be that the demand from the British churches would be just too great to meet.

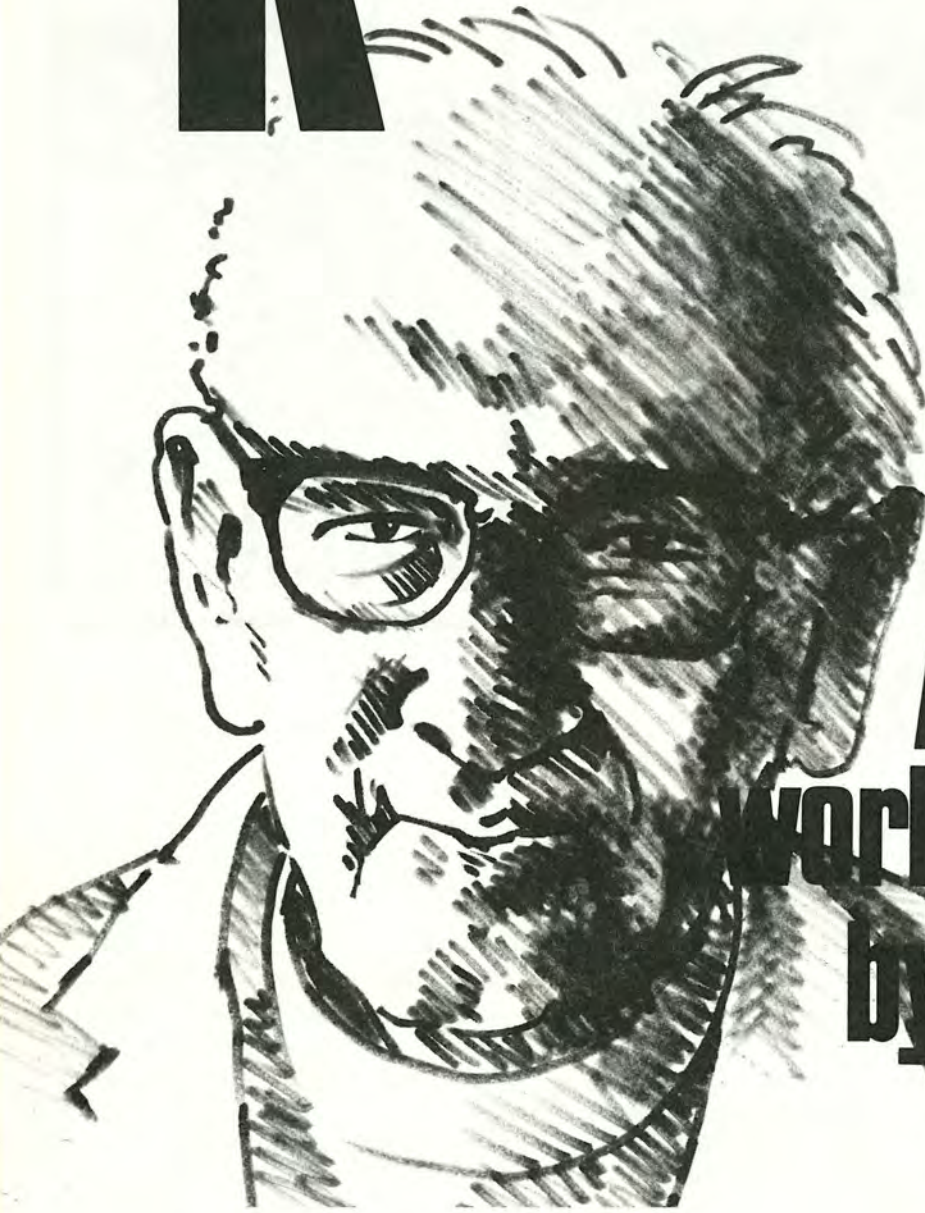
I still feel, however, that this might be a good idea to pursue through the BMS and the French Baptist Federation.

*David L Boydell
MASSY, France*

ROYAL WEEK 25th JULY - 1st AUGUST 1987

Revd Peter Amies will be attending Royal Week at the Missionary Exhibition. Be sure to visit the stand and talk to him about the latest news from the BMS.

