

MISSIONARY

HERALD

October 1988



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Editorial Comment

IT's hard to keep up with the disasters that are happening worldwide at the moment. Floods and famine in the Sudan; floods in Bangladesh; floods in El Salvador; and an earthquake in Nepal and North India. Each time we hear of a need linked with one of our partner churches or organisations we try to respond with adequate help from the BMS Relief Fund, but it can never be enough.

The tragedy of Bangladesh is that it is suffering, as we pointed out in August's *Herald*, from the cutting down of the trees in the Himalayas. Until that is remedied, it seems that Bangladesh will be having yearly floods on a disastrous scale. Can we keep it up, this concern for the needs of our brothers and sisters overseas?

At one time, in September, the telephone at Mission House seemed to be continually ringing. Churches and individuals were searching for news and wanting to know what they could do to help. How encouraging this is! Especially when some are suggesting that we are in danger of suffering from compassion fatigue. Perhaps that is why the General Secretary of the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha (Union) could cable us, describing the problems that country is facing, and then end by saying: 'Prayerful support requested.'

So praise God, Baptists seem not to be suffering from 'compassion fatigue', whatever that is. All the signs are that Baptist churches are still prepared to 'go the extra mile', to take time to pray and to link their prayers with sacrificial giving.

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY



FEATURES

OCTOBER 1988

- 199 SPEAKING FOR THE PEOPLE
Young El Salvador speaks out
- 201 STANDING WITH THE COMMUNITY
David Mee reflects on El Salvador
- 203 THE OLD MAN AND THE TOOTHBRUSH
an unlikely, but true, drama
- 204 ... IN SPIRITUAL SONGS
A growing church in Zaire
- 206 MISSIONTALK
- 208 POPULAR RELIGION
Religion and Culture in Peru
- 210 EYEOPENERS
- 212 PRAYER CALL
- 214 BOOK REVIEW
- 215 MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS, ETC

We share in the work of the Church in:

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

MISSIONARY HERALD
THE MAGAZINE OF
THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY
93/97 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA
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ISSN 0264-1372

© 1988 Baptist Missionary Society
Photoset and printed by
Stanley L Hunt (Printers) Ltd
Rushden, Northamptonshire

SPEAKING FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES



Baptist churches in El Salvador are playing a vital role in the cause of peace.

'We are not separate from what is going on in the country,' said Maria Josefa Hernandez (Josefita) when she visited Mission House in London.

'It is very important for young people to realise how important it is to be struggling for peace and justice, but not with weapons. The only armament we are using is the Word of God – the two-edged sword. We have a programme of education about peace based on Bible teaching,' she said.

'We want our young people to grow up in an atmosphere based on Biblical truths and where there is hope for the future.'

Josefita is Young People's President of the El Salvador Baptist Association. She came to Britain in July to attend the Baptist World Youth Conference in Glasgow.

'It was very interesting at the Conference to meet people from different countries and backgrounds. Those of us from Spanish speaking countries had several opportunities to get together.'

Speaking of the work among young people in El Salvador she said that the distinctions between age groups were not very marked.

'Young people and older people in our churches work together. It is important to be working as one united body.'

'The young people have started a project called the Centre for the Protection of Young People. It supports young people



Josefita

against military recruitment. Children of ten years of age are being forcibly taken out of schools and made to join the army. It is sad because such children have no childhood at all.

'First of all we get to know the legal situation because this forced recruitment is happening against the country's constitution. Anyone between the ages of 18 and 30 can join the army voluntarily, but the age limit is not being adhered to. Younger people are being press-ganged and they tend to be from the poorer families in the rural zones.'

'So we are speaking for people who cannot speak for themselves – speaking out for their human rights.'

'We also help by supporting those who have had to join up and are in the army now. Obviously they don't want to be in the army so we visit them and help them spiritually. Sometimes we give financial aid. We also provide companionship for parents who are now without their children.'

'We think this is a wonderful opportunity for young people – Christian and non-Christian – to get together to work for peace and justice.'

'Young people don't travel very much because of the forced recruitment to the army. Girls too find travel difficult'

'If someone comes to us from Britain they can teach us from all the Biblical knowledge they have. Whereas we can teach you how to live together and love each other. We can both learn.'

because there is always the danger of rape and anyway they are suffering because their boy friends are in the army.

'This means we can't often get together as Baptist young people. So we are training youth leaders so that they can work in their own churches.

'Each month we have workshops where we teach people in reading, basic health care, peace work as well as doing Bible study. We are using Bible study material prepared by the Mennonite Church. We are teaching people that they don't have to use weapons and kill each other. We are helping them to think in a different way.

Josefita said that Baptists in El Salvador are grateful for the support Baptists in Britain are giving.

'The Church in El Salvador is taking up the role of being peacemakers. It is very important that people from other countries can see the situation in El Salvador and help because they are Christians, because they feel something inside them to support and encourage them.

'We appreciate the new link we have with you through David Mee. We like it because we are supported by Christians in Britain in a practical way through someone we can see.

'David is working in a pastoral role and as a teacher of children in one of the most dangerous areas in the east of the country. He has got involved not only with the church but with the wider community of people living around the church.

'There are a lot of refugees in his area, people who have had to leave most of their possessions behind in the guerrilla areas.'

Josefita spoke about the priorities of the El Salvador Baptist Association.



Children in local orphanage

'The faith of the people of El Salvador is based on the fact that one day there will be freedom and our country will be at peace.

'As the country is going through a lot of changes at the moment the church wants to be involved in them. Obviously there are different kinds of churches. Some are in quite wealthy areas where the members have their own houses and cars. But out in the rural zones people just haven't got anything. The warring within the country means that they can't harvest so they've no food to eat.

'One of our main aims is to give people in the rural areas a full education, not just Biblical teaching, but dealing with health and literacy as well.

