

MISSIONARY

HERALD

November 1988



**CHANGED
LIVES
IN
BRAZIL.**



20p

Editorial Comment

OVERWHELMED by all that we hear of lives ruined by drugs, people living in fear and bitter fighting between countries or communities, we may ask ourselves again 'Does anything I do make the slightest bit of difference?' 'What is the point of my praying?'

Faced with the stark fact that their son was taking drugs, two missionary parents in Brazil 'turned to the Lord' and asked their Brazilian and British prayer partners to seek God's intervention and change their son's life. Despair was turned to joy.

A tiny Christian church in a Muslim country has just been celebrating. Twenty years ago, the Christian College of Theology in Dhaka, Bangladesh, was borne out of prayer. Surrounded by prayer, the College has grown from a few humble classes in a rented house to a fine complex of buildings on its own land. Today, Bengali Christians are equipped for effective ministry through residential courses or through study at home.

Never ask 'Does my praying count for anything?' Throughout the world, lives are being changed on the strength of dedicated prayer.

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MISSIONARY

HERALD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY



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We share in the work of the
Church in:

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

FROM DRUGS AND DESPAIR...

...TO FULLNESS OF LIFE.

Missionary parents, Gerry and Johan Myhill, tell how their prayers and those of Christians in Britain were answered in a surprising way.

When we felt a 'call' to leave the Royal Air Force after 14 years service to serve not the Queen but the King of Kings in South America, one of our major concerns was for our family. We had two sons aged 11 and 13 and had to consider their schooling. At that time, the BMS was establishing a hostel in São Paulo, Brazil, for missionaries' children and they opted to go there and attend the English School in São Paulo rather than stay in Britain. At least in São Paulo they would be in Brazil and could come to stay with us for the holidays.

The boys, David and Gerald, enjoyed, in some measure, their time at the hostel, but they found it very difficult to accept a way of life which forced separation from their parents. After three years, when David had taken his 'O' levels, he decided to return to Britain and study for his 'A' levels. David was not very taken with Brazil and wished to return to Britain to stay anyway.

Gerald continued for a further year at the Hostel in São Paulo and then, when we returned to the UK for our first long furlough, he accompanied us with the object of completing his 'O' levels. At the end of our furlough, Gerald opted to stay in the UK to try to establish himself in some way; we left him with some trepidation as he was unemployed and had always been more of a home bird than David, who had been independent and always out and about.

We left instructions that, if it didn't work out, he was to contact us and we would get his air ticket for him to come back out to Brazil and join us. After six months of looking for a job and wandering the streets, he wrote saying that he wanted to return to Brazil, and out he came to join



Gerry and Johan Myhill

us. David, by this time, was established in a steady job and was living in a council flat in Huntingdon.

When we met Gerald at the airport, we were aware that there was something different. Nothing you could put your finger on, just an indefinable thing that registered in our subconscious.

It was good to have Gerald with us in Nova Londrina, where we work. It was the first time in five years that we had been together as a family and it brought a whole new atmosphere as he made friends and they started coming to the house. The house became alive with the laughter and music of young people. However, after a time, we noticed that some of the friends were from the groups that were involved with drugs and a style of life completely opposed to that which we stood for as Christians.

We noticed, also, that Gerald seemed to be deteriorating both physically and mentally. His interest in the church and

anything to do with Christianity became totally negative. At times he even became aggressive toward us and our work. When we objected to some of his friendships and the style of life that he was adopting, it only made matters worse. It appeared that some of the friendships now meant more than family relationships.

During this time, we had a woman coming in to help Johan with the cleaning. Rosie was still a young woman but she already had a lifetime experience of prostitution and drugs. Johan had found a tiny seed on the floor in Gerald's room and showed it to Rosie. Rosie immediately identified it as marijuana and said, 'Of course, you realize that Gerald is using drugs.' Even though we had noticed something different at the airport when he had arrived from the UK, even though we had objected to some of his friends obviously involved with drugs, and even though we had watched him deteriorating, it had not occurred to us that he was on drugs. It

(continued from previous page)

all fell into place. The signs had been there all the time and the shock was perhaps even worse because of that. Along with the awareness of what was happening, we felt a real helplessness about what to do.

We faced Gerald with the accusation of drug taking, but we were met with all sorts of counter accusations and denials to such an extent that we began to lose all sense of what or who was right.

Our reaction was to treat him at times with strictness and severity, at times with love and care, as we sought to reach him but, above all, we turned to the Lord. We wrote to churches with which we were linked. We wrote to friends all over the place asking them all to pray and ask God's intervention in Gerald's life.

In the following days, Gerald's reaction was to get more involved with drugs and his so-called friends. There were nights when there was such an evil presence in the house that you could feel it. It was as if Satan was reacting against the power of people's prayers and concern. It seemed that Gerald was out to destroy himself completely and would often return home at the crack of dawn and would collapse onto his bed in a terrible state.

The leader of the group he was involved with was a young woman who had been on the run from the police after releasing a drug trafficker from the local jail at gunpoint. We then discovered that Gerald had formed a close relationship with her and we just saw it as a worsening situation.

