



# Editorial Comment

A HAPPY NEW YEAR to you all. Thank you for staying with us for another year and if you are a new reader thank you for joining us. We are not, as you know, just another magazine. Our intention is to keep you in touch with the World Church scene and especially those areas with which we, as British Baptists, are in partnership.

There is a constant danger for churches in this country to look in upon themselves, to be so bound up in meeting the needs of the local fellowship and maintaining church properties that there seems little time or energy left to have any wider concerns. Yet the lesson that churches have to relearn over and over again is that when they become involved in mission, when they forget their own preoccupations with survival, they become alive. Serving the needs of people in Christ's name makes worship more meaningful, gives purpose to church meeting agendas, and makes us all aware of our need to study and equip ourselves to be good disciples.

We want to help, through the pages of this magazine, in this business of education in mission. We also want to improve the content and format of the *Herald* and for this we would beg your assistance. With this edition you will have received a questionnaire which we would like you to fill in and return to us at Mission House. The information from the questionnaires will help us and the committees of the Society when we come to make decisions about next year. The main questions before us at the moment are: should we go over to bi-monthly, but larger editions and should we use more colour within the pages? What do you think? Now is the time to tell us.

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MISSIONARY  
**HERALD**  
THE MAGAZINE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY



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Brazil	Jamaica	Trinidad
El Salvador	Nepal	Zaire

# The Man wHo lived for MISSION!

Fred  
StainThorpe  
writes  
about  
RobERT  
ArTHington.

**THIS YEAR** Christians at Bolobo in Zaire will be celebrating one hundred years of Christian work there. The vision of pioneer missionaries, the prayers of Christians in this country, and their regular giving made much of this possible. The generosity of one man Robert Arthington, the millionaire who lived for missions did the rest. The pioneers and others will rightly be remembered and praised. We ought not to forget the man whose money got them to Africa.

He was born in Leeds in 1823 to a Quaker family which was much concerned with issues of the day. This extended to support for the burgeoning missionary and Bible societies of the day and, about 1850, Robert Arthington became 'mad on missions'. He began to live the life of a recluse allowing himself only the minimum of food, not to amass wealth for himself, but to obey the constraints of his

conscience. He wanted the Gospel to be offered to all men everywhere, without delay. If this meant living in penury, so be it.

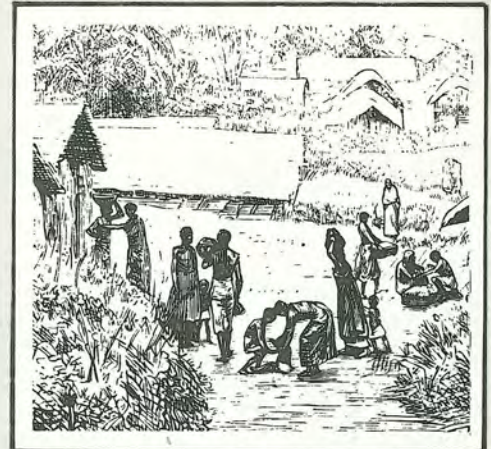
David Livingstone enabled some of his plans to be put into effect. For years Arthington had dreamed of planting a chain of mission stations across Africa. When he heard of Livingstone's death in 1873 he assumed the mantle of his successor. Less well-known men were waiting to occupy the lands Livingstone had opened up. Arthington gave them the means to do so.

In 1877 he wrote to the BMS urging them to begin work in Central Africa by planting stations at hundred-mile intervals along the Congo. He not only suggested the plan but offered them money to initiate it. He proposed building a steamer which would carry missionaries up to Nyangwe, the village on the Lualaba river where Livingstone

witnessed the atrocities of the slave trade, and pledged £1,000 to do this.

Thousands of miles away, two young men in the Cameroons were waiting to implement his plan. George Grenfell and Thomas Comber had long wished to penetrate into

*Etching of Congo (taken from photograph from same period)*



Central Africa. How must they have felt when the Society instructed them to reconnoitre the lower Congo area with the intention of establishing a mission there, if at all possible? Small wonder that Comber threw his hat into the air on hearing the news! Three weeks later they were sailing up the mouth of the Congo.

In 1880 Arthington offered to buy a steam-launch for the Congo river so as to help establish Christian work in many places inland. With a pioneer's instinct he saw the possibilities which rivers offered for mis-



*Rev and Mrs E G Harrison outside Bolobo House 100 years ago*

*Continued from previous page*

sionary expansion in the same way Paul had viewed the Roman roads of his time. Grenfell came back to England to superintend the vessel's construction and shipment to Africa. One of the epic sagas of missionary history was to follow. Doke, the engineer who was to have built the boat, died and Grenfell was forced to supplement his theological training with a large dose of practical skill to put it together. In 1884 it was launched. God's plan, and Arthington's was under way.

The boat was expensive to run. In its first seven years it saw 27 Congo missionaries die, mainly from fever. Yet others came in their place, eager to be baptized for the dead and the vessel wound its way up and down the river carrying the pioneers of the Cross and servicing the stations in which their work was centred. The 1880's was a decade of beginnings. Arthington, later to become Kinshasa, was founded in 1882. By 1895 missionaries had reached Stanleyville and established a station at Yakusu. Later a head station at Wayika was begun, within reach of Nyangwe. Missionaries had almost accomplished Arthington's plan. Half of Central Africa had been reached.

Other people, of course, gave generously to the planting of stations along the river. Many hands maintained the boat and many missionaries served on land. Yet Arthington

deserves a special mention for the vision, initiative and generosity he showed. Would the Mission have flourished without his participation? It seems as though he was brought to the Kingdom for such a time.

His open-handedness continued after his death. Life-time giving barely ate into his capital so that, at his death, he left a fortune of almost a £1 million. The vast majority of this was given to missions. Probably no larger single gift has ever been given to God's work overseas by an Englishman. Of this sum the BMS received nearly £½ million.

This enabled it to begin, maintain and expand work in Africa, China and India. Other missions, particularly the LMS profited from his generosity, but we have special cause to thank God for the miser of Headingley.