'This education is not just for children. Many young people have missed out on any type of education. In this we are working together with the other churches - the Mennonites, the Lutherans and the Episcopal church.

She spoke about the Nazareth church, just outside San Salvador, where she is a member.

'We have a membership of 77 people, but the church is big enough to hold 200. Our Sunday congregations are between 120 and 150 people.

'We visit the shanty areas where the poor are living. We help people to read and give out Christian literature. We also take basic food, like rice, to them.

'We have an orphanage linked with our church. The young people visit it regularly. The most important thing for the orphans is to show them love because they haven't got parents of their own. The children are happy when we go and give them big hugs and sing to them.

'There are about 100 orphans in the home ranging from two months old to about 20 years. Many of them have come in as refugees because their parents



Soldier? Ten years old!

'Most Baptist Churches in El Salvador are in rural areas, scattered widely over the country, both in government and guerrilla controlled areas. This makes communication very difficult. Sometimes telephone lines are cut, but sometimes people can actually get through to see the churches in person.'

have been killed. We have 25 official workers apart from the young people who go to help as baby-sitters and nurses.'

The women's meeting is one where the women seek to help each other.

'The married women with children teach the younger women how to manage a home and how to cook. They give sex education, not so much family planning, but more like sharing their own experiences so that the younger women will know what to expect. There is, of course, Bible teaching as well.'

The men's meeting is also involved in the community.

'They go to people whose houses have been destroyed. They visit the sick. They make contact with refugees and give help and comfort.

'Once a week the families of the church meet together. We share our problems and those things we are pleased about and we pray together. It's very good because we get to know each other. As well as praying for ourselves, we pray for the Christians of El Salvador and for Christians all over the world. Every day we pray for peace in our own lives.

'At our Sunday family service we sing a lot. Many of our hymns are based on peace because it is right to have your own internal peace first and peace is important in the country. In the evening we have an evangelistic meeting to which people can invite their friends.

'Thank you for the opportunity to talk about El Salvador. We would like you in Britain to know that in the Church in El Salvador we are working as a united body, young and old together and across the denominations, for peace and justice in the country. The faith of the Christian people in El Salvador is based on the fact that one day there will be freedom and it will be a peaceful country.

'The El Salvador Baptist Association has about 7,000 baptised members and perhaps a total worshipping community of 10,000.'

STANDING WITH THE COMMUNITY

David Mee has recently spent two weeks at the Seminary in Santa Ana at the invitation of the El Salvador Baptist Association.

'It was very good to be there and to mix with the students and some pastors who joined us,' David says.

'That two weeks has made me feel there is a tremendous hope for the Baptist Churches here, seeing such committed, and realistically so, young pastors. They have a very impressive grasp of the Bible, the reality of the Central American situation, and in very patient and effective ways they are helping the churches to respond to the challenges and demands of their context.

'It's very refreshing to hear people taking the local, national and international situation into consideration when trying to discover what might be an appropriate way of living and working with the Gospel in the churches here. It is so different from some of our British churches which often seem unable, or unwilling, to look beyond their own gutters and leaking roofs, yet without the excuse of overwhelming pressure from US cable evangelists or military threats which have turned many of these churches into other-worldly centres.'

David Mee is now based in the east of El Salvador.

'A group of Baptists were displaced five years ago from their homes in Nuevo Eden de San Juan in the province of San Miguel. They moved across the Rio Lempa and some stayed just on this side of the river, building homes from mud and sticks, planting what they could in a very dry scrubland and fishing.

'A smaller group moved even further away, one and a half hours' drive down a dirt road to the capital of Cabanas province, Sensuntepeque. It's here I am to live, at least for now, to develop a relationship with the group here.

'The community in the town numbers about 20, over half are children and



David Mee

they meet together in a house on the edge of the town. The worship is frequently interrupted either by the chickens that wander through or the helicopters that drown us out from above.

'Sensuntepeque will get most of my time at the moment because it's not easy to get to Nigueresque without private transport and since it's in a kind of no-man's land between areas held by the two armies it's not wise to wander about on my own there.

'So I'm working with a small group of a handful of adults and more than a handful of children.

'We've been looking at the story of John the Baptist and acted it out a bit. It is good to be with a group of people who refuse to sit back and listen to sermons, but are more than willing to get stuck in themselves. Very quickly they reidentified the various emperors and governors in the story as present-day political figures.

'John became an El Salvador country dweller who was chosen to do his job of prophecy because he was able to hear God and to understand what was going on. Unlike the other figures he had nothing to lose and so was open to new possibilities.

'More revealing were the comments on John's words to the tax collectors, the soldiers and those who had more than their fair share of the world's goods. The congregation spoke his words for him long before we wondered what John was recorded as having said.

'These people face real issues and expect their Bible to address those issues in real ways. Unequal shares of resources, robbery and fraud by public servants and abuses of power were, for them, all addressed in the story of John the Baptist. And in Jesus' baptism it was easy to see him wanting to stand with those who were looking for changes.'

'Since this community is involved in some fledgling discussion about bringing street lighting and a sewage system to their corner of the town, it was important to know that their faith encourages them to look for and be committed to such moves towards community development.'

'It was no surprise to them whatsoever to recognise that the word of prophecy came from outside the centres of wealth and power, from the desert, the margins and forgotten places. For them that means that they expect to hear it in Sensuntepeque in the poorest corners.'

'When I asked what they understood as "Good News" for them they told me

that being able to study the Bible together and discover themselves in it, knowing that they have, so far, survived a war which in the last eight years has killed close to 70,000 people and left many more refugees in foreign lands; that they have houses and food and as displaced people that's no small thing; that in the presence of their God they are not alone, forgotten or uncared for, and that in all of that there are signs of community growth as together they are working to transform themselves and their neighbourhood into something new and better; that, they said, is good news.'

On the subject of prayer, David Mee says he has been reading Charles Elliot's *Praying the Kingdom*.