'KALAMANYA'



**-HIGH
HONOUR**

**A life-time's
work recognised
by Sri-Lankan
Government**

The Rev S J de S Weerasinghe is a member of Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Last year the island's Prime Minister conferred on him the honorary title of 'Kalamanya', an award given for outstanding contributions to the art, literature or culture of Sri Lanka.

'It is quite remarkable that in this predominantly Buddhist country the value of his contribution should be recognized,' says Margaret Goodall. 'It was specifically for his work in translating and editing the Sinhala Bible.'

THE Rev S J de S Weerasinghe is now 90 years of age. He is well known in Sri Lanka as a broadcaster and a writer, but his greatest service to both the Church and to Sri Lanka is his translating and editing of the Sinhala Bible.

His father, Joronis de Silva Weerasinghe, was a well-known ayurvedic physician and poet. He made his home, with his wife, on a beautiful island called Wallagoda, in the middle of some paddy fields.

In a largely Buddhist area, besides the Weerasinghes, there were only two or three Christian families.

The Weerasinghe's were married for many years without having any children. They made a vow that if God should bless them with a son they would offer him for the Christian ministry. At last, on 24 November 1896, Samuel Josephe was born.

Education

He was educated at Agalawatta Sinhala Mixed School and in the afternoons he took extra classes at Prathiraja Pirivena in order to learn Pali, Sanskrit and more Sinhala.

When his Sinhala education was complete his parents made known their wish for him to enter the ministry.

'No,' he said.

'My Sinhala education took me into a very small world,' he explained later. 'Beyond that there was a vast world. English was the key in order to enter it and I was craving to learn English.'

So his parents sent him to Cyril Jansz College at Panadura and later to Carey College, Colombo. The Principal of Carey College was BMS missionary, the Rev H J Charter. Impressed by the young Weerasinghe he sent him to the United Theological College of Bangalore for ministerial training.

The ministry

In 1920 his parents wishes were fulfilled when he became pastor of the Baptist Mission church in Matale.

After ten years there he came to Britain and to Regent's Park College for further training. When he returned home he became minister of Grandpass Church in Colombo.

Journalist and author

During this time he turned his hand to journalism, encouraged by the editor of the Sinhala daily, *Dinamina*, and he became a prolific writer. His first book in the Sinhala language was *Analysis of the Child Mind*, but the one that brought him most publicity, and not a little criticism, was one on sex.

'Why should a Christian minister go into such detail?' asked several critics.

He was feeling very discouraged by the many attacks on him, when a distinguished Buddhist scholar, Bambarende Siri Seewali came to see him. He congratulated Samuel Josephe for writing the book.

'We have no books on sex education in the Sinhala language,' he said.

Bible translation

In the 1930's there was a cry from the churches for the Sinhala Bible and all the Christian denominations apart from the Catholics agreed to embark on a project to produce one. Samuel Weerasinghe played a leading role in editing it. It was published in 1938. He went on to serve the Ceylon Bible Society for 20 years.

In the 1960's it became obvious that the Sinhala language was changing rapidly and that the 1939 Bible was out of date.

'We need a new translation in lucid, modern Sinhala,' was the cry.

The appeal was heard by the Bible Society in Britain and a fact finding mission was sent to Sri Lanka. A

committee was appointed, including the Rev Weerasinghe, and this time the Catholics joined in.

It took over ten years to complete the New Sinhala Bible. It was launched in 1983 at a mass meeting held at the Sugathadasa stadium in Colombo.

Broadcaster

Samuel Weerasinghe is noted for his broadcasting. For many years he conducted *Buddhi Mandalaya* a panel discussion based on the old BBC 'Brains Trust'.

He is also a bird lover. He starts each day by walking in the garden listening to the birds singing – he says there are 22 varieties of birds there. The rest of the day he spends in writing his life story.

Five days after his 90th birthday, in November last year, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Ranasinghe Premadasa conferred on Samuel Weerasinghe the honorary title 'Kalamanya', and a cheque for Rs. 10,000, for his services to Sinhala literature. President Jayewardene was the chief guest. Peter Goodall, minister of Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church, was also present, along with members of the Weerasinghe family.

200 YEARS OF BMS WORK

How has your church been involved?

What missionary support was given?

Who went overseas from your fellowship?

LET US KNOW

facts, anecdotes, names, so that we can include them in our nationwide BMS celebration.

Research your archives!

Delve into memories!

Read your minute books!