It wasn't long before we managed to get them together. The Lord gave Johan the words she needed as she spoke to them plainly and simply of the Lord and of his love. That, if they truly loved each other, they would want to build up each other in the true love of the Lord and not destroy each other or lead each other on a road which led to destruction and, by following that, they were actively serving Satan.

They sat and listened and then asked if they might talk in private for a while. This they did and then came back saying that they wanted to be serious about each other and saw that, if they were to have a future together, drugs could not

be a part of it. They sat down and wrote out a list of rules and regulations for themselves to follow. Things like people and places to avoid, being honest with each other and with us. It was alright for them. They wanted to abide by the rules that they had set themselves, but their friends were not happy and did all that they could to make them go back.

Since they had decided to be serious about each other, they needed to ask Raimunda's parents for permission to court each other (still a strict tradition in Brazil). They spoke to Raimunda's mother who agreed, but were afraid to speak to her father as he was very aggressive toward them. Gerald was visiting Raimunda at her home in the evenings while father was out for his evening drinking session.

One night, he came home early and, to avoid Gerald being discovered, mother and Raimunda pushed him under the bed. Father came in, took off his shirt and gunbelt, laid them on the trunk by the bed, dropped onto the bed and was soon asleep. Gerald lay under the bed scared to move and stayed there until father got up in the morning and went off to work!

Once it was safe to come out, he crept home, had his breakfast and went off down to Raimunda's father's place of work to ask permission to court his daughter. It turned out that he was well received and permission was given.

The following weekend, David Doonan, BMS Overseas Representative in Brazil, was in Nova Londrina. He invited Gerald and Raimunda to go to church in the evening. It was an evangelistic meeting and David was preaching at his best. At the close of the address, David appealed for anyone with the desire to give their lives to the Lord to come forward. The Lord had used David's words that night to touch Raimunda's heart and she went straight down the front with tears streaming down her face — a face which was lit by joy. You can imagine our feelings. We were witnessing the Lord at work and we knew that people were praying and that those prayers were being answered.

With Raimunda's decision to follow the Lord, Gerald rededicated his life to the path that he had chosen as a twelve year old and which he had wandered so far from. With the love of Christ to sustain



them, they found the strength to overcome the craving they still felt for drugs. In Christ, also, they found guidance to resist the continuing invitations and pressures put in their way by their so-called friends.

Shortly after coming to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour, Gerald and Raimunda were married in Nova Londrina and set about the task of establishing a home of their own. They took an active part in the life of the church and, after six months, I had the joy and privilege of baptizing them in the local river as they confessed their faith in Jesus and were accepted by the church for membership.

It has been wonderful to see them grow in the Lord. They have blossomed not only spiritually but also physically as they have recovered from the damage done by the drugs. They are using now their gifts and talents in the service of the Lord. The qualities that Raimunda was using as leader of the gang, she is now using in the church where she is leader of the ladies meeting. Gerald is now the Sunday School teacher for the young people and is also leading one of the church mid-week house group Bible studies. He is also in charge of the administration and control of the children's day centre, with 80 children to care for and the oversight of a full-time staff of nine people.

They have two sons, Billy and Bruce. Billy was born to an earlier girl friend during the time that Gerald was involved with drugs, and Bruce came along the year following Gerald and Raimunda's wedding. The story of Billy's birth and survival is another story on its own. I will write it soon . . . Raimunda works during the day at the children's day centre and at night she studies, doing what would be equivalent to her 'A' levels. Gerald gives English language lessons, in a little school he runs, to earn their daily bread.

When we think back to the way they were and of what was happening to them, we can only marvel at what they have become and thank and praise God for the way he has touched their lives and is using them. We hope this story will emphasize our dependence on, and need to pray for, each other. In our own minds, all we wanted was to get Gerald away from Raimunda as we felt she was holding him in the drug circle. People's prayers were for her as well as for Gerald and God answered those prayers and



continues to do so as they are now being used in His service.

Please continue to pray for them, that they may be filled with the Spirit of God, that through their lives people may see that our God is able. Just as God has worked and is working in their lives, so He is able to do the same in ours.

Gerry and Johan Myhill have been involved in church work at Nova Londrina, Brazil, since 1975.

CONTRASTS IN BANGLADESH

Monday 25 July was rather special this year. Not only was the entire Muslim world busy sacrificing animals seeking to earn favour with God but also, in Bangladesh, a small group of about 300 Christians were enthusiastically praising God for His faithfulness over the last 20 years.

**Noticed by
Christine Preston**



On 25 July 1968, the College of Christian Theology was formed. Of the original 25 founder members, four were present at the celebration, and that is what the evening proved to be. From a variety of rented houses to, now, a fine two-storey complex of buildings surrounded by its own land; dependency upon missionary leadership to a godly, highly trained Bangladeshi Principal; from very humble classes to an extensive programme of 'home learning' supervised by local deans and tutors. Everyone who shared in the evening looked back with a full heart at what God has done, was doing and will continue to do.

I travelled out to Savar with the officers of the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha, all of whom had taken extension courses from the college, one of whose wives is currently doing so. Also with us was Rev W Goetz who serves with the Liebenzell Mission in cooperation/partnership with the BBS. He is a local tutor and has seven groups of students in the Khulna Union in which he is stationed.