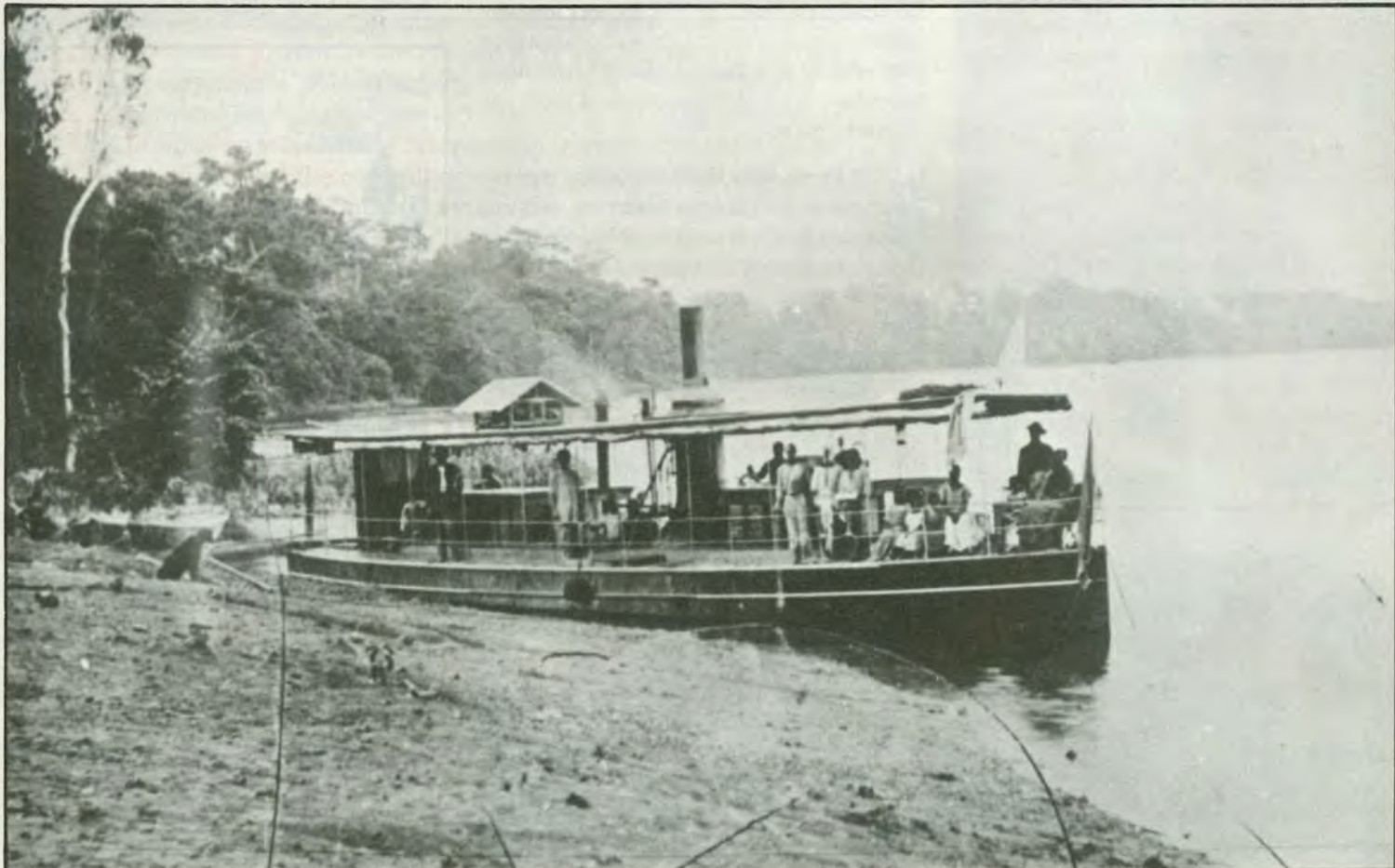
A big wooden house still stands at Bolobo as a silent testimony to him. His money enabled it to be built and it has housed many generations of missionaries. There are also living memorials to his work in the people who came to know Jesus as a result of their work. Some of their descendants are now church leaders ready to lead God's people into the second century of their history. Perhaps black Grenfells will emerge from them to pioneer regions as yet unevangelized.

Not many people in our churches know much about Arthington. No doubt, like Carey, he would have preferred them to remember and speak rather of his Saviour, but it is right for us to honour him. His self-sacrifice brought about a great harvest. Who follows in his train?

*Congo Pioneer George Grenfell*



*'The Peace' built in 1882*





same way as do the local people. I do not live in a village, I am not dependent on growing my own food, I am not under the authority of a chief – I can study their culture, but I cannot share it.

For effective communication, some understanding of that culture is important, as the meaning of words can often depend on the context in which they are used. Some things may become meaningless outside of their cultural context. What does the 'good shepherd' mean to people who have no sheep, and whose domestic animals – pigs and goats – are simply left to run loose?

More problematically, some things may take on a very different meaning in another culture. One missionary had problems when he talked of Jesus who 'stands at the door and knocks', because, in a culture where it was normal to call your name when approaching a house, the only people known to knock on a door were burglars seeking to find out if anyone in the house was awake before breaking in.

Psychology presents the most difficult barrier to overcome. The language and culture of a people can, at least, be observed and understood, but the way people think, the way they reason and react, is not easily studied. Even if I spoke an African language fluently, and lived exactly as Africans do, I would not be African. The way I think is determined by 25 centuries of European history and philosophy, which an African does not share. From occasional incidents I have realized that what an African understands by my words is not always exactly what I understand by them. There are slight, but significant, differences in what is understood by such words as forgiveness, or wisdom.

It will never be easy for a foreign missionary to be a good communicator of the Christian faith. Those who remain in Africa for longer periods will be more effective in that work, but never as effective as an African Christian, proclaiming his faith in his own language, to his own people. For him there are no barriers: for me there are some very large ones.

## WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

**'It will never be easy for a foreign missionary to be a good communicator' believes Chris Spencer.**

SERVING in Zaire, it took me several years to get a good working knowledge of a local language. I then felt that I was able to communicate my understanding of the Christian faith to the local people.

It needed several more years for me to become aware that knowledge of the language was not enough to ensure good communications. I have come to recognize that an understanding of both the culture and the psychology of the local people is often more important than a grasp of their language. Although I may be using the same words as the Africans around me, it is difficult to be certain that my understanding of those words is exactly the same as theirs.

Language, culture and psychology form three barriers to communication: barriers which need to be overcome by missionaries who seek to proclaim, and explain, the Christian faith. For a new missionary, language is the most obvious of these, but it is also the easiest to overcome. While some may find learning a foreign language more difficult than do others, a certain amount of patient study will produce a reasonable grasp of the language: most Africans are very gracious towards those who try and learn their languages, and also very tolerant of the mistakes that will be made.

Culture, however, cannot be learnt in the same way as a language can. As a missionary I do not live in exactly the

# NEW MISSIONARY CANDIDATES

**PEOPLE** of all ages are hearing God's call and are offering to serve overseas with the Baptist Missionary Society. At the November General Committee ten new missionaries were accepted for overseas service and two former missionaries were re-accepted for service in Zaire.

Personnel Secretary, Joan Maple, is continuing to receive many enquiries about missionary work, and the Candidate Board has a full programme ahead of it in the interviewing of candidates.

However, there is still a great need for more ministerial couples. This concerns **Michael Hambleton**, minister of Kings Langley Baptist Church, one of those accepted by the BMS General Committee.

'We're going to be on our own when we go to Sri Lanka next year,' he said. 'More ministers are needed for Sri Lanka, but for the moment it looks as though we are going to be the only BMS folk on the island.'

The two ministerial couples working in Sri Lanka at the moment will have returned to Britain by the time Michael and his wife Stella go there.

Twelve months ago Michael spent a period of sabbatical study in Sri Lanka and India.

'I'd been trying to persuade him to take a sabbatical for some time,' said Peter Clark, church secretary at Kings Langley. 'But when he returned home he felt convinced he should work in Asia for a longer period of time.'

Michael, aged 52, confesses that he had begun to explore the possibility of work overseas before his sabbatical.