'It's one of the most helpful and formative books I've read on prayer. If I knew that BMS supporters were being encouraged to pray for us in that way I'd feel it was far less of an individualistic effort on my behalf, but much more of a committed response to the people I'm here for.'

House used as church at Sensuntepeque



David Mee out and about

'I am not here just to see if I can survive in a difficult situation, but, in some way, to stand with the community here who are living daily the difficulties of modern Central America.'

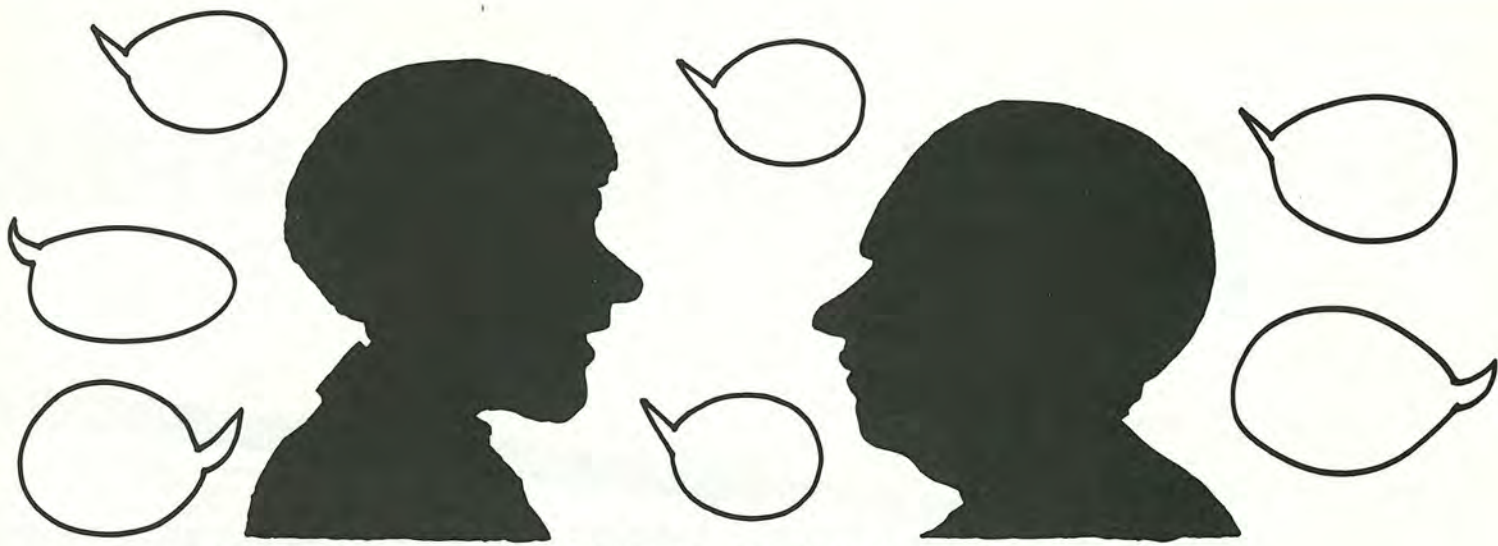
'If I ask for prayer for anyone, it's for them first, for the people themselves and for the seeds of hope they are planting and guarding, often at great cost.'

'Then for those who are trying in all kinds of unpleasant ways to destroy those signs of change and moves towards a more just society; for those who, in far-off centres of power, either don't understand or don't care what they are doing to the very people who provide their bread and butter.'

'Then for those in Britain who have such influence — or could have if only they would recognise more fully their responsibility and commitment as members of the same Body of Christ that's struggling here to bring the Kingdom into being — that they may understand their role and find ways of responding to it.'

'Then, last of all, prayers for one single, British missionary who finds himself in the middle of a very seminal situation surrounded by genuine and unspectacular saints who know what being faithful and hospitable is all about.'





THE OLD MAN AND HIS TOOTHBRUSH – an improbable, but true, case

Pastor: The deacons from your village have suggested that you should be put out of church membership. Why is that?

Old man: Well, it's because of my toothbrush.

P. Sorry! Did you say 'toothbrush'?

O. Yes.

P. Why would they want to put you out of the church because of a toothbrush?

O. Because my son turned it into a fetish.

P. This really isn't very clear. Let's go back to the beginning. What sort of toothbrush are we talking about?

O. Oh, it's not a real toothbrush, just a chewed twig for scrubbing teeth.

P. Just an ordinary twig?

O. No, it came from a special bush. Everyone knows that twigs from that sort of bush make good toothbrushes, and keep teeth whiter.

P. This isn't a dental commercial, thank you. Now, what did your son do with that twig?

O. He made it into a fetish.

P. What kind of fetish?

O. A necklace. He cut the twig into small pieces and threaded them on to a string.

P. Why would he want to use a toothbrush for that?

O. Everyone knows that the wood of that bush makes a very good fetish. It protects you from evil spirits.

P. Did you use the fetish?

O. No, I'm a Christian.

P. Did you give your son permission to use the toothbrush?

O. No. I didn't even know he had got it. I think he must have taken it while I was out.

P. Does he live with you?

O. He's over thirty, married, and has his own home in the village.

P. Has he been put out of the church as well?

O. He isn't a Christian.

P. Why do the deacons want to put you out of the church?

O. My son told them he got the fetish from me.

P. Did he?

O. I suppose so – it was mine, and he got it from my house. But when I had it, it wasn't a fetish, just a toothbrush.

P. Another time, when you want a toothbrush, try and find a twig that doesn't have magical powers as well.

SPEAKING TO EACH OTHER

When a recent visitor to Zaire told me that he had visited the CBFZ congregation at Matadi I was pleased to hear that they now had the roof on their building. A year previously, when, at Pastor Zinu's invitation, I had preached at their annual Thanksgiving Service, the walls were barely completed and there were no windows, doors or roof.