We drove carefully along the busy road, as many folk were out visiting after the morning of prayer and sacrifices. There was still a large cattle market for those who would sacrifice on the second or third day of the festival. We wended our way in and out of family groups, overloaded buses, rebellious cattle pulling their new owners in all directions at once. At last, we turned off the main road to the peaceful surroundings of the college.

A crowd of several hundred had gathered for the evening. We began in the open air when, after a scripture reading and prayer, the four founder members released coloured balloons bearing details of the college into a breezy evening sky. Everyone then moved into a covered area for the service of thanksgiving and testimony. I was so very glad to be reminded of the key role BMS and BBS have played in the growth of the college.

Twenty-five years ago, it was Rev and Mrs L Wenger's encouragement that gave direc-

tion to the aspirations of the various church leaders. Rev David Rowland represented the BMS at the inaugural meeting and Rev R N Baroi, who was then the General Secretary of the BBS, was their representative. As an elder statesman in the Bangladesh Christian community, Rev R N Baroi is the present Chairman of the College Board.

From amongst the 'old students', Rev Paul S Biswas, the present Pastoral Superintendent of Dhaka District Union, gave testimony of how he had been grounded in his Christian faith through taking the college courses.

The college's first Principal, Rev S Avery (a missionary with the New Zealand BMS), is at present pastor of the Dhaka International Christian Church. He had been invited to give the address. It was a stirring message to pass on to godly men what we have learnt, that they too may pass on the message of God's grace in salvation through Jesus Christ. The need to recognize we are soldiers in enemy territory, athletes who need to be fit, and farmers who plant in expectation of the harvest, were all points drawn from Paul's message to Timothy.

The youth choir from the Savar Baptist Church sang well and led us in a rather more lively way than is customary for Baptist churches in this land.



Little or no value...

By Fred Stainthorpe

I handed a letter to the postmistress containing a *Missionary Herald* for a friend in Brazil. She told me that it needed a customs certificate in case an official should intercept it. Having taken down some details she then asked me what its value was. 'It sells for 20 pence,' I replied, and was amused to see her write down in the values column 'None'. Evidently the *Missionary Herald* does not count for much in the Post Office.

Does it count for anything in the churches? To some people it does. They read it regularly and pass it on to others. Others seem to ignore its existence. Not all church members read it. Not all deacons subscribe to it. Ministers receive it automatically. How many would buy it otherwise? It is estimated that only about one in ten Baptists is familiar with it.

This concerns me. One would expect Christians to value missionary literature. If we believe that Christ died for all and has commanded His followers to go into all the world we should regard this as a priority. We should want to find out what was happening on the frontiers, eager to learn of the advance of the Gospel and the penetration of paganism. We should pack missionary meetings and devour missionary literature, not because it is something exotic and unusual but because Jesus has commanded us to do so.

Sadly, this is not the case. Missionary matters and missionary literature appear to have little or no value.

Do Christians, however, read the larger missionary books? Apparently not. In preparation for a missionary convention which we planned to hold at our church I asked the local Christian bookseller for a selection of missionary books. 'You will need to include more general books as well,' he replied, 'Missionary literature does not sell very well these days.' I asked him whether much mission-orientated material appeared nowadays in publishers' lists. He said it did not. Certainly few such books are ever reviewed in the *Baptist Times*.

How much would Roman publishers have valued the letters of the apostles? At first glance they too would have been marked 'None'. Sent by obscure travelling Jewish preachers to little groups of Christians in the Mediterranean world, they did not deal with high matters of state or momentous current events. Their recipients were drawn mainly from lower social classes. All of them in some way mentioned a Jew who had been executed as a criminal but who His followers said was alive. What permanent value could such foolish ideas have? They might flourish for a while but were bound to perish as they came into contact with real life.

Fortunately history has proved this attitude wrong. The books have been translated and distributed in hundreds of languages, world-wide. Scores of scholars have researched their meaning and thousands of preachers have found messages from God in them. No single book has

influenced the life of the world more than the Bible. The original valuation was wildly inaccurate.

How can one value the letters and documents which mark the beginning of missionary enterprise? Each missionary society treasures resolutions from their founders and letters from their pioneers. They have stirred people's hearts, widened their vision, pricked their consciences, sent them to their knees in prayer and prompted them to offer their lives in service abroad. To the world they were insignificant. Even their writers may have wondered at times whether it was worth sending them but God had different ideas. His scale of values is different from ours. We can reverse Luke 16:15b, and the world should be thankful for this.

In many ways mission has changed its form over the years. Few pioneers hack their way through jungles, dodging snakes and shooting lions. Life is much easier but modern mission began with great hardship. People gave up much to break new ground and we who inherit their labours should remind ourselves of their sacrifices. Our church members need to know something about Carey, Grenfell, Timothy Richard and others. Why not buy somebody a missionary biography for Christmas?

The problem is that we have little available as Baptists. The demise of the Carey Kingsgate Press has robbed us of the means of learning about the history of our

(continued from previous page)

missionary work and we are impoverished thereby. However help is at hand. The situation is about to be remedied. In 1992 the Society will celebrate its Bi-Centenary and we plan to produce literature in the years preceding it.