'That's why I chose Sri Lanka as one of the places to visit,' he said. 'Stella and I actually made the decision to offer ourselves to the BMS at Easter.'

'In Sri Lanka we shall obviously have a concern for peace and justice but we are initially hoping to get involved in the work of the Leadership Training Institute in Colombo. Stella and I see it very much as a joint job, her educational skills combining with my theological training.'

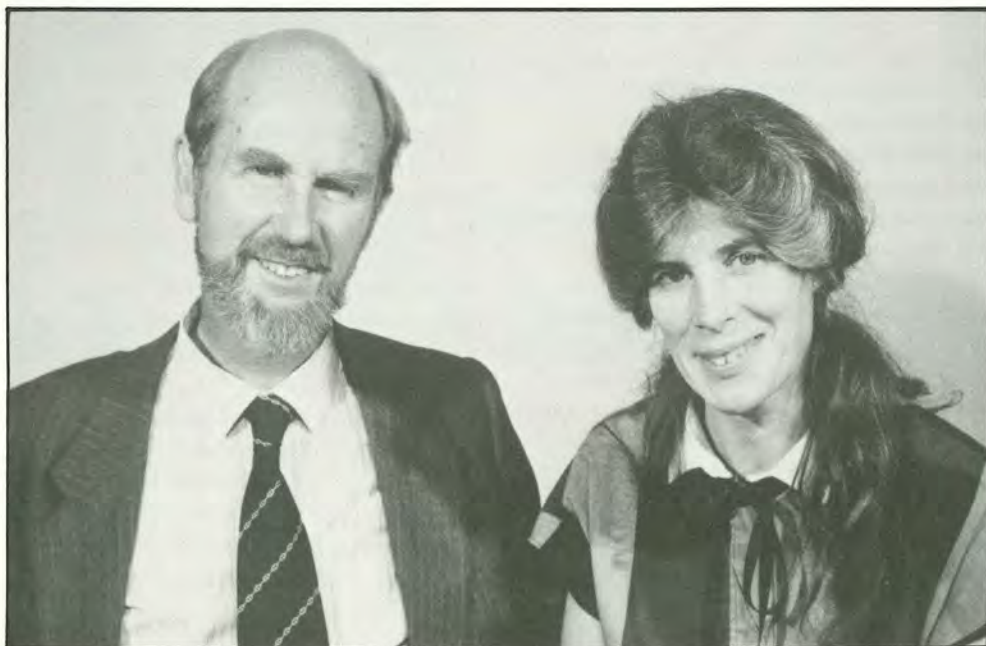
Michael Hambleton has been at Kings Langley since 1972.

**MARGARET DICK**, 36, is a Scot who lives and works in Newbury. Before training as a nurse, she has worked as a

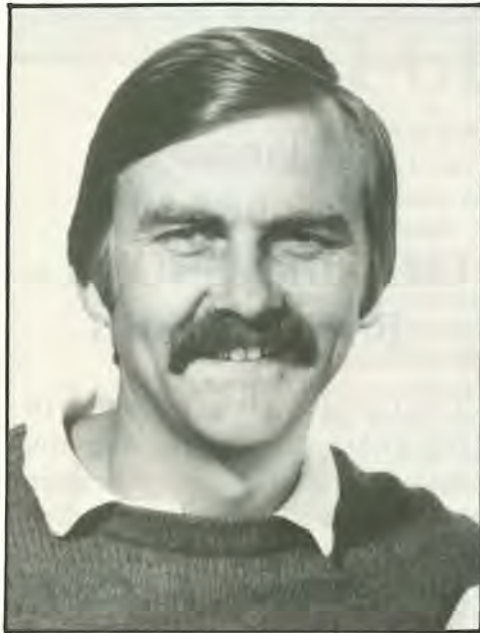


shop assistant, office worker and shoe bench worker. Since 1981 she has been Senior Matron of the Mary Hoare Grammar School for the Deaf.

It was whilst attending the baptismal service of one of the pupils from the school that she felt Christ's claims upon



# John Passmore



'So you're a BAM now!'

'No, BMS,' John Passmore replied.

'Yes you are, you're a BAM – it means: Been a Missionary.'

John had been explaining that after ten years working in Bangladesh he was now home in Britain and had been appointed by the General Committee as BMS Promotion Secretary with responsibility for youth work.

'I shan't stop being a missionary just because I'm no longer working overseas,' he said. 'Every Christian, wherever based, is meant to be a missionary.'

John was born in Okehampton, Devon and after becoming a Christian in 1967 he was baptized and joined the Okehampton Baptist Church. It was while he was training for the ministry at Spurgeon's College that John felt called to serve overseas. He and his wife Nan were appointed as BMS missionaries in 1976.

They served in Dinajpur in the north of Bangladesh, where John worked amongst the village churches and was also involved in an agricultural project to provide seeds for village farmers. They also lived for one year in Ruhea. For three years John was pastoral superintendent of the Khulna district in the south of the country, then in 1984 they moved to Dhaka, where John helped with the administration of the Social, Education, and Development work of the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha. He was also Pastoral Superintendent of the Dhaka Union and has served as assistant to the Rev Poritosh Biswas, General Secretary of the BBS.

Nan Passmore is a trained teacher and she helped at the Christian Primary Education Centre in Dhaka where their two children went to school.

John will begin his work at Mission House in February.

her life. She was baptized at Newbury Baptist Church in 1985.

She has been accepted for service in Nepal as a houseparent.

**TIM READ** is a self-employed builder. He has already done a short term of

service with the BMS in Zaire and he will be returning to Zaire, this time with his wife Mary and their family.

His work will be as a builder-mechanic. They are members of the Brighton Road Baptist Church, Horsham.

## ARE YOU MAKING THE FRENCH CONNEXION?

Many Junior Churches and Sunday Schools are joining in with the 1987 BMS Young People's Project the **French Connexion**. Is your church involved? The main aim is to help young Baptists in Britain learn more about French life, and the contribution of French Baptists in France. The Target of £18,000 will help equip and settle two pastoral couples who, together with French Baptists, will be involved in evangelism and outreach.

With most French people not knowing Jesus Christ as Lord, France is seen both by Catholics and Protestants as a 'mission field'. Will your church help make the **French Connexion**? A pack of activities, discussion starters, games, recipes, songs and much more is available for your use – and is free! A slide set, complete with taped commentary, is also ready for you. Book the slide set from Mission House, and write in for your free pack today!



The remaining missionary candidates will be featured in next month's 'Herald'

# • PRAYER CALL •

## 10-16 January PRAYER FOR ASIA

CHRISTIANS in Asia are a small minority within communities dominated by Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, although in many areas the Church is growing rapidly and in north-east India especially it is very strong numerically. However there are very strong pressures working on the church, but generally Christians are accepting the challenge to share their faith in Christ.

In Sri Lanka the church sees its ministry as that of working for reconciliation between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities.

In Nepal evangelism is forbidden, but the church still grows. In India the church is achieving a unity from which we can learn. In Bangladesh the church feels small amongst the Muslim majority. In China there are more Christians than ever before.