Let us have the information!

MISSIONTALK

MISSIONTALK

MISSIONTALK

MISSIONTALK

YOUNG AND OLD

They're all

supporting

BMS

IN the same post generous gifts came from both age extremes in the churches – from a centenarian and a group of young people in Scotland.

'Out of the first envelope dropped a cheque for £252,' says Ron Armstrong, BMS Scottish Representative.

'One of the members at Springburn Baptist Church had recently celebrated her 100th birthday. At a party arranged by the church friends had brought gifts, but Mrs Steel insisted that the money should be sent to the BMS. She has been a life-long supporter of the Society.

'Another letter enclosed a cheque for £755.50 from Christian Endeavourers in Baptist Churches at Wick, Kirkwall (Orkney),

Cambusland, Denny and Livingstone. A further cheque for £173.50 arrived from Alloa CE. These young people had adopted the "On Yer Bike" project, to buy bicycles for Zairian pastors.

'As I wrote letters of thanks,' says Ron Armstrong, 'I thought how wonderful that I should receive, in one post, generous gifts from supporters at the age-extremes of our churches – the children and the veteran. What an inspiration and example to the rest of us who come, agewise, somewhere in-between.'

A REAL TONIC

QUITE a number of you responded to our request for tonic sol fah copies of Sankey's hymn book. We have now made arrangements to send a copy to Zaire and have taken note of all those who have offered copies in case other requests come in.

Thank you so much for the swift and generous responses to the original request.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

BMS

THE count-down has begun for the BMS Bi-Centenary in 1992! Five years will slip by very quickly and there are plans to be made, scripts to be written, buildings to be booked, people to be invited and interest to be stimulated.

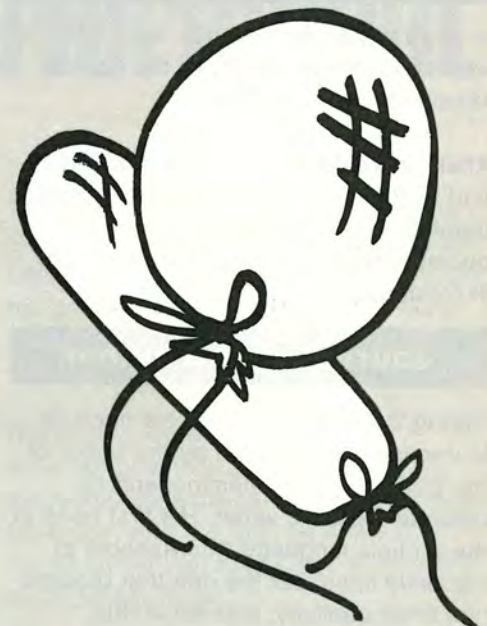
We are planning for a time of real celebration for the twelve months from October 1992. By remembering the past we hope to be stimulated to prepare ourselves for mission in the future.

But this is not just a job for BMS Committee members, or the staff in Mission House. It includes all those reading this Missionary Herald. As your local committee starts to organize local happenings they will need your ideas and support.

We need, as soon as possible, information from local church and missionary auxiliary archives and minute books. So much local detail about missionary activity is stored in church safes and older people's memories. Are there interesting relics in your church related to missionary enterprise? What can you remember about missionary work from your younger days?

These facts, figures and stories are needed for the Bi-Centenary road show which we shall be taking round the country. They are also needed to feed back to local committees so that they can plan local events.

So please dust off your old minute books, delve back into the past, put pen to paper and send your contribution to the Bi-Centenary Working Group at Mission House.



THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The Society is seeking a *REPRESENTATIVE FOR WALES*

to serve in the place of the Rev Carey Garnon, who is retiring. The role will be to secure grass-roots support from local Baptist Churches, encouraging and assisting ministers, missionary secretaries and other key workers in world mission and the support of the BMS.

The person will be expected to have previously demonstrated knowledge of and commitment to the Baptist Denomination and the Baptist Missionary Society.

The task will involve personal visitation of local churches and leaders, conduct of meetings of varied types, leading of training conferences, participation in the general promotion and deputation programme of the Society, etc. A competence in the Welsh language as well as in English is preferred. It is anticipated that the person appointed will be resident in Mid or North Wales. Applicants may apply direct, giving full curriculum vitae and details of relevant experience. Applications should be received by 31 August 1987.