Dr Brian Stanley of Spurgeon's College is busy writing the official history of the BMS. From it someone will produce a popular version. So both scholar and ordinary church member will be able to review the past. Numbers of smaller publications will appear from time to time. They will

include portraits of outstanding missionaries and national leaders, reviews of important periods of the Mission and accounts of new beginnings in different lands. We intend to provide prayer guides and helps to worship and hope that church members will respond to this initiative by buying these books. They will fill large gaps in our knowledge of recent church history. We hope they will inspire us and the churches we work with overseas to look expectantly to the future and answer any new call which God will issue.

The Bi-Centenary will also offer scope for local initiative. Baptist missionaries came

from all over Great Britain and their stories are full of interest. Enterprising writers could produce much for the local media. Imaginative dramatists could unearth many intriguing subjects. The Baptist community could inform a largely ignorant country of what God has done through them over the past two hundred years. The inheritance of the past should not be undervalued. It must be treasured as a springboard for the future.



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After the two-hour service there was time for chat, relaxation, admiration of the pictorial record of the college and then everyone shared in a fellowship meal. Those present were from all branches of the Christian community, and represented almost all missions and para-church groups, as well as the various church bodies in Bangladesh. It was such a joy to see folk sitting and sharing the meal in a beautiful spirit of Christian brotherhood.

As the college looks forward to its next 20 years, please pray for those who teach the various courses – Basic Christianity for new Christians; a Certificate course for those with only primary and maybe two years secondary education; then a Diploma course for those with matric plus; also, as an extension arm for Degree courses from other colleges in Asia. The faculty is still partly Bangladeshi and partly missionary. There are short residential modules each year but the aim is to develop into a residential college, where students can study more intensively and so complete their studies in a shorter time.

The Word of God is living and quick. Let us pray for those who study it that they will be conformed to the image of Jesus as they hide the word in their hearts and let it work within their personalities.

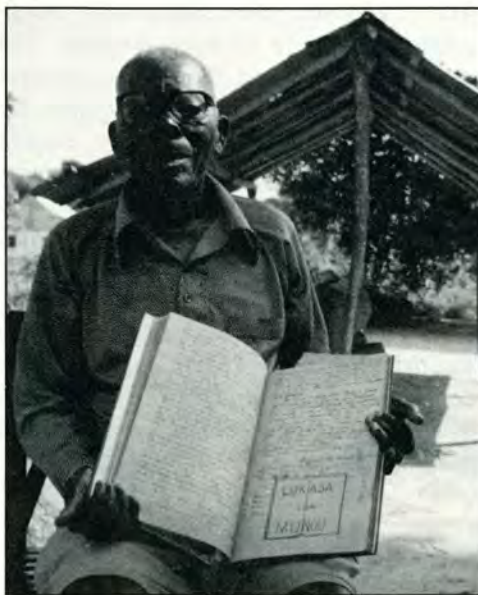


Christine Preston first went to Bangladesh in 1969 as a BMS Nurse. After a leave of absence, she recently returned to Bangladesh as acting Secretary for Missionary Affairs.

PAGES FROM THE PAST

I could scarcely believe it! There I was in July 1987 at Yakusu, exchanging greetings with an old man named Tula, when, with a dramatic gesture, he suddenly put the clock back over 50 years.

Walking back into his thatched hut overlooking the Zaire river, he came out holding a big leather-bound volume. As he turned the pages, I had to admire the careful handwriting and the neat presentation. With a smile of justifiable pride, Mr Tula pointed to various entries, dated on Sundays, for years such as 1933 and 1934. I could see the initials CCC underlined, followed by a Bible text and then sermon notes. 'Yes,' said that faithful old African Christian, 'I heard your father (Dr Clement Chesterman) preaching on



that text 54 years ago, and that was his message.'

As I looked more carefully at the pages, I saw three words in bold capital letters and, framed in a box of ruled lines, 'Lukasa loa Mungu' – the Word of God. I couldn't help thinking of that verse (Colossians 3:16) which tells us 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.' What better example than old Mr Tula could you find of the Word of God dwelling richly in the heart of a believer? What wonderful evidence of the abiding fruit of missionary work too! How many of us could match up to the standard set by Mr T?

Michael Chesterman

MISSIONTALK

MISSIONTALK

MISSIONTALK

MISSIONTALK

'TAKE 7'?

by Peter Amies

'Take what?'

'TAKE 7!'

'Whatever is . . .?'

'Well, how about Royal Week?'

Such might have been the conversation last year when all the publicity started. But now the very best of the Royal Week programme – plus a host of fresh ideas – has been moved from Cornwall to a Somerset location and has established itself in its own right as TAKE 7.

In early August, some 2,200 people gathered at the Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, to take 7 days off for a unique holiday experience. With tents erected and caravans sited, young and old were soon happily involved in a varied programme of holiday activity, worship and teaching sessions geared to all ages and interests.

One of the joys of TAKE 7 is that there's nothing enforced or regimented about it. How much you 'put on your plate' is up to you! A primary emphasis (not surprising, for it is organized by 'Christian Family' Magazine, CARE Trust, CPAS and Scripture Union) is on the family having fun and learning and worshipping together. And it works!

But why is BMS there? A major aspect of TAKE 7 is the Exhibition at which 38 organizations were represented. Of the four involved directly in overseas mission, BMS was the only denominational society present. Since 1986, as South-West Area Representative, I have represented the Society, first at Royal Week and, this year, at TAKE 7.