At that time the unfinished preaching platform had, at least, a temporary cover of rush mats, whereas the congregation protected themselves from the fierce rays of the tropical sun with the aid of umbrellas. The few, rough, wooden benches had soon filled, and as others arrived they found themselves a cement brick to sit on, or stretched a plank between two bricks. People passing by had no difficulty hearing the singing and the Gospel message that was preached, for it was virtually an open-air service in that street of simple houses, closely packed on the Matadi hillside.

One of the choirs from Kinshasa, the Jeunes Joyeux (Joyous Youth), with a desire to encourage the Christians at Matadi in song, had travelled with me. As they sang to electric guitars, it was necessary to pass a lead to the house next door and 'borrow' electricity. Their rhythmic songs really had the women dancing down the aisles to place their special offerings in the large basket provided. During a temporary cut in the electricity supply one of the church's own choirs took over. There proved to be time, in fact, for every choir present to sing, for the offering took a good three-quarters of an hour, as different groups came forward in turn.

A graduate from the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Kinshasa, Pastor Zinu was only in his second year of ministry, yet there were already signs of God's blessing. His presence had encouraged other pastors in Matadi, and he was getting the opportunity to preach on local radio. The little CBFZ congregation had grown, both in numbers and confidence.

Farewell photo of Pastor Zinu (in white shirt) and the Jeunes Joyeux



The Jeunes Joyeux in full song



The congregation from the preaching platform

IN . . . SPIRITUAL SONGS

by Owen Clark

The Women's Choir led by the conductor's son



Suspension bridge at Matadi



Pioneer's grave at Matadi

No effort had been spared to make our visit to Matadi both enjoyable and worthwhile, the first time for some. Generous hospitality was offered us in the home of Mambe, a leading layman in the church, as well as the Swedish guest house. On the Saturday the pastor had arranged a guided tour of the busy port and a visit to the Japanese-built suspension bridge now spanning the river from the hill once occupied by BMS missionaries in the very early days of the mission to Congo, as it was. At the bottom of that hill we were able to visit the pioneers' cemetery. From a village of Angolan refugees across the river the choir bought themselves straw hats as souvenirs.

Already on the Saturday evening the choir had taken part in a concert, for which the church had hired the local cinema, and this led to an invitation to sing at the official mourning for a Zairian diplomat killed in an air crash. On the Sunday evening the choir's public witness in this way was an encouragement to the Christians at Matadi, and we were pressed to stay longer, the Monday being a public holiday. A long journey back to Kinshasa awaited us, however, and many had to be at work on Tuesday.

As we said our mutual farewells and expressed our mutual thanks we realised that the encouragement, too, had been mutual. We had, in fact, spoken to each other . . . in spiritual songs.

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THE STAR TREK GENERATION

When Tony Campolo speaks in his typically raspy voice, young people listen. One example was the seminar he held of 'Poverty in a World of Plenty'. It was one of eighteen such seminars on contemporary issues which the 7,000 delegates of the 11th Baptist World Youth Conference in Glasgow, on 26-31 July, could attend. Campolo's audience of 2,000 young persons was spellbound as he alternated between hilarious humour and reflective rhetoric during his treatment of the problem.

Dr Campolo teaches Sociology at the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. He wants to see the Christian church awakened to the needs of suffering people, but he expresses optimism concerning youth in the church.

During the BWA youth conference, he addressed the Thursday evening plenary session. He described his excitement over seeing numbers of young people serving Christ in many different settings around the world. 'Young people are the most inspiring creatures on the face of this planet,' he said.

'I have seen more and more Christian young people going out doing all sorts of wonderful things, serving in the name of Christ. You should be called the 'Star-Trek' generation. It is wonderful to see Christian young people taking off like rockets, going out to conquer unknown worlds, risking their lives for Jesus.'

MAKE WAY

'Make Way for the King of Kings,' sang six thousand Baptist young people as they marched through the streets of Glasgow in a triumphant praise march culminating a week of festivity at the 11th Baptist World Conference, held in Glasgow in July.

Delegates from 83 nations carried signs proclaiming the conference theme that 'Jesus Christ Rules'. The delegates came in all shapes and sizes, all colours, political affiliations and nationalities. Some delegates proceeded through the march in wheelchairs or on crutches, all united in their common bond of Christ.

The colourfully dressed Naga Indians, from a tribe of former headhunters, marched in front of the long line. The plumes in their headdresses standing tall, their spears held firm in front of them, they too proclaimed that 'Christ is Lord'.

The Angolan Baptist choir, in bright white coats marched as a unit, ready to sing at the rally in Kelvingrove Park at the end of the march.

As the march proceeded along the streets of Glasgow, clowns stopped along the way to play with children and give out an occasional balloon, sharing that 'Jesus is Love'.

The rally in Kelvingrove Park was led by Steve Chalke and Graham Kendrick, the organizer behind the march.

'This is the reason we are here, to unite together in Glasgow and pray for the world,' Steve said.

A representative from each area of the world then shared prayer requests with the entire group. At this time the six thousand young people divided into groups of four to pray specifically for the various regions of the world.

Accompanied by the applause of his hearers Mackey declared, 'Together we want to worship Jesus Christ: North, South, East, West, black, white, yellow, red, in one community which, in peace and in hope, celebrates the fact that Jesus Christ rules over all and for ever; to Him be all the honour and all the power and all the glory for ever and ever, Amen.'

JESUS CHRIST RULES

At the beginning of the Baptist World Youth Conference in Glasgow, Argentinean Tomas Mackey challenged the young people on the conference theme 'Jesus Christ Rules'.

Tomas Mackey, who teaches theology at the Baptist seminary in Buenos Aires, declared that the sovereign rule of Christ 'confronts the power structures of this world by denouncing their deep-seated ambition to rule, and by proclaiming another alternative, based on love, service, and self-dedication to others.'