Write for further information or apply directly to:

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

FORTY-FOUR YEARS!

WHEN Ethel Roberts took over the job of Brighton Auxiliary Secretary in 1943 she did not realize that it would be 1987 before she handed it on to her successor. With the former secretary ill Ethel had one month to organize the Brighton Deputation programme. She managed magnificently, and has done so ever since.

At a recent Brighton Auxiliary Rally, former Zaire missionary, Mary Hitchings, assumed responsibility. Ethel Roberts was presented with a leatherbound NIV Thompson Chain Reference Bible and a cheque for £50. It was a token of appreciation by all the churches of the tremendous task Ethel has done in promoting and encouraging support for world mission. The SE Area Representative, Leslie Gregory, was there to express the gratitude of the BMS.

THE FRENCH CONNEXION

BMS Young People's Project
1987-88

HELP RAISE

£18,000 . . .

. . . And share with French Baptists in telling people about God's love.

Project pack, including games, activity sheets, missionscene, prayer-cycle, etc., now available. Please write in for your packs.

NEEDED FOR MISSIONARY SERVICE OVERSEAS

FRANCE – Ministerial couples for evangelism and church planting.

THAILAND – Ministerial couples to work in evangelism, church planting and lay training.

NEPAL – Primary teachers for missionary children's tutorial groups. Laboratory technician.

BANGLADESH – Physiotherapist for General Hospital, Chandraghona.

**MISSIONTALK
MISSIONTALK
MISSIONTALK
MISSIONTALK**

OUR CHILDREN SHOULD KNOW ONE ANOTHER



Dr Suna

AS the BMS task force in India gets smaller and smaller an Indian doctor has appealed to British Christians not to forget the church there.

Dr Suna, medical director of Diptipur Hospital in the state of Orissa, has been on a short visit to Britain.

'Your missionaries helped to establish the church in India, but now, because of the visa situation, there are fewer and fewer

missionaries. So it is important that we don't feel abandoned.

'We need the encouragement and the fellowship of the wider church. Christians in India are a tiny minority of the population. But you are in a much more privileged position and we need to have fellowship with you so that we can grow in our faith.'

Dr Suna suggested that money and assistance are secondary needs, which can be

supplied, for the work of the hospital, from non-church aid organizations.

'It is fellowship through prayer and concern that we need most of all. If you can no longer come as missionaries, come as visitors and when you return home, you can do what the missionaries used to do and visit the churches and speak about our work. This will help Christians in both countries to grow.'

Dr Suna thanked the BMS for keeping up this link through various visitors.

'We are encouraged by this. The door should be kept open. Our children — both Indian and British — must come into contact. Something should be worked out so that our children and your children can know one another.'

Dr Suna's main responsibility at Diptipur is in eye work.

'But as a mission doctor I have to do everything. I go out into the villages with a team of workers. They go in advance and set up the camp, examine the patients and get ready for the final examination.'

'The next morning I select those for operation and we do the operations the same day — anything from 50 to 100. They are mostly cataract cases, but there are a few cases of glaucoma.'

'We hold 25 to 30 eye camps each year from October to March, which means that I can be treating up to 3,000 people in a year.'

Diptipur means 'city of light', although, Dr Suna says that it is only a village. The hospital work there was started in 1958 by BMS and Disciples of Christ missionaries. It originally had 12 beds but now has 100.

'The government does not provide services like ours in rural areas. Some services are provided, but the standard is much below ours and there is no facility for operations.'

Some rich patients complain about our fees, but they are much lower than in the town hospitals. We have to tell them that we only give free treatment to the poor and deserving.'