With display panels erected and literature set out, I was available to talk to folk who visited the Exhibition. They came from far and wide and, this year, I had conversations about world mission and the Society's part in it with about 130 people from various denominational backgrounds – many of them Baptists. The most satisfying and (hopefully) productive being about the opportunities for service overseas. One young couple discovered that, since their marriage, unknown to each other, they had each been challenged about overseas service.

Whatever the outcome of those conversations and that exhibition, BMS and Baptists are seen by thousands to be committed to the mission of the church overseas. And that, I believe, really makes it all worthwhile.

KENT ASSOCIATION CHILDREN'S DAY

Green Street Baptist Church, Gillingham, is often a place of lively activity but, on a recent Saturday, over 50 children from six local Baptist churches made it livelier still.

The minister, the Rev Chris Voke, led a time of praise. Then there was a variety of activities led by Adrian and Sylvia Hopkins from Pimu. Drama, model-making, and some enthusiastic discussion on a real-life situation in Zaire held the children's attention.

African games filled another exciting part of the programme before lunch. Several sat on the floor to eat, Zairian style.

The children's parents and leaders were invited to join in towards the close. Several came and saw a presentation of the work done earlier in the day. This included a TV News broadcast on the differences between hospital life in Zaire and the UK. Everyone enjoyed the 'Pimu Plan' slide sequence which formed part of the concluding challenge to the day.

There was a display of handicrafts and paintings from Zaire, and the BMS literature relevant to the emphasis on Africa. Each child went home with an information pack on Zaire.

The day was planned by Mrs Pauline Sutton, KBA Missionary Secretary, and the Rev Michael Ridgeon of Sheerness. Several people joined the team. It was agreed that the project was well worthwhile and should be repeated in other centres.



NEW AUDIO VISUALS FROM THE BMS!

S161 WORLD MISSION PUZZLE

A tape/slide set looking at world mission and how we, through the BMS, fit into this puzzle.

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A VHS video of the tape/slide set with a lively visual approach. Ideal for house groups!

MS28 WHERE IN THE WORLD? – BANGLADESH

MS25 WHERE IN THE WORLD? – ZAIRE

The first two in a new series of slide sets for children. They provide a glimpse at lifestyle and church work overseas.

Each set has 21 slides and comes with a written script easily adaptable for Junior Church/Sunday School.

TAKE TIME

Have you used our new appeal leaflet, 'Take Time' yet? It is available in quantities for each church and is a useful way to challenge both church and people to look at their stewardship of time in relation to World Mission.

CRY ETHIOPIA

MANY of us have seen pictures of starving Ethiopian children, but few of us know much about the country's political and religious situation. Peter Cotterell, writing from 20 years' experience of missionary work there seeks to correct our ignorance in his book *Cry Ethiopia* (Marc 1988).

He worked with SIM, linked to the Kale-Heywet (Word of Life) Church, which grew up in the 1930's largely independent of missionary activity. He intersperses personal experiences with potted episodes of the country's history. An unsuccessful coup in 1960 warned of discontent with Haile Selassie's regime. The later uprising of 1974 toppled this authoritarian system which had given rise to the Rastafarian movement.

In the North, the Eritrean war of independence began to strip the land of men who could cultivate it and helped prepare the way somewhat for famine. Yet through all

this God's people continued to witness and to play a leading role in famine relief. One such trip gave Cotterell the unprecedented opportunity to preach the Gospel to a crowd of Muslims.

The Marxist revolution began its long oppression of the Church and restructuring of society. Many churches were closed and Christians had to reassess their priorities. When Caesar laid claim to what was rightly God's he had to be resisted. In the midst of all this, famine struck again in 1983, touching the hearts of people everywhere and evoking the response of

Band Aid. It still continues. In 1988 the country needs further physical aid, political reform, but above all it needs the preaching of the Gospel, which alone exalts a nation. Only in this way will Ethiopia's tears be dried.

Fred Stainthorpe

**MISSIONTALK
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MISSIONTALK**



The final article on 'Popular Religion'

Rastafarianism is a dynamic religious force and one of the most important cultural-political movements in Jamaica and the Caribbean. An estimated 100,000 people – five per cent of Jamaica's population – call themselves Rastafarians.

The movement began in the 1930's in the misery belts surrounding Kingston. 'Rastafarianism is fundamentally a social movement of poor black kids,' writes anthropologist Andres Serbin.

'Using the ideological tools at hand, they seek a way of surviving in adverse economic, political and cultural conditions that are the result of the British colonization of the region,' says Serbin. 'They've developed a messianic cosmology that gives them hope for change, that Babylon will disappear and they will one day return to the promised land of their black ancestors.'

Selassie are the movement's two key doctrinal tenets.

Longing to return to Africa dates back to the time of slavery. Slaves were taught to read and write by 18th century Protestant missionaries, who used the Bible as their main text. In the ensuing years, the Bible was often the only book to which Jamaican peasants had access.

The Rastafarians (commonly called Rastas) were influenced by Jamaican Marcus Garvey (1888-1940) who formed the Black Pan-African movement in 1916. The movement brought together millions of Africans and blacks throughout the world; its ideal was struggle for an economic and cultural autonomy that would allow them to confront whites on an equal basis. Garvey gave Jamaicans a new pride in their African heritage.