He warned that Christ's rule can be challenged by the rule of other 'gods'. He listed some of these gods as money, a false hope in the superpowers, the 'war-power' god, 'scientism', success, fanatic nationalism, eros and racism.

'However, perhaps the most dangerous god of all, is a false image of Christ; a Christ who knows nothing of the cross, nor the power of the resurrection, nor the hope of His second coming.

'It is our task, young people of the world, to limit the power of these gods. We cannot serve two lords.

'If the church is to live under the rule of Christ, it must live as a humble servant, not strapped down to its own programmes or institutions, its buildings or leaders. It must be a reconciling community without walls.

'Under the role of Christ the church must identify with the needs of others, as a community of love committed to peace.

'The church in which Christ rules must transmit life . . . and be committed to life and justice, a community of believers who are available to their Lord.

'We in the third world do not need the gods of the first world,' he said. We do not need its tanks, or its powerful governments that enslave, or its agreements, or its Baals of selfish production.

'You of the first world do not need our gods of the third world either . . . our despotic gods . . . our powerful leaders. . . .

CLOSE FELLOWSHIP IN 'COMMUNITIES'

A MOST creative aspect of the 11th Baptist Youth World Conference in Glasgow took place every morning at 9 am. The 7,000 delegates were divided into groups of about 400 and met in 'communities' in churches and other venues throughout Glasgow.

Each community had a trained leader who presided over a flexible programme consisting of various elements. Beginning with a praise and worship period with singing lasting about 20 minutes, the community spent about 30 minutes in Bible study.

The community then broke up into 'families' of 10-12 each, with a mixture of nationalities that 'made the experience very rich' as one delegate commented.

These small group sessions lasted for nearly an hour. This length of time was thought to be good, because 'the real meat of the conference came in these small groups', said James Maryland of England.

'I think the two most important parts of the programme were the 'celebration' services in the evenings, and the community groups in the morning. The real teaching which will remain from the conference will be that which was received in these family groups. The international groups were small enough for us really to get to know one another,' he said.



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POPULAR RELIGION

In the second of three articles on popular religion, Stephen Judd, director of a pastoral institute in Peru, shows how popular religion helps to maintain people's identity.

Popular religion has arisen because you can't separate culture from the preaching of the Gospel. A culture always gives the Gospel its own particular tint.

You could say that popular religion is an outgrowth of the whole evangelization process; an expression of people's faith life that grew up where there was no official church presence or where evangelization was incomplete.

We tend to think popular religion arises only in areas that are backward, outside the official sphere of church influence: or that it is found only among illiterate or uneducated people. Not so. Popular religion exists in developed countries as well as less developed countries.

In the Andean world, an example would be the reverence Aymara and Quechua peoples have for the land. That is displayed in beliefs about the Pachamama (the earth mother) and different local deities. There is a closeness to creation and a deep sense of the presence of God. But a God expressed in multiple ways: through the mountains, the rivers, the hills. All of creation is filled with a sense of the religious.

RITUALS

Before the Spanish conquest, rituals had developed out of the agricultural cycle of planting and harvesting. When the Spaniards arrived, they brought a whole set of popular religious practices; so the encounter between the two cultures gave rise to another stratum of religious beliefs and practices.

For example, the cult of the Virgin Mary is closely related to the fertility rites that took place during the agricultural season. Many feasts of the Virgin, which are in the Catholic church calendar in August through October, were taken up

by the Andean people. The Feast of the Assumption, for instance, acquired new interpretation and significance.

I don't think it's fair to associate magic or the occult with popular religion. Admittedly, there's always a fine line between what is superstition and magic and what isn't.

But in our own ways of communicating with the supernatural and transcendent, there is always some element of manipulation, of what many would call magic. Some associate the practitioners of popular religion with witch doctors. I think these are misconceptions and cultural stereotypes.

CONTRADICTIONS

Does popular religion liberate, or does it oppress? There's never a clear-cut answer. There are ambiguous elements and contradictions. Often what we call popular religion reflects the values of the dominant culture or is a response to social, political and economic domination.

But on the whole, I'd say that popular religion is not just resistance to domination; it has a surplus of creative elements that maintain people's identity, their ties to the land, their ties to community. There's a whole dimension of coherence in symbols, dances and so on that helps to reinforce one's identity. In that sense, popular religion is liberating.

Popular religion is not elitist because it is celebrated in a massive way. We can see this in the pilgrimages, processions and other popular manifestations in which a social levelling takes place. We see a dynamism, a contact with what's real. It's not escapism at all.

So how far can Christianity go in accommodating itself to popular beliefs?

It's impossible to celebrate one's Christian faith through ritual without integrating some elements of culture. That's the challenge of evangelization. We have to allow the culture to speak its own Christianity, to embrace the Christian message through its own symbols and rituals.

The problem is that inculturation of the Gospel hasn't really been done well. We have very few instances in which there has been sustained and prolonged experience of the inculturation. We've always had violence or we've had one culture imposing its own cultural view of Christianity.

We've associated Christianity with Western culture. We haven't allowed Andean or Asian or African cultures the opportunity to express their interpretation of the Christian message.

We need to relativize our own cultural perspective and realize that there are facets of the Christian message that perhaps one culture can express better than another. There are many ways of expressing the mysteries of Christianity. What we do in the Western world isn't the last word.

INTERPRETATION

Let's be specific. Should we support popular Andean practices that seem to dwell on the crucified rather than the resurrected Christ?

First of all, we should be attentive. At first glance, yes, there would seem to be heavy emphasis on Christ's death rather than on His resurrection. But I don't think it's as simple as that.

For instance, the Andean feast of the cross is not a feast of the defeated Christ

or of resignation before life. Rather, it represents the victory and life that comes in the harvest season. The cross symbolizes joy, festivity and abundance.