Our BMS Overseas Representative in Asia is Neil McVicar. He and his wife Marjorie travel frequently throughout India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and elsewhere. Neil retires later this year and will be succeeded by Joy Knapman.

## 17-23 January BRAZIL

140 MILLION people live in Brazil. It is the fifth largest country in the world, full of life and urgency. It has a great deal of potential, but at the present time is facing considerable problems not the least being its large debt to international bankers and high inflation. The people are open to the Gospel and the churches are grasping many of the opportunities in radio, television and by personal witness, to share the Gospel.

The Baptist churches in Brazil see mission as essential. There is a strong Home Mission Board, led by Oliveira de

Araujo, with 300 'home' missionaries working throughout the country.

Brazilian Baptists have invited British Baptists, through the BMS, to share in this work. At the moment new missionaries, Christopher and Marion Collicts, Michael and Jean Gardiner and Iain and Anne Walker are engaged in language study and orientation. To care for BMS missionary children going to school in Sao Paulo, there is a hostel where John and Valerie Furmage are hostel parents.

## 24-30 January CHURCH WORK IN ANGOLA

IN SPITE of, or even because of, the many problems affecting Angola, the Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola continues to grow. New congregations are being formed in the north and in Luanda. Church buildings are often overflowing even before they have been completed.

There is a real hunger for the Gospel in the country and IEBA is concerned to take every opportunity of reaching out with the good news both in word and in deed.

General Secretary of IEBA is Alvaro Rodrigues. The President is Joao Makondekwa, who also works as Secretary of the Bible Society in Angola. Joao's other responsibility is as president of the All Africa Fellowship, which meets for its second assembly in Lilonge, Malawi, this week.

IEBA women's work is looked after by Ida Sal Francisco. She is encouraging social work, literacy work and organising many seminars.

## 31 January- 6 February CHANDRAGHONA – BANGLADESH

THE Christian Hospital, where Dr Chowdhury is Medical Superintendent, and the Christian Leprosy Centre, where Dr Ken Hatano is Doctor in Charge, at Chandraghona are bringing medical care and surgical treatment to both the people of the plains and the tribal people from Chittagong Hill Tracts. Outreach is made through the Community Health Project and the Leprosy Clinics.

The BMS personnel at Chandraghona, whom we are remembering this week, are Dr Bob and Mary Hart – Bob is Deputy Medical Superintendent; David and Janet Kerrigan – David is Hospital Treasurer; and Alison Cottam – Alison is newly arrived in Bangladesh and is doing language study in Dhaka at the moment. They work alongside highly qualified Bangladeshi doctors and nurses and workers from the Leprosy Mission.

The two hospitals are part of the caring work of the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha and so part of its witness to the caring love of Jesus Christ.



# • P R A Y E R C A L L •

## ANTI-GENESIS

IN the end, man destroyed the place called earth.

The earth had been lovely  
until man's spirit moved over the face of the earth  
and destroyed all things.

And the man said: let there be darkness.  
And the darkness seemed good to them,  
and they named it Security;  
and divided themselves into races and religions and classes.  
And there was no morning or evening  
the seventh day before that final day.

And man said: let there be a strong government  
to reign over us in our darkness;  
let there be armies that kill one another,  
let there be order and efficiency in our darkness,  
let us hunt down and destroy all those who tell us the truth,  
here and unto the ends of the earth,  
because we prefer our darkness.  
And there was no evening or morning  
the sixth day before that final day.

And man said: let there be missiles and bombs to  
kill quickly and easily.  
And there were gas chambers and ovens  
to finish the task more efficiently  
the fifth day before that final day.

And man said: let there be drugs  
and every kind of escape  
because we must avoid the consistent nagging of REALITY  
which gets in the way of our comfort,  
the fourth day before that final day.

And man said: let there be divisions among nations  
so that we may know who our enemies are,  
the third day before that final day.

And finally man said:  
let us make god in our own image and likeness,  
not some other god who will compete with us,  
a god who thinks as we think  
who hates what we hate  
and who kills just as we kill,  
the second day before that final day.

On that last day  
there was a great explosion  
on the face of the earth;  
fire purged that once beautiful world,  
and there was silence.

And the Lord God saw  
what man had done  
and in the silence  
that enveloped earth's smoking ruins  
God wept.

(Iglesias, Mexico City)  
reprinted from Latinamerica Press.

## FOR ASIA

*Lord,*

It's hard

to pray for those we do not know,  
to feel for those we've never seen,  
to care for those whose voice we've  
never heard.

*Lord*

Half the world's people lives in Asia  
and we are neighbours to them  
these statistical people,  
these anonymous people,  
these curves on the graph  
of the world's this and that  
and you tell us we must not pass by  
on the other side.

*Lord*

to you no one is lost in the crowd,  
you recognize the features of each  
face  
you respond to the sound of each  
one's  
voice.

*Lord,*

bring alive for us the newsprint photo  
of the victim of a flood,  
help us to hear the person in the  
anguished sound-track cry of  
television news,  
give meaning to the figures of the  
annual aid report,  
bring Asia close,  
. . . so close  
that we may never even think  
of passing  
on the other side.

# 'Thank you for being with us in our distress.'

by Frank Mardell

'The flood relief plan was drawn up and executed completely by the church,' says Frank Mardell writing from Bangladesh.

'The floods yesterday around Thakurgaon were terrible; houses, roads, crops; everything gone. PS There's a bridge down, north of Kobirajhat and no trains at present, so please don't send Jean Pullin in a hurry: I'll be in touch. Regards, Suzanne Roberts.'

These were the first words we received, indicating the power of the flood water sweeping over the border from India into northern Bangladesh. Eventually it was the south of the country that suffered most and the water, in October, was still well above normal: three months of devastation.

In the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha headquarters in Dhaka, the word came through to Manindra Baroi, Director of Social, Health and Economic Development (SHED) Board. In a few days he formulated a plan of relief assistance in phases and sent telexes off to donor bodies, which included BMS, in the Western countries.

## DEVASTATION

The response of some was swift and so he turned his attention to detailed survey and planning work to enable the work to be done as quickly and as fairly as

possible. His own staff began to come back with stories of the misery and devastation and bringing requests for assistance with food, accommodation, medicine and new seedlings for replanting crops destroyed by the flood water.

The BBS Working Committee met and set up district teams to supervise and carry out the first phase of the plan, which concerned food, health and minimum shelter provision. Then the BBS President, Mr Sushil Adhikari and Manindra Baroi set off themselves to tour the worst affected areas in the south. (By that time Dinajpur had had quite a lot of help and the situation had stabilized.)

## SWIFT PLANS

They originally decided to go for two days but what they saw led them to tour round in their kerosene engine boat for four days. They found many, many groups huddled together in churches, schools and mosques; on the roofs of buildings, with their children and animals; on the higher parts of the mud roads and in our clinics. In some places, Moslems, Hindus and Christians were sheltering together, sharing what they had. The reaction of the people almost everywhere was the same: 'Yes, we need help but thank you for coming to be with us in our distress.'