Rastas believe that whites christianized the biblical message as a palliative for the suffering of this world, and that they use the Bible to make the poor more malleable. Rastas identify with the Jewish people, they

believe they are the new Israelites in exile, and that redemption will be found in the cradle of biblical origins – Ethiopia, the land of their black ancestors.

When Haile Selassie was crowned 'King of Kings' and 'Lion of Judah' in 1930, the Rastas saw it as a fulfilment of the prophecy found in the Apocalypse. The event also responded to Garvey's admonition to 'look to Africa for the coronation of the Black King; he will be your Redeemer.'

Selassie's crowning was interpreted as the 'good news' of redemption, the establishment of the power of the black race. His theocratic government was to restore black dignity and lead the black race in a new direction. The movement takes the emperor's name before his coronation: Ras Tafari.

In recognizing Selassie as their god and leader, Rastas rejected the authority of the Jamaican government and assumed the posture of Africans in exile. Jamaica became Babylon.

Subversive movement

For the past 50 years, Rastafarianism has offered poor black youths a new way of seeing history and a sense of identity, cohesion and pride. But the

Deifying Haile Selassie

Return to Africa and belief in the divinity of the late Ethiopian Haile

movement has always been seen as subversive in a society that is 76 per cent black but has always been ruled by a white elite.

The Jamaican government has often painted the Rastas as a delinquent fringe, and has occasionally launched half-hearted rehabilitation programmes in Kingston slums.

In the 1960's, influenced by the growing Black Power movement, Rastas moved away from their strong messianism and became more political. Black leaders such as Walter Rodney brought radicalized black nationalists at Jamaican universities into contact with Rasta slum youth. Police repression of the black movement further united the two groups, and in the late 1960s a political wing of the Rastafarians was formed.

This wing now became interested in the country's political direction, in wresting power for Afro-Jamaicans. Selassie was no longer seen as a god, but as a symbol of black power. The movement became more class oriented, identifying with union and student struggles and with black people's liberation movements worldwide.

This change was encouraged by Selassie, who visited Jamaica in 1966 and told Rastas not to emigrate to

Africa until they liberated their own country. Since then, the movement has become more secularized: many Rastas have abandoned the idea of returning to Africa and see their task as that of 'Africanizing Babylon' by bringing about a revolution in Jamaica that reflects the aspirations of the poor, black majority.

The mainline media has sensationalized the Rastas, making much of their 'deadlocks', their use of 'ganja' (marijuana) and the Reggae music made famous by the late Bob Marley.

But experts point out that Rastafarianism has become a strong cultural development determined to develop Caribbean blacks' pride in their African heritage and to forge an authentic Afro-Caribbean identity.

Most Rastas profess the superiority of the black race and the need to punish the white race for its 'perversions'. They oppose all 'melting-pot' efforts and have encountered violent repression in Trinidad, Dominica, Guyana and Grenada.

Symbols of their differences include their vegetarianism (ital food) and abstinence from all alcohol as a way to combat poor diet and break the vicious cycle of malnutrition; their

'dreadlocks', or long ringlets modelled after those of the Mau Mau tribe in Ethiopia, a symbol of black pride; their use and promotion of ganja, the 'mysterious wisdom weed' which helps users reach a 'higher state'. (Some 60 per cent of the Jamaican population is believed to use marijuana for medicinal purposes.)

They have developed their own dialect as a protest against the official language of neo-colonial Jamaica (Ex: 'This is fi wi country' – This is our country), and make a practice of wearing red, green, black and yellow, the colours of the Ethiopian flag.

Reggae, the world-famous beat that originated in the Kingston slums, has become a major vehicle for transmitting the Rasta worldview. It combines African chants, Jamaican blues and calypso, was popularized by the late Bob Marley. Marley's songs protest against misery, and have become a vehicle of communication among black youth: they tell of police violence, joblessness, racism and poverty – but also hold out the hope of pan-African unity and issue a call for rebellion.

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EYE OPENERS!



FLOODS IN BANGLADESH

THE floods came suddenly and devastatingly to Bangladesh at the beginning of September.

'They are the worst in living memory,' reported Christine Preston from Dhaka at the height of the problem.

'The north has not been too severely affected, but moving south Pabna and Rajshahi have been badly hit. South of the Ganges the ferry terminals at Faridpur, Daudkhandi, Doulatpur have all been washed away, so there is no motorised communication.

'Faridpur district went completely under water and many folk were stranded in boats and up trees, for high rise buildings are few.'

Christine reported that there was no rice in Gournadi or Turki and that there was little chance of getting any there without the boat being hi-jacked.

At Barisal, where some stocks existed, a worker from the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha's SHED Board organised a food chain.

'Helicopter drops are taking place to where there can be distribution,' Christine said. 'The Indian pilots are appalled at what they have witnessed – so many marooned folk whom it is almost impossible to help.

'South of Dhaka, several Christian groups are making daily food runs of

both dry goods and cooked food.'

Christine described the 'tide' marks seen on many houses as the water subsided.

'For many the temporary shelter on the roof is becoming home. There are still families camping on beds which are five feet above the ground.