Should any element of popular religion ever be discouraged? Perhaps, at certain times. After a time of reflection with the people, if we detect alienating features, those ought to be examined.

IMAGE

But we can't be making people over in our own image. We have to acknowledge that the 'other' is different. We have to recognize the mystery in how another appropriates the spirit of Christ and perceives the Gospel.

Sometimes, a feeling grows out of church teaching that we have to purify popular religion. But if we're honest and open

about how the spirit works in different ways, we won't have to be looking to purify.

There is a relationship between popular religion and the struggle for justice.

IDENTITY

Looking at popular religion on its own terms rather than seeing it in terms of Western rationalistic or positivist thought calls into question the Marxist concept that religion is no more than the opiate of the people or the cry of the oppressed. Religion is a part of people's identity.

Expressions such as 'People of God' for church focus on the people as the place of revelation. In areas where there hasn't been much church pastoral presence, there can still be a thriving faith life maintained by groups of people who

continue to meet and pray, keeping alive something that might have come out of an earlier, incomplete evangelization. Popular religion evangelizes by being particular to a people rather than uniform to a whole church.

That's a great insight: that the poor are no longer the objects of evangelization; rather they are subjects and the protagonists. One way they take the protagonist's role is through popular religion.

Faith and life are not two separate entities. There is no clear separation between the sacred and profane. Especially in Latin America.

The Christianity practiced here reflects the social conflict, injustice and poverty to which popular religion is a response — not so much one of seeking consolation, but of defending life.

BMS WAS THERE

'Glasgow's Miles Better' was not only the verdict of the 7,000 delegates to the Baptist World Alliance Youth Congress in July, it was the majority opinion of the hundreds of thousands attending the Glasgow Garden Festival.

Established on the site of former derelict docks, visited by Royalty and by thousands of visitors daily from all over the world, the Festival also featured amongst acres of beautiful flowers and shrubs, a Garden Church project, supported by the mainstream churches in Scotland.

A feature of the special chapel was an exhibition area where Christian organisations participating in Christian mission were able to exhibit their work.

During the peak month of August, when attendances broke records with 50,000 visitors daily, the BMS Scottish Representative, Rev Ron Armstrong, was able to display a presentation focusing on the work of the Society. The visitors, enjoying 'A Day Out of This World' as the advertising blurb put it, were exposed to this BMS feature.

Please pray for the impact the exhibition had on visitors from home and overseas.

A special BMS team also mounted an exhibition at the Youth Conference in July. There were many visitors who took away literature and spoke to BMS staff. Our greatest thrill was meeting visitors from BMS related countries, speaking to them, albeit with difficulty, in their own language to make them feel at home!

Scottish Baptists would say to all these visitors, both at the Youth Conference and at the Garden Festival, 'Haste ye back!'

Alliance of Baptist Youth



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ONE WORLD?

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MARCH AGAINST DRUGS

ON 6 June 1988 a 'March for life and against drugs' took place on the central streets of Buenos Aires. It was called by the ANDRES Programme, a scheme for the recuperation of drug addicts, which is directed by Baptist Pastor Carlos Novelli. More than 3,000 people, mostly families and young people, took part in the march carrying placards condemning drug trafficking and the resultant use of drugs.

Pastor Novelli an ex-addict himself began his programme of rehabilitation of drug addicts some six years ago in a church in the suburbs of Buenos Aires. Now they have various consultation centres and an important recuperation centre some 60km from Buenos Aires in which there is a farm-workshop where the young people can find a suitable atmosphere in which to begin their rehabilitation.

This march, the first of its kind to be held in the country, was accompanied by the national minister of education, by the secretary for children and families, national senators and deputies, writers, artists and sports people. In the address which brought the convocation to an end Novelli urged the crowd to work with hope in the fight against drugs and gave personal testimony to the liberating power of Jesus Christ in the recuperation of addicts.

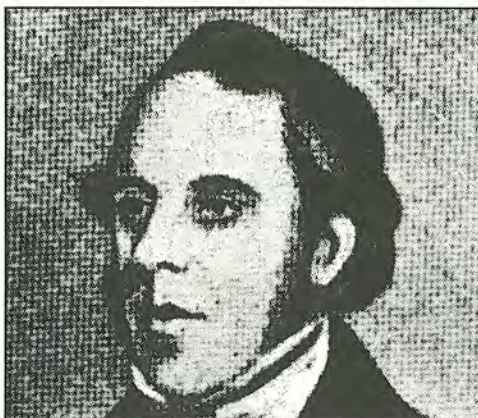
by Daphne de Plou from Buenos Aires reported in Rapidas, the information service of the Latin American Council of Churches.

ORDINATION OF WOMEN

'WOMEN as well as men can be appointed by the Church of Christ to occupy the position of pastor, teacher, theologian and other ministries exercised by the Church as well as leadership positions in the Church.' This resolution was approved recently by the General Assembly of the Association of Churches of Christ in Nicaragua, a denomination which links 100 congregations throughout the country and historically has its roots in the old evangelical church of Central America and the Baptist church.

This resolution, according to the evangelical press service, ratifies a practice which this denomination has followed for two decades. The same resolution ratified the fact that all ministries in this church are lay ministries. Those appointed to the ministries ought to work in other ways to gain their living, thus avoiding privileged positions in the church.

by Guillermo Melendez, in Mangua, report from Rapidas, the information service of the Latin American Council of Churches.



William Knibb

ORDER OF MERIT

WILLIAM KNIBB, BMS missionary to Jamaica from 1824 to 1845, has been posthumously made a Member of the Order of Merit by the Governor General.

'This is in recognition of his work towards the liberation of the slaves,' says present day BMS missionary in Jamaica, Keith

Riglin.

'Those who say that BMS missionaries are too involved in "social" issues, should take a lesson from him! Obviously, we and the JBU community are delighted at this recognition of the Baptist contribution to the life of Jamaica.'