Perhaps the worst affected area was Gopalganj Madaripur district where Martin Adhikari is Pastoral Superintendent. He and his wife Shusree share a large building with Michael and Regine Kestner of the Liebenzeller Mission. Michael had been running a children's meeting and had constructed a tarpaulin tabernacle on the roof for it. Suddenly it became the home for many Hindu families whose homes had gone under water. Then the church went under water and so the church services were able to be held up there. There were more people living in a downstairs area of the house.

At Chowkshing there is a large church of 250 members.

When we arrived we saw their houses like tiny islands in an ocean. We went to the church and found 400 people sheltering there. They asked for fishing nets and boats so that they could earn some money from fish while there is no rice. We were able to allocate 2,200 Taka (about £45) to them, mainly for goods.

## CHURCH UNDER WATER

Overall, in the district Martin was able to give the equivalent of £1 per family member for which they were very grateful. He laughed when he told of one family who had nine girls and two boys.

'We want to encourage family planning but in those circumstances I could not take a tough line.'

In Barisal District, Paul Solil Bis is the Superintendent. He told me of Rahuthpara where a government dike had broken along a 300 yard front. The water is still pouring through it and water is standing 10" deep in the houses. Actually the worst affected are Anglican and Hindu families. Everywhere the attitude to the help given was humble gratitude.

They too want to earn money by fishing and they have been asking, 'Why has this been happening to us?' Paul hopes that good may yet come out of this evil for the churches.

He went to Bissakandi in the far south by punt boat and found a miserable situation. The church building was very small and could offer them no better conditions. The land was covered over with water hyacinth, which will have to be cleared before any crop can be sown. Here they will get a 'food for work' scheme to clear up the mess. He is very grateful that in all the distribution there has been no trouble and no outbreaks of jealousy or protests, as can so easily happen.

### NO OUTBREAKS

I asked Hirolal Baroi, Manindra's assistant in SHED Board about the work in Dinajpur. Here the flood water has gone down and rehabilitation work is now possible. He, Sorbananda Roy the Superintendent, Toroni Das the District Vice-President and Asru Singh a leading pastor, toured the area.

He told of their visit to Takahara (which means 'lost money'). Here the houses are built of mud. Of the three *baris* or family settlements, two had been totally and one partially destroyed by the flood water on 15 August. With their allocation the people were able to buy food and rice seedlings to replant their fields and they were very grateful. They cannot start rebuilding their houses till the drier winter season comes; and they will need more help.

In Laxshampur the church compound was destroyed but the brick-built church survived well. The pond which is used to rear fish needs complete re-excavation.

The flood wave washed the embankment back into the pond. Here the people had taken loans from local moneylenders at high interest to replant their fields. These men demand the money plus a sack of rice when the crop comes, which is crippling for these village farmers. With their allocations they were able to repay these loans.

Manindra Baroi told me that he is very grateful to BMS for their immediate grant of £3,000 and then a further grant of £7,000 for rehabilitation work. He is also thankful to God that the first phase has gone well. It marks another landmark in the progress of the Baptist Sangha. The relief plan was drawn up and executed completely by the church.

### LAST PHASE GOES WELL

They were aware from the beginning that it would be a difficult and even dangerous task. At Koligram there was a scare when it seemed that a gang of robbers was coming in boats to grab relief money but the danger passed. Yet they also knew that the needs of the people had to come first. The distribution will not have been perfect but it has been done faithfully.

Now comes the rehabilitation phase. It will need very careful planning, with differing needs in each district. SHED Board does not have the personnel to

supervise carefully all the rebuilding work that needs to be done. The Flood Relief Committee in Dhaka will need great wisdom to draw up workable plans to fit each situation.

Dinajpur needs mud houses and walls rebuilt. Southern districts need bamboo posts and bamboo walls to replace what has rotted. Some men have lost their life savings in the fish that swam away when the floods covered their ponds. Fruit trees have died when their roots rotted in the water and, of course, there is the huge loss of rice.

### NO REPORTS OF STARVATION

Praise God that there are no reports so far of deaths from starvation as there were in 1974, but there is still a long way to go till the next rice harvest.

Government distribution of food grains is much better than it was then. We need to pray for the Bangladesh Government and for the church as they seek to grapple with this disaster which is the worst in living memory, in the extent of it and the devastation which has been caused.

Pray that the church may receive blessing out of this affliction. May they be able to confess the truth of Isaiah 43:2 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overwhelm thee.'

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# EXPERTS GAUGE TELEVISION'S IMPACT ON LIVES OF LATIN AMERICAN POOR

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by John McCoy

**There's no running water;** the walls are fashioned from mats of woven straw and the door is nothing more than a blanket. But there on a battered table sits the family's prize possession: a television set.

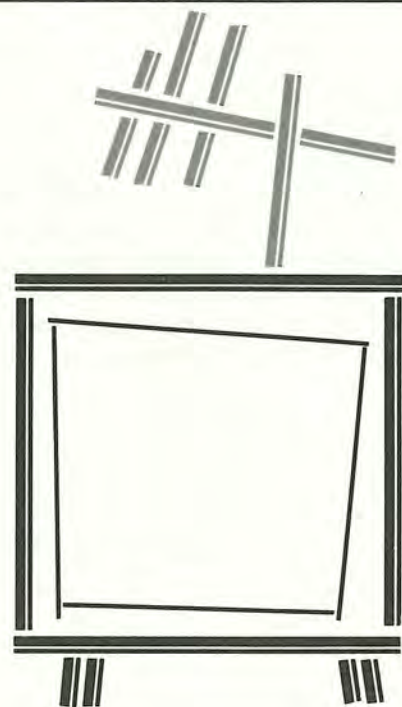
Purchased on time and powered by electricity pirated from an overhead cable, the television is on day and night. Someone is always home to protect it from thieves.

This scene, or one like it, is repeated all over Latin America. In even the humblest homes of Rio's *favelas*, Santiago's *poblaciones* or Lima's *pueblos jovenes*, people are watching television. Hours and hours of television.

From the top of his cement church in the Lima shantytown of Pamplona Alta, Tom Burns, a Maryknoll priest, can look out over hundreds of television antennae poking above unfinished shacks of tin, wood and brick.

'The first thing they get after the kerosene stove is a TV,' he says.

When families are unable to buy their own televisions, they often pay to watch someone else's. In rural villages in the Dominican Republic, for example, entrepreneurs prop their televisions in trees in the central plaza and charge viewers a small fee to watch soccer matches, baseball games and movies. Other entrepreneurs sell soft drinks and popcorn.



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## TV PROGRAMMING

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What are Latin Americans watching?

It depends. In Bolivia, where television is still in its infancy, 95 per cent of what's on air is imported. Much of it is canned US material, dubbed into Spanish: movies such as *Hotel* and *Jaws*, serials such as *Starsky & Hutch* and *The A-Team*, cartoon shows such as *Batman* and *GI Joe*.

In Columbia, on the other hand, more than half the programming is produced locally. The government, in consultation with a citizen's television council, controls the country's three networks. Though the state sells air time to private programmers, government control has permitted the airing of more commentary, cultural and musical shows.