'Immediately the water began to rise people opened their door to evacuees, the Blind School has 200 or so, BBS just a handful, YMCA School several hundred and all local schools were full.

'The Baptist Sangha organised a feeding programme of one hot meal per day for almost one thousand people. This they did for ten days until people were able to return home.'

When news of the flooding reached the BMS in London, £15,000 was sent to the

What's happening in the Church around the World

Bangladesh Baptist Sangha for relief work.

'We are all very grateful for your concern and prayers,' wrote Christine Preston. 'There is a distribution programme planned to bring food to 30,000 affected folk, in various parts. Please pray for safety in travel for those involved in the work and for a righteous distribution.'

Photos: Packets of chappattis, sugar, salt and water purifying tablets being distributed to the west of Dhaka.

The Bangladesh Baptist Sangha work at Shanti Kutir is in the care of the Liebenzell Mission. From Sunday 28 August until Tuesday 5 September the water was rising there up to a level where every house on the compound was flooded except the Church building, the clinic and the waiting house for the patients.

The waiting house, as well as the clinic, has been used to evacuate some of the clinic staff as well as others.

During this time, 823 patients, men, women and children, received treatment and 1,284 received food for one meal. Four men, who normally work at the clinic, were occupied in finding food in order to help the flood victims. Others had to organise the patients so that the work in the clinic could be done smoothly.

One of the Liebenzell sisters has been visiting different villages and churches.

'These visits have been done under great difficulties as every area is tremendously flooded and a very dangerous current can be seen. It will take at least another month to see the water receding in a way that the people will be able to return home. And with the receding water there will come the danger of disease. We shall have to engage in a feeding programme which will probably last for another twelve months.'

DISASTER TIME!

It's been a time of disasters. In a period of about four weeks the BMS responded to an earthquake in Nepal (£2,000), floods in Bangladesh (£15,000), and then to the Hurricane which swept through the island of Jamaica damaging thousands of properties including the United Theological College of the West Indies. This time an initial grant of £5,000 was sent, although it will probably take ten times that amount to repair the college.

Keith Riglin, BMS tutor at the

College, said that the beginning of term had to be delayed – a great disappointment to all those theological students due to arrive from different parts of the Caribbean for their ministerial training.

All this happened in the middle of a postal strike, but this didn't prevent our Baptist Churches from sending in more than £31,000 – paid through bank accounts – for the BMS Relief Fund. Thank you for that, and for all that continues to come through.

NEWS REPORT

The floods in Bangladesh were the worst in the history of that part of the world. More than 16 different Christian Churches and 35 Voluntary Christian Organisations have been involved in the relief operations.

The Churches have mobilised all available resources to help the people affected by the floods. The Government of Bangladesh also sought assistance from friendly countries to overcome the situation. Many countries have responded positively to the call.

A great question arises: IS BANGLADESH DROWNING? The river-beds are becoming shallower by deposits of alluvial soil each year and tend easily to cause inundation.

from 'Ecumenical News'
Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 1988

• P R A Y E R C A L L •

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 their adjustments to French life, and as a family with their baby daughter, Rachel. Neil and Ruth Abbot hope to join them in a year's time. Remember them in this year of preparation as they minister in Ossett.

6-12 November WOMEN'S WORK IN ZAIRE

This covers a whole range of activities from weekly meetings, larger monthly meetings, choirs, sewing and reading classes, prison and hospital visiting. Women may walk many miles to attend services and classes. Leaders may have particular difficulty in travelling in the interior as they seek to build up and encourage women in small villages. Pray for their safety and that they will be able to continue to work.

Pray especially that all those in leadership will have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and be prepared to forsake all involvement in witchcraft and that all they do will be marked by love and that they will receive wisdom and boldness in their witnessing.

13-19 November COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN BRAZIL

The Baptists of Brazil are showing an increasing awareness of and commitment to Social Work. Alongside vast riches, there is also much poverty, ignorance and malnutrition. The church has various projects offering help and teaching to those in need. The Friendship House at Campo Grande is providing the base for clinics, creches and primary education.

After some months at the rural development project at Potinga, working with Santino the foreman and gaining experience in the programme there, Michael and Daveen Wilson will soon be moving into a new area. Remember them with all the new challenges ahead.

20-26 November CHURCH WORK IN ZAIRE

In the 110 years since Protestant missionaries arrived in Zaire, millions have received the Gospel. BMS missionaries continue to share in the spread of the Gospel through the work of the CBFZ. The work is spread from the port of Matadi to the capital, Kinshasa, up the river to Kisangani and beyond, crossing, by the grace of God, many tribal and language barriers. Communications within the country are exceedingly difficult. A radio network helps, as does the division of the work into six regions.

In Kinshasa region the churches are bursting at the seams – several hold two full services each Sunday – but witchcraft and the many and varied sects lay claim on a population which is economically poor and is seeing an increase in diseases such as resistant malaria and AIDS. Only about one third of churches have a trained, ordained pastor. There is, therefore, a great need to encourage and train church leaders. Pray for the Rev Foster and Jean Wright as they arrive in Kinshasa and begin the process of understanding the people and the church they have come to serve in Christ's name.