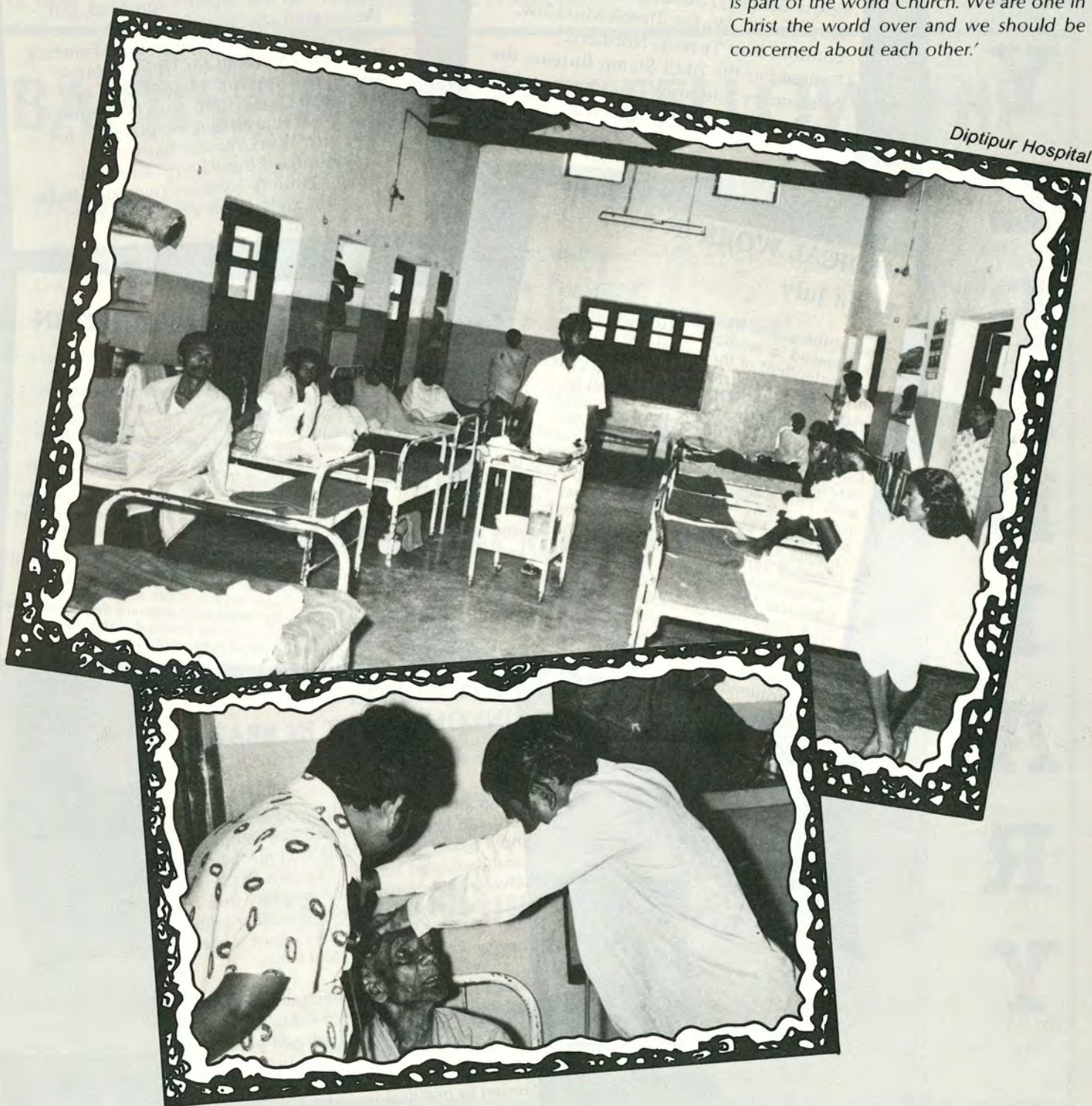
What is so special about a Christian hospital?

'It is in the love and care we give to our people as we share the love of Christ. We conduct services and the local pastors visit the patients. This reminds them that we are a Christian hospital, not a private institution

just intent on making money. Most of our patients are Hindus, but we don't discriminate.

Dr Suna was hoping to tell Christians in Britain how the work they began is continuing today.

'I want to say how we are managing without them now that there are no missionaries working with us. But I want to remind them that our hospital at Diptipur doesn't just belong to the church there. Neither does it belong only to the Church of North India, it is part of the world Church. We are one in Christ the world over and we should be concerned about each other.'



Diptipur Hospital

PRAYER DIARY

HOME BASE

5-11 July

Many people are involved in the promotion and administration work of the BMS in Britain. Eight Area Representatives relate to the churches in England, Wales and Scotland – the personal contacts they are able to make, the challenge and encouragement they give to share in World Mission are invaluable. Pray for all the representatives – Peter Amies, South West; Ron Armstrong, Scotland; Peter Briggs, Midlands; Jim Clarke, Eastern; Leslie Gregory, South East; Gareth Hutchinson, Wales; Derek Mucklow, London; Roy Turvey, Northern. Remember the BMS Stamp Bureau, the Missionary Literatures Association and the Baptist Men's Movement.