What's happening in the Church around the World



At Chandraghona, Bangladesh, the river has risen 30 feet above its normal level flooding many areas in the hospital compound . . .



. . . including the weaving shed, and a new building in the course of construction which is being funded by Operation Agri.

FLOODS . . .

ONCE again floods have hit Bangladesh, but this year they are more severe and more far reaching. Tens of thousands are homeless, the rice crop has been destroyed, and polluted water has affected the health of

100 thousand, it is reported.

The Bangladesh Baptist Sangha (Union) has appealed for the 'Prayerful support' of British Baptists, in a situation where transport, telephones and electricity are

disrupted.

The BMS is again responding with help from the Relief Fund so that the Baptist Sangha can give help to those who are suffering.

. . . EARTHQUAKE

THE BMS was quick to respond to the earthquake disaster which hit the east of Nepal and parts of North India last month. An initial grant of £2,000 was sent from the Relief Fund to the United Mission to Nepal to aid victims of the earthquake and to help in the reconstruction of damaged buildings.

The BMS is one of nearly 40 mission and development agencies working in Nepal through the United Mission. The

UMN reports that Okhaldunga in Eastern Nepal will be the focal point for the Mission's direct involvement.

'While no severe injuries have occurred to project personnel, four deaths have been reported in the Okhaldunga community. Also there has been severe damage to property including irreparable damage to the hospital building and four of seven homes in the hospital compound,' the Mission reports.

NO TO ELECTION VIOLENCE

CHURCH leaders in Jamaica have demanded that those taking part in the forthcoming national elections should take steps to curb violence associated with the campaign.

They are trying to avoid a repeat of the troubles that occurred in connection with the 1980 elections when an estimated 800 people died.

• P R A Y E R C A L L •

2-8 October

THE HOME BASE

2 October is the Birthday of the BMS, and we are 196 years old today. Pray for the commitment to World Mission in your local church and for sensitivity in being open to the leading of God's Spirit. Ask God to give each one of us a vision of His great worldwide family and the blessing of knowing that we are all part of it. Wherever we are, in whatever situation, God calls us to be witnesses for Him.

9-15 October

MEDICAL WORK IN INDIA

Christian hospitals in India today are seeking their specific role as they continue to show God's love and compassion to all who come for treatment. There are still millions of people without any adequate medical care – in many areas, village clinics and dispensaries are trying to meet this need. After a short furlough, Ann Bothamley has just returned to Vellore in South India – a land of turmoil, but one in which it is a great privilege to serve. In her responsibilities in the hospital, the care of the children in her home, and the building of a hostel for more children – pray for daily strength and wisdom for her.

23-29 October

EDUCATION IN ZAIRE

This is the beginning of a new academic year for schools in Zaire. There is always a big demand for places. We need to pray that all the Head Teachers may have strength and wisdom so that all administration is carried out fairly and justly.

We remember especially new missionaries who, having done a three-week Lingala course in Kinshasa, are now starting teaching – Elizabeth Baker at Bolobo, Chris and Lynette Outram and Alison Dutton at Upoto.

30 October-5 November

FRANCE

In September, the first BMS missionaries went to France to begin their work with the French Baptist Federation. John and Sue Wilson are presently at the language school at Massy, near Paris. It is very important that they become really fluent and are able to communicate with ease. Pray for them in their studies, in all their adjustments to French life, and as a family with their baby daughter, Rachel. Neil and Ruth Abbot hope to go to join them in a year's time. Remember them in this year of preparation as they minister in Ossett.

NOT JESUS

Christ didn't deal
with the Temple merchants;
neither did he come around
on the sly
to talk with them at midnight.

Christ doesn't opt
for the lesser of two evils,
because the lesser evil
hides abominations.

Christ doesn't promote
cluster bombs,
or say they'll contribute
to world peace.

Christ wasn't awarded
the order of merit,
or knighted.

Christ doesn't insist
that the best communist
is the dead communist;
the best fascist,
the dead fascist;
the best man,
the dead man.

Christ didn't give
a long sermon
before Lazarus' tomb;
he wept instead
and God heard him
and Lazarus rose
from the dead.

Christ didn't become
a guerrilla
willing to eliminate
his mother
if necessary.

Neither did he take
money stolen from the poor,
deposit it in a Swiss bank
and live off the interest.

Christ dined
with rich and poor,
but he neither flattered
the rich
nor became a demagogue
to the poor.

Christ has never climbed
genealogical trees.

Christ never said
an easy way for folks
to reach heaven
and enjoy life everlasting
was by murdering them;

that's why he never said
the death penalty
was a good thing.

Christ never looks
the other way
when they tell him
Christians are robbing
the public coffers
in his name;
that in his name
they are
raping,
torturing
and slitting
throats on the pretext
of uncovering the
devil's clandestine
activities.

Christ never
earned a doctorate
in prudence;
neither did he yearn
to appear on TV
or do what he did
so others
would notice him.

Christ multiplied
the loaves,
but he did not
change stones into bread
just to gain power
in this world,
which is what happens
in the reign
of the Twisted.

Christ was not given
the keys to the city
of Bethlehem.

Christ didn't die
surrounded
by his disciples.

Instead,
it was women
who refused
to abandon him
and accompanied him
in his agony,
and were the first
to see him
in his Resurrection —
a fact that solemn men
forget.

from Paz y Justicia, Santiago, Chile

THE FIRST WOMAN MISSIONARY OF INDIA

by Keith Skirrow



Hannah Marshman

LAST year, Professor Sunil Kumar Chatterjee published a small book on the by-no-means-well-worn subject of Hannah Marshman who, in his subtitle, he calls the first woman missionary of India. The book is priced at 20 rupees, which is remarkably cheap. Prospective readers should be warned that the book is full of printing errors – mistakes in spelling especially – and Mr Chatterjee's English falls short of perfection.