The high foreign content of television, particularly the tendency to import US 'action' series, alarms some communication specialists.

Leopoldo Chiappo, a Peruvian psychologist, says many such programmes carry subliminal messages that undermine Latin American interests.

'This is so obvious, yet no (Latin) government is paying any attention,' Chiappo says. 'Our children are being made into alienated monsters – not to mention our teenagers and adults – who imitate the brute force of conniving conduct of characters such as Murdock, Hannibal or Mr T.'

'In these series, Indians, blacks and Latinos (not to mention women) are presented as idiots or bad guys; depending on the situation, they are either saved or destroyed by these blond champions of brutality.'

In recent years, however, especially in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Columbia and Venezuela, US 'action' series are being displaced by locally-produced *telenovas*, soap operas that have become increasingly sophisticated and provocative. Prime time spots, once monopolized by US fare, are now devoted to *telenovas*.

In fact, says Jesus Martin Barbero, a Columbian professor of communications, 'Today, it's not strange at all to see on US, European or Asian television various programmes that were made in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Columbia and Peru.'

In late 1985, for example, the Venezuelan soap opera *Cristal* had a higher audience share in Miami than the glittery, US blockbuster *Dynasty*.

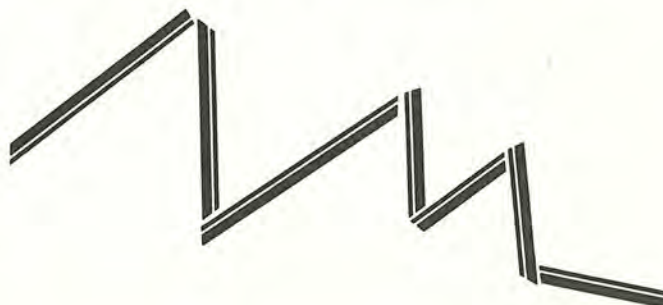
Latin America's biggest television industry is in Brazil, where the huge, privately-owned TV Globo produces more programmes than any other station in the world. It reaches virtually all Brazilian homes with television sets, and sells its programmes to more than 100 other countries, including China, the Soviet Union and East Germany.

TV Globo's most popular programme, *Roque Santeiro* enjoys a 90 per cent share of Brazil's television audience. Written by Dias Gomes, a playwright who calls himself a Marxist, the series does not shy away from controversial fare. Set in a small Brazilian town of the 1930's, *Roque Santeiro* dramatizes the unabashed abuse of power by the town's bosses. The parallels in contemporary Brazilian society are obvious.

But *telenovas* are devoid of social or political commentary. In Chile, where the military's control of the media prevents the entry of provocative programming, dreamy, romantic *telenovas* are still the most popular shows.

A survey conducted by a cultural investigation centre in Santiago found that 78 per cent of women living in urban shantytowns preferred the *telenova* to all other television programming.

Maria Elena Herмосilla, one of the investigators, recounts how one poor mother living in an arid *poblacion* in Concepcion threw open the window of her shack and said, 'What do you see here? Nothing but grey. So, with my television I put colour in my life. Would you criticize me for that?'



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## INFLUENCE ON DAILY LIVES

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Are Latins, who use TV to put colour in their lives, changed by what they see? Do violent 'action' series imported from the US contribute to violence? Does political analysis, packaged in the form of *telenovas*, lead to political action?

The answer is not clear. Some communication theorists argue that television viewers are passive couch potatoes who accept what they watch without further reflection. Others argue that television characters can be powerful role models who dictate fashion, styles of speech, social or anti-social behaviour.

'I don't believe either,' says Rafael Roncagliolo, a Lima-based communications expert. 'There are messages and there are messages.'

Nevertheless, alienating messages regularly hit their mark. A year ago, a group of teens in a Lima shantytown gathered for a talk on the steeply pyramidal Peruvian income structure. When asked where they fit into the pyramid, most responded without hesitation: 'We're middle class.'

Weekly consciousness-raising sessions have led some group members to discover their real situation. Eddy, once an inveterate TV addict, reflects back: 'I thought I lived in Maraflores (a wealthy residential area). I didn't even know who I was!'

# MISSIONTALK

## MISSIONTALK

### MISSIONTALK

#### MISSIONTALK

## ROOM FOR A GUEST – ABIDE WITH US!

***'Stop being afraid of strangers' says Jim Wilkie***

We stood at the bus-stop waiting. Soon we would meet them and between us, Kathleen and I, were asking ourselves over and over again – How will we manage? What are they like? Have we done the right thing? and wondering how could we make *them* welcome. The bus was late and we waited. Suddenly it appeared and in a few moments 'they' emerged. The letter from David Martin came quickly to mind – 'Room for a guest?' it asked.

Our response made after some thought and, I am sure, some prayer – was Yes! we had and we would make it available to Pastor and Mrs (Clenir) Manuel Xavier from Curitiba, Brazil.

Now they were here, and our meeting was a happy one. Introductions were easy and in a few moments doubts were dispelled. The barriers were down and we chatted easily as we walked to the car. Sure, our concern that our time together should present no problems was still at the back of our minds, but we were already beginning to feel that we had found something 'special'.

Having visitors to our home was not something new, indeed we had had many. The General Secretary of the BU of Great Britain, the Rev Bernard Green, had stayed a weekend with us, and there had been missionaries who were visiting Newport on Deputation. But never had we had someone from another country. Why? There was no answer to that.

But all that was changed, we were being hosts to these two young Brazilians and we were already feeling the warmth of their very infectious spirit of Christian love. By the time we reached our home in

Caldicot we were no longer strangers to one another. After giving thanks to the Lord for His Goodness to us we shared a meal together and had a rapturous time of fellowship.

The few days that followed can only be described as a 'wonderful experience' of Christian love at work. We visited the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagan's, Cardiff, where Xavier and Clenir took many photographs, we toured the Wye Valley, calling at Tintern. We had many hilarious moments as we 'tried' to learn their language – Portuguese – and they ours, although it is true that Clenir was already very proficient in English.

Xavier and Clenir were eager to attend our Church Prayer Meeting and shared with us their own personal experiences of the work of the Church in Curitiba, where Xavier had been Pastor until he had come to Britain for three years. He is now at Spurgeon's College in London.

We took them to Chepstow on the final day of the holiday – to catch the bus to London, and what a surprise the shoppers had, for, as the bus drew in, there we were, four people, arms around each other saying our farewells with a true Christian spirit of love in the Lord Jesus Christ, totally oblivious to all the stares and comments.

But, that was not the last, the bus was full, no seats available. The Bus Company were quick to make other arrangements, however. Another bus was diverted off the M4 Motorway on the West side of the Severn Bridge and we said our farewells again.

What is the point of all this, for there is one, of course? Why are we so reluctant to welcome into our homes strangers from

another country, Christians at that? These people, too, love the Lord Jesus Christ as we do. John in his epistle writes: 'Behold what manner of love the Father bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.' If that is so, then surely *all* who believe are related in Christ. Whatever our nationality, whatever our colour, yes, whatever our denomination, we are brothers and sisters, Christ died for all.