WOMEN'S WORK IN ZAIRE

19-25 July

BMS Women's Worker, Allison Issacs hopes to start a small monthly prayer meeting with some leader of the women's work in the Upoto area. Pray for this group that they will give real spiritual leadership to the women. Allison asks us to pray for a play group for little children to keep them happy while their mothers attend classes. Mary Philpott, at Kisangani, is concerned with literacy classes for women. So few women can read, but the women she works with are very eager to learn. Remember the Women's Regional President for Upoto, Mama Mondengo, and for Mamas Luta and Marguarite, who help with the work. Pray for Mama Ditina, responsible for Women's Work for the Baptist Community of the River Zaire and Mama Mabinda Kwama, responsible for all six districts of the Lower River region in Zaire.

MEDICAL WORK IN INDIA

12-18 July

Two of the seven BMS personnel in India are engaged in medical work. As Medical Superintendent of the hospital at Berhampur, Betty Marsh has great responsibilities. She retires in three years time. Pray that an Indian doctor will be found to take over. At Vellore Christian College, Ann Bothamley has set up the recently opened bone marrow transplant unit. This week, remember Dr Harashita Nayak, Acting Medical Superintendent at the Moorshead Memorial Christian Hospital; Dr D Suna, Director of the Christian Hospital in Diptipur and Dr J M Laun, Director of the Evangelical Hospital at Khariar. Pray for the Christian Medical College at Ludhiana and Dr F Eggleston, Director. As the BMS Women's Project, Healing Hands, gets well underway, remember the work at Serkawn Christian Hospital and its Medical Superintendent Dr Lal Lawma.

DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN NEPAL – 26 July - 1 August

Butwal in southern Nepal is the location of a Technical Institute and Development Consultancy Service. Nepali people are trained in engineering, furniture making and construction. Mike and Val Roake are working there. Mike being an engineer and Val a teacher. She teaches the children of missionaries, of up to six different nationalities!

Tim Lehane works on the Andikhola Hydro-Electric project and this will be a major contribution to rural development in the area. Pray that the expatriates involved in this rural project may be vital, living witnesses to their Nepali colleagues of the love and compassion of God. Fred Swindell is currently doing language training before becoming involved in development work in Nepal. Remember too the Lalitpur Community Development Assistance Project, forestry schemes, and various companies involved in this area which the United Mission to Nepal runs or advises.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN BRAZIL

2-8 August

After 24 years in Brazil, David and Doris Doonan have just returned to Britain to take up a pastorate. We thank God for their long and dedicated service. The new BMS Overseas Representative for Brazil and Caribbean is John Clark. Remember John and his wife Norma as they adjust to these new responsibilities in São Paulo.

Brazil is suffering the effects of soaring inflation and huge foreign debts. There are stark contrasts between rich and poor. Many Baptist churches are engaged in a 'multiministry' which aims to share the Gospel in practical ways to serve the sick, needy and unemployed.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Mr D Kerrigan on 6 May from Chandraghona, Bangladesh.
Rev and Mrs D Brown on 9 May from Porto Velho, Brazil.
Rev and Mrs D Doonan on 21 May from Sao Paulo, Brazil.
Mr S Ayres on 26 May from Tondo, Zaire.
Miss M Philpott on 29 May from Kisangani, Zaire.
Mr P Stuart on 29 May from Mbanza Ngungu, Zaire.
Dr and Mrs K Russell on 29 May from IME, Kimpese, Zaire.
Mrs M Hart on 30 May from Chandraghona, Bangladesh.
Dr H Salter on 30 May from Chandraghona, Bangladesh.
Rev and Mrs D Punched on 31 May from Curitiba, Brazil.

Departures

Mr and Mrs T Hinchliffe on 6 May for Yakusu, Zaire.
Miss P Bryan on 20 May for Bolobo, Zaire.
Mrs D Clark on 20 May for Kinshasa, Zaire.

General Work

Anon: £40; Via Charities Aid Foundation: £400.00; Anon: £30; FAE Aberdeen: £20.00; Anon: £10.00; Anon: £20.00; Anon: £100.00; Anon: £26.00; Via Baptist Union: £5.00; Anon: £26.00.