But the author is indeed a remarkable man. Though he came to Serampore as Professor of Physics, he has devoted himself to the Carey Library and to research into the history of the Serampore Mission. He is a Hindu, but shows sympathy with the Christian Mission, and is especially appreciative of the efforts of missionaries in the sphere of education.

Through the initiative of Mr Michael Carey, a descendent of Dr Carey, Professor Chatterjee was able to visit Britain in 1983 to do some research in various libraries, including BMS Archives, and to see something of the Northamptonshire 'Carey Country'.

Hitherto, he has concentrated in his writings on Dr William Carey, but now he turns his attention to a personality who, he feels, has been neglected. Neglected first of all

because she was a woman. Nowadays women outnumber men as missionaries on the fields but, when BMS began, missionaries appointed were all men: wives were allowed to accompany them, that is all. It was a mark of singular initiative when Hannah Marshman undertook so many responsibilities in the Mission.

She has been neglected in the second place because her husband has been so overshadowed by William Carey. Why? Stephen Neil, in his history of Christianity in India, wrote that, of the Serampore Three, Marshman was probably the most brilliant but the least amiable. Mr Chatterjee, accusing Baptist historians of underestimating Marshman, suggests a reason in the targetting upon him of the attacks of the junior missionaries in India whose complaints to BMS Committee did so much to sour relations between BMS and Serampore. Maybe these two assessments should be brought together.

Be that as it may, Hannah Marshman's life and work well repay study. We are not short of resource material for this because her own journal and the diary of her daughter, Rachel (Mrs Voight), are available, as well as the account of the pioneer Serampore missionaries by her son, John Clark Marshman. They give details of her early upbringing in Baptist circles, her marriage, the voyage to India, and the first years at Serampore. As well as the work for which she became famous, she became responsible for the children of the Serampore missionary family. She looked after the sons of William Carey along with her own children. Because of her sad mental illness, Dorothy Carey was quite incapable as a mother, and the Carey boys were notoriously wild.

However, it is as the organiser of girls' schools, especially for Bengali children, that she is known to posterity. The schools were opened as a means of supplementing the Mission's income, as well as a way of bringing enlightenment and the knowledge of Jesus Christ to Bengal. In the first place, the schools were meant for Anglo-Indians and Indians desirous of learning English.

Later, vernacular schools were opened. The missionaries took responsibility for giving education to the poor, as well as to the fee-payers. Hannah Marshman also cared for orphans.

Mr Chatterjee is most interested in the educational aspect of Mrs Marshman's work, and his longest chapter is entitled 'Western Education to Indian Women'. For this reviewer at least, there is much that is new in the chapter. I, for one, did not realise that there was any education of women at all in India before the nineteenth century. However, it was on traditional lines, and the Serampore missionaries had many prejudices to overcome before it became common for girls to attend the schools as established by Government and Missions. Hannah Marshman's patience was rewarded in the end.

Hannah Marshman survived her husband by 10 years. She remained loyal to Serampore, in spite of many disappointments.

I have some criticisms, particularly of matters on page 39. It is said that the funeral sermon for Fountain was preached by 'Forsyth', but there is no indication who he was. From the *Oriental Christian Biography*, I find that he was one of the first missionaries of LMS in India, stationed at Chinsurah which, today, is about 20 minutes by train from Serampore.

It is significant, I think, that there was this close link between the missions.

On the same page, Mr Chatterjee, referring to the Bengali reaction to the Catechism introduced into the schools by Marshman and the children's fear that it might make them lose caste and become 'feringhees', says that the feringhees were 'those who had formerly been converted directly from Hinduism'. 'Feringhees' refers, surely, to Anglo-Indians, and to converts to Catholicism, mostly from those of mixed Portuguese descent.

Mr Michael W Carey of 'The Ridges', Little Cawarne, Bromyard, Shropshire, has several copies of Mr Chatterjee's book for sale at £2 each which he will be glad to sell on Mr Chatterjee's behalf.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Departures

Miss S Evans on 27 July to Kinshasa to teach in Lingala Language School.

Miss E Baker on 27 July for Bolobo, Zaire.

Miss A Dutton on 27 July for Upoto, Zaire.

Miss M Hester on 27 July for Pimu, Zaire.

Mr and Mrs C Ouiram on 27 July for Upoto, Zaire.

Mr and Mrs A Wood on 27 July to IME, Kimpese, Zaire.

Arrivals

Mr and Mrs F Gouthwaite on 16 July from Campo Grande, Brazil.

Miss S Chalmers on 22 July from Yakusu, Zaire.

Miss R Williams on 22 July from Yakusu, Zaire.

Mr and Mrs K Liu on 31 July from Kathmandu, Nepal.

Births

On 20 July 1988, in Falmouth, to Rev and Mrs J Wilson, a daughter, Jessica.

Deaths

On 22 July 1988, Mrs Dorothy Wells (widow of Rev D S Wells) who served in India from 1920-55.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and anonymous gifts. (To 7 September 1988.)

Miss A E Allen	£	200.00
Miss M E Ayling		2,815.49
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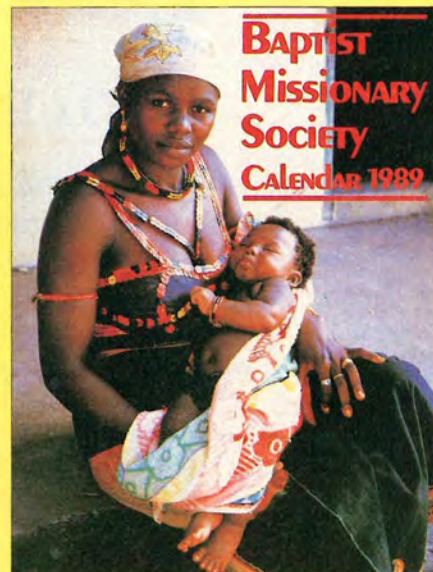
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