After the walk along the road to Emmaus, the two folk arrived at their home with the 'Stranger' and said 'abide with us'.

Kathleen and I offered a 'Room for Christ', but not without some thought, a few doubts and fears. Now we wonder why we were afraid. We enjoyed a wonderful fellowship with Xavier and Clenir, we learned a lot from each other, we shared in their experiences and they in ours. There is a common bond of love between us, and we believe a friendship that will live on. We will keep in touch when they have returned to Brazil, they are young, we are older, but it doesn't matter, our Saviour is the link.

Stop being afraid of strangers, hold out your hands in love, share fellowship with your foreign brothers and sisters. Christ died for them too, remember.

We hope and pray that you too will find a fellowship of joy as we have. We are looking forward to new visitors soon, and already another member of our fellowship here at Bethany, Caldicot has offered – a 'Room for a Guest'. There are others around the country who have done the same as we have. Why don't you?

# CASHING IN ON TALENTS

**MEMBERS of 55 member Swaythling Baptist Church in Southampton have been taking the parable of the talents to heart! After seeing the parable enacted in the church the congregation was challenged to put its own talents to work to raise money for BMS.**

Some ingenious schemes emerged. One member took orders for fresh cream

meringues which were then delivered to the doorsteps of her customers. Another bought a sack of potatoes from a farm and then resold them by the pound donating the profits. A great variety of home made foods and handicrafts were sold at a special coffee morning when a BMS slide tape was shown. Two young people in the church earned over £15 by washing cars and the final amount raised by the whole venture was over £100.

The church's missionary secretary said that she was very encouraged by the way the church had responded to the challenge. 'People really seemed to enjoy using their gifts and hobbies to good purpose' she said, 'and also it focused people's thoughts on BMS and helped to make them feel more involved in its work.'



Arthur Garman

IT'S hard to get excited about figures, balance sheets, percentage increases and shortfalls, but the General Committee of the BMS, as it looked at the estimates for the year, certainly felt that there was something to go back to the churches to shout about.

More missionaries in Nepal and Angola, new work and a missionary in El Salvador, and the prospect of workers going to the new areas of France and Thailand, were all reflected in the figures.

Reminding the committee that the estimates were about people committed to mission, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, Richard Kingston, said: 'These estimates anticipate missionary movement, the work of area representatives and committees, the work of the Society. The total cost of the work is in order to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that His Kingdom may be extended.'

Presenting the accounts the Treasurer, Arthur Garman, told the Committee that

## INCREASE IN GIVING NEEDED

the amount needed, £3,189,579, in order to engage in the planned work for the next twelve months, was an increase of only 0.8 per cent.

But we shall have to appeal to the churches for more than this,' he said. 'Last year we appealed for an increase in giving of ten per cent, but all the indications are that the giving is much less.

'Although the Churches are giving more, the giving is only 5.2 per cent up and I think we need to be worried. In 1982 the increase was 10.6 per cent, in 1984 8.4 per cent, in 1985 8.9 per cent, in 1986 7.5 per cent, and so far in 1987 5.2 per cent. We seem to be on a slippery slope downwards.'

Mr Garman felt that there was a danger that Baptist Churches would be attracted by the glossier, Geldof type appeals. 'Some say to me that they are giving to Third World causes. They fail to realise that the BMS is working in the Third World, with the under-privileged presenting the Gospel in all its wholeness, addressing the needs of people in body, mind and spirit.'

'But here is the difference – the BMS is supported by Baptist Churches and Baptist members and if these resources are diverted elsewhere, who else will support the BMS?

Mr Garman recommended that the Society ask the churches for a minimum increase in giving of eight per cent and this was accepted by the committee. One or two members of the committee talked about the Society being a faith mission in that it had already started out on the work of the new year in the way it believed God was calling it, without knowing if the money would be there.

Former missionaries spoke with gratitude about the way the BMS had cared for them. 'I didn't need to have to worry about money, but could get on with the work of a missionary, because the BMS looked after the financial side managing its funds in a responsible way.'

MISSIONTALK  
MISSIONTALK  
MISSIONTALK  
MISSIONTALK

# PERSON *to* PERSON CARE

NOT so long ago, the BMS sent a contribution to the Christian Hospital at Vellore in South India. It was specifically meant for the Poor Patients Fund.

'We have now used the money for supporting medical and surgical care for ten very poor patients in the hospital under our Person to Person programme,' writes Susan Koshy the Project Officer at the hospital.

'As always, we had several patients needing assistance and we chose ten deserving ones out of them. Some of them were able to contribute part of the bill, but some others needed to have their entire bill written off. Thank you for helping us to treat them.

'Here are some brief reports and some pictures. We hope the case histories will help the donors to understand the needs and experience their share in the care adequately.

## SELVAM

*Six-year-old Selvam is the youngest of the three children of a manual labourer couple from Kavalur, about 40 km from Vellore. The parents are not regularly employed and cannot hope to earn more than £20 in a month. The second child, a ten year old son, died recently.*

*Nearly one year ago Selvam fell down from a bullock cart and the cart ran over his hip. His right thigh bone was fractured and the unretbra ruptured. Surgery was undertaken to repair the damage and he was on catheter drainage for about eight months.*



*Later the catheter was removed, but he developed urinary infection and came to the hospital once again. An abscess was also noticed. He was operated on once again. Antibiotics helped to control the infection. He stayed on the ward for twelve days before being discharged.*

*His repeated hospitalization and treatment used up what little savings the family had. This time they were unable to make any contribution towards the cost of his care. It was your donations which helped us to care for this boy and we join with his grateful parents in thanking you.*

## RAJAN

*Fifty-year-old Rajan and his wife work in a sugar mill near home in Alankupam, about 50 km from Vellore. They are illiterate and earn the equivalent of 75p a day between themselves. They have four children, all daughters. The older two, aged 20 and 17, have been given away in marriage. The younger ones are studying in the local secondary school. The parents hope that the children will have a better future than themselves due to their education. They live in a rented mud hut and were content with their lot.*

*Rajan fell from a tree about 10 ft high. He was unconscious for a few minutes soon after the fall. When he came to he noticed weakness and tingling sensation of all the limbs. After waiting for two days he was brought to the neurosurgeon in Vellore. X-ray and other tests showed dislocation of the backbone. He was put on cervical traction immediately and the next day was taken up for surgery. After reducing the dislocation the vertebrae were fused together. A miinerva jacket was given to keep the fused spine in*







## GUNALAN

*This twelve-year-old boy is an only child. Naturally his parents have pinned all their hopes on to this school-goer. They themselves have had no schooling at all and the father works as an unskilled manual labourer.*

*This irregular occupation earns him £7 to £10 each month. The three of them survive on this meagre income. They live in a rented mud hut in Chengam, about 20 km from Vellore. Gunalan is a bright lad and tops his English medium class. Probably his parents' hopes are not misplaced, he looks as though he will fulfil their expectations.*

*Gunalar was brought to the Orthopaedic Clinic one day with a fracture of the right thigh bone. He fell down while playing in school and injured the leg three weeks earlier.*