In Memory

Mr Harry Leaman (Eastleigh) £232.50.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies, and gifts sent anonymously (to 16 April 1987).

Legacies

	£
Mrs D D Bevis	200.00
Mrs F J Dare	1,980.71
Mr R W Eames	100.00
Mrs Irene D Edwards	915.45
Mr Alex Jarvis	3,759.03
Mr Arthur C D Lane	500.00
Miss Mary Liddle	250.00
B H Little	50.00
Mrs Margaret O Lockhart	500.00
Miss Alice Myers	1,325.40
Elizabeth Maud Owen	200.00
Mr John Patten	16.26
Miss Lily Potts	351.75
Miss Hilda K Russell	700.00
Mrs E F Savill	12,114.41
E A B Smith	100.00
Mrs D L Shaw	200.00
Mrs Martha R Thomas	154.12
Irene Turnball	100.00
Rev A J Westlake	22.57
M E H Williams	331.73
Miss Hilda Young	100.00

BAPTIST HOLIDAY FELLOWSHIP

WESTHOLME, MINEHEAD

- ★ Seafront Hotel
- ★ 31 comfortable bedrooms – some en suite
- ★ Excellent Food
- ★ Happy Fellowship
- ★ Low rates for families

HOLIDAY FLATS – MINEHEAD

- ★ Spacious – Sleep 2-10
- ★ On Seafront
- ★ Fully carpeted and equipped
- ★ Colour TV
- ★ Own Car Park
- ★ Friday to Friday or Saturday to Saturday

MEET BAPTISTS ACROSS THE WORLD

AUSTRALIA

January 1988

Leader: Rev Dan Weller

- ★ Join the Australian Bi-centenary Baptist Convention
- ★ Holiday in Queensland
- ★ Stay on with Family or Friends

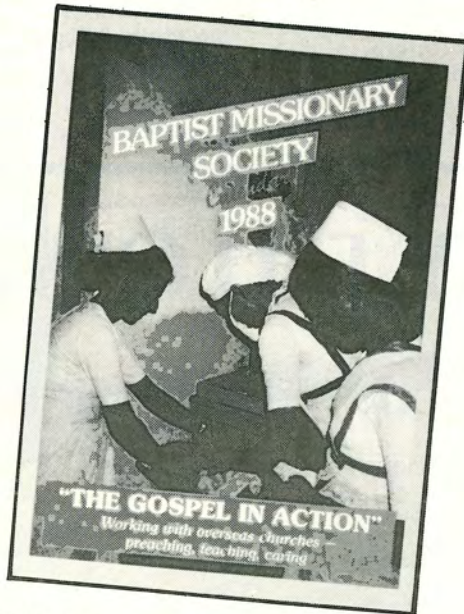
FELLOWSHIP HOLIDAYS

Full details from: Baptist Holiday Fellowship (MH)
1 The Esplanade, Minehead, Somerset TA24 5BE (0643) 3473

NOTICES

1988 CALENDARS

These are now available!
Yes really! Just write into Mission House
and your order will be despatched
immediately.



It is an engagement calendar, A4 in size
with 14 full colour photographs
illustrating the areas where BMS is at
work.

The cost? £1.50 or £1.75 by post.

MAKE MISSION LIVE!

Workshops for

Missionary Secretaries, Ministers,
Youth Leaders, etc.
and all interested in mission education

10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

PLYMOUTH – Saturday 12 September
at Mutley Baptist Church

TRURO – Saturday 7 November
at Truro Baptist Church

Further details from:

Rev Peter F E Amies
9 Newport Close
Clevedon
Avon
BS21 5DZ
Tel: 0272 875563

HARVEST APPEAL 1987

Special material – leaflets, posters,
discussion starters, worship aids,
etc. have been prepared for this
year's BMS – Operation Agri joint
Harvest Appeal for the work of
Agriculture and Rural Development.

Please use the special order form
which has been sent to every
church.

COLOUR POSTERS

The first two in our new series of full
colour A3 size posters are now available
at £1.00 each, inclusive.

By popular request we have reproduced
the cover photograph of the March 1986
Herald featuring the two young girls from
Nepal.

The second poster is of a Baptism scene
in the Kond Hills, India.