*place. He was sent home after a couple of weeks for further recuperation.*

*Rajan's hospital expenses had to be completely underwritten. The couple were absolutely unprepared for this emergency. Their second daughter's marriage, earlier in the year, had exhausted their modest savings and in fact had reduced them to debts. Thanks to your generous donation, we could treat him free of charges. The grateful family joins us in thanking you.*

*Because of lack of funds he was taken to an indigenous practitioner first. But despite his treatment the leg did not heal. On the advice of some more enlightened neighbours*

*he was later brought to Vellore.*

*He was taken to the operating theatre and the fracture reduced and fixed with pins. His young bone should grow and unite without any complication.*

*The check X-ray taken before he left the ward showed good healing, but he will require further recuperation at home before the bone unites completely.*

*In spite of their poverty, the parents contributed about £30 towards Gunalan's hospital bill. This was a loan taken from the village money-lender and will take years to pay off. Thank you for providing the balance, which of course was a great relief to them.*



## GOVINDAMMAL

*Thirty-nine-year-old Govindammal is a mother of four children, three sons and a daughter. Her husband, who is the sole breadwinner of the family, is an unskilled labourer. Having not gone beyond elementary school and unskilled as he is, he cannot hope to get any better employment. He works casually and earns around £10 in a month. With all the children in school and Govindammal needing regular treatment things were far from easy for this family.*

*She was diagnosed to be suffering from Addison's disease in 1979. This disease is characterized by increased pigmentation and irregular*

*white patches on the skin and needs continuous medication, which is a big drain on the family's limited funds. She came to the hospital with acute exacerbation of the disease and was quickly treated appropriately.*

*However, during the course of treatment it was learnt that the crisis was precipitated by pulmonary tuberculosis. Therefore anti-TB treatment was also initiated. When the symptoms started subsiding she was discharged. Prior to this arrangements had been made for her to continue the treatment as an outpatient.*

*Since their home is only 10 km away from the hospital this should not be difficult. We are hoping that she would be able to persevere with the treatment, which a large number of our patients fail to do.*

*They were unable to make an contribution towards Govindammal's treatment expenses at Vellore. Thanks to your generous contribution we could underwrite her charges. Govindammal's picture is enclosed. No doubt she looks older than her 39 years. Perhaps due to the hardships of a life of poverty and disease.*



## What's happening in the church around the world?

### DISCRIMINATION

**The council of the Protestant Federation of France, which groups Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist and other groups, warned (27 September) against proposed changes in French law which could exclude from French citizenship non-citizen immigrants' children born in France.**

## STEPS TOWARDS CHURCH UNION

**AT its fourth meeting, held in New Delhi, the Union Negotiations Committee of the Church of North India and the Methodist Church in India agreed that MCI affirmation of the faith-and-order statements which led to the 1970 formation of the CNI would facilitate moves toward inter-communion and mutual recognition of ministries. That is an interim goal on the way towards uniting the two denominations.**

### BISHOP THREATENED

*San Salvador – Lutheran Bishop Medardo Ernesto Gomez Soto says he has been 'threatened many times' in recent years, 'but I think that the reason is only the work being developed in our church'. He said the most recent threats on his life came by phone twice at the end of last month. In a message to Jose Napoleon Duarte, El Salvador's president, Gunnar Staalsett, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, urged him to do 'all within your powers . . . to halt such threats, investigate their sources, and take the necessary administrative and legal actions.'*

### SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY

**THE Wigner Lower Primary School** in the Church of North India Diocese of Cuttack celebrated its 150th anniversary in December.

'We would like to assure the present members of staff and pupils at the school of our warmest good wishes and congratulations on reaching this important anniversary,' wrote Angus MacNeill on behalf of the BMS.

'From the Wigner Lower Primary School has emerged a number of important institutions such as the Buckley Girls' Hostel, The Buckley Girls' High School and the Thompson Women's Training Institute. It is reassuring to know that out of small beginnings, great achievements can be obtained.

'In the important work of education which is carried on at the school may there continue to be a clear understanding of the importance of learning and the need to build life on the secure foundation of God Himself.'

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and anonymous gifts. (To 26 October 1987.)

Legacies	£
Mrs. Dorothy M B Alexander	500.00
Mr R James Bending	100.00
Mrs Gwyneth M Griffiths	50.00
Margaret J Hellier	150.00
Mrs L C Hale	200.00
Mrs Esther Hugh	300.00
Mr R A Jarvis	13,827.88
Miss E R Newman	7,386.68
D O Pearson	50.00
Miss C L Pearcey	500.00
Mr Richard Sheppard	500.00
Mrs F Thorpe	100.00
C A Welch	11,100.00

## Bangladesh Relief Work

Anon: £10.00.

## Relief Work

JA: £21.00.

## Harvest Appeal

Anon: £5.00.

## General Work

Anon: £40.00; FAE Aberdeen: £15.00; Anon Durham: £20.00; Cymro: £75.00.

## MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

### Arrivals

Rev & Mrs S Christine on 21 November from Rondonopolis, Brazil.

### Departures

Rev N B McVicar on 8 November to Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Rev & Mrs C Spencer on 11 November to Mbanza Ngungu, Zaire.

Mrs M McVicar on 12 November to Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Miss S Headlam on 12 November to Chandraghona, Bangladesh.

### Births

On 22 October, in Rio Negro, to Rev J B & Mrs Dyer, a son, Joao Marcos (John Mark).

On 29 October, in Glasgow, to Mr & Mrs I Walker, a son, Callum Andrew.

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# NOTICES

## BREAK OUT!

### BMS Summer Holidays 1988

This year, the BMS is launching out in a different direction for its Summer Holiday Programme! Take the opportunity of joining in with one of three holidays below – and grapple with world church issues!

#### AMONG THE ROLLING HILLS – 11-17 July

Marvellous Malvern is the venue for this year's Family Holiday. Join with 50 others for six days of relaxation and stimulation at St Edward's Conference Centre.

COST £90.00 per person.

#### PHAB! – 23-30 July

Llandudno, Wales, is the location of a rewarding holiday for physically handicapped and able bodied people to share together. Many activities are planned – music, drama, sport, art and much more! If you are physically handicapped and between 15-25, or able-bodied and between 16-25, and would like to get stuck into PHAB, then write to: Geoff Evans, 41 Parklands Road, Fulwood, Preston PR2 4SJ, or phone him on 0772 863355.

COST £45.00 per person.

#### MESSING ABOUT ON THE RIVER – 16-23 July

Young People! Get the taste for canal life this summer. Two brightly decorated canal boats, a ten and twelve berth, will await your arrival. Where will they take you? Who knows? The narrow boats will journey from Hertfordshire for as far as you can make it! If you are between 16 and 25, live dangerously, and be a part of this exciting holiday.

COST £65.00 per person.

#### NEW LIFE IN THE NEW FOREST 13-25 August

The fabulous facilities of Avon Tyrrell are waiting for you in 1988!! Avon Tyrrell is an old country mansion standing in 43 acres of its own land, and bordering onto the New Forest. Here you can swim, sail, play tennis, badminton, rounders or do a host of other things. While you're here, John Rackley will lead you through an assault course on world mission today!

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