27 November-3 December DEVELOPMENT WORK IN NEPAL

In Nepal, a country with few natural resources, the people depend on forests for their survival – fodder for the animals, which give essential manure for growing crops. Trees also provide fuel and their roots hold the soil in place and retain the water which is released slowly. The cutting down of trees too quickly has disastrous results – one of the reasons for last year's (and this year's) disastrous floods in Bangladesh. This problem is just one that the UMN is trying to help solve through its rural development projects – like reforestation. One of the aims is to ensure that such projects also help the poorer people, like power for rural areas and the opportunity for cooking by it, and irrigation to help better agriculture. This is all part of God reconciling all things to Himself.

The Bolobo Centenary

by **MARGOT BAFENDE**

We were bumping along a badly eroded dirt track in the Land Rover, en route for an annual 'Matondo' thanksgiving service, and I was clutching hard at the back to hold on, when Pastor Nkuansambu leaned over and said, 'The Executive Committee want you to go to speak about the beginning of missionary work there. . . .'

This was why, on 10 July at 6 o'clock in the morning, Augustin, my husband, Ida, who had just broken up, and I joined the crowds at the river port at Kinshasa and boarded the special boat hired by the Kinshasa churches to take over a thousand of us to the weekend celebrations at Bolobo. We greeted our friends: choirs in their uniforms, pastors, deacons, the brass band, and others, all surrounded by luggage, including food for the two to three day journey.

A river journey in Zaire is a never-forgotten experience. Our boat pushed three barges which had recently been spruced up when used for the big Party Congress. 800 slept in the minute bunk-bedded cabins on the barges. Some of us slept on mattresses on the floor in the 'real' boat. The rest - no-one ever knew how many (200? 300?) - kipped down on deck.

On looking back over this weekend, I find that the river journeys of nearly three days up and one and a half days down were as much part of our whole experience as the actual day's celebration at Bolobo itself. A very large percentage of the group were women, who gave up their earnings on the market stall or elsewhere to come.

There were eight or ten church choirs in their colourful uniforms. They could be seen and heard practising in many parts of the boat, singing in Lingala and Bobangi. The twenty odd participants from the Lower River (Mbanza Ngungu and Matadi) immediately joined up and started a little choir in Kikongo. Some enterprising members sold the new editions of the Lingala and Bobangi hymnbooks, and the brass band, with members from three different churches, worked on their repertoire.

The food we had brought was supplemented by fish, chickens, kwanga

(manioc puddings), plantains and greens bought from the village fishermen who came alongside in their canoes, timing with admirable skill the moment to tie up and jump on board. The old hands had brought braziers with them to cook on; but the first mate's wife let me use her calor gas stove

welcoming on board delegations from Tshumbiri and other riverside parishes. It was, too, a time for showing that belonging to the one Baptist community broke down the tribal barriers which separated us. Boat services were held every morning and late afternoon, led by the different pastors and



Centenary Address by Pastor Koli, President of CBFZ

for our fish, even adding onions and tomatoes of her own! We were able to thank her on the return journey by giving her a leg of a small goat we had bought cheaply!

Before it was light, folk started to queue for the very limited washing-cum-loo accommodation - each cubicle containing a shower which dispensed (river) water immediately above the (one) hole! Pastor Enguta, bless him, spoilt us, as we were able to share the first mate's bathroom. He also sent to our cabin some very welcome bottles of 'pop' to supplement the drinking water we had brought. Many were old hands at river travel, others were making the journey for the first time.

Walking around the barges was the occasion for renewing old friendships and making new ones, of sharing experiences and, as we drew nearer to Bolobo, of

accompanied by the band and some of the choirs, with a series of very good meditations.

There was great excitement when two of the barges broke loose as we juddered and grounded momentarily on a sandbank. We waved and shouted to our other half, who sang and danced back as they drifted slowly down river with the brass band striking up from the top of the back barge! We turned, gave chase, and finally captured our other half! Two series of sandbanks delayed us, so that the journey took much longer than anticipated. Pastor Enguta, sadly, had to radio the message that we would not arrive in time for the Saturday festivities. In fact it was early Sunday morning when we tied up to a huge mango tree at Bolobo station, and Pastor Enguta led our delegation, walking the plank to where Rev Koli, our CBFZ President (who

(continued from previous page)

had come by plane) and the welcoming party were waiting.

The Celebrations, necessarily shortened, started with a marathon four and a half hour open-air service, with many choirs, our brass band and, unexpectedly, a local military band. We sang lustily, albeit incomprehensibly, in Bobangi. We were all welcomed, and then we listened to Pastor Koli, who made an excellent though long speech.

Then it was my turn to give the history of the early missionary work. I afterwards discovered that this was shown that evening on the national TV!

Pastor Mengi of the Church of Christ in Zaire gave the sermon, and then the surprise: President Mobutu's personal representative, a cabinet minister, brought greetings from 'Le President Fondateur du Parti' and, unzipping a large travel bag, handed Pastor Eboma literally armfuls of money, a total presidential gift of 5 million zaires (over £10,000), of which part was to pay for the boat! The service finished with a memorable prayer by Pastor Mengi, as together we praised the Lord for one hundred years' work at Bolobo, and committed to Him the next hundred years.

In the afternoon, we watched an enacting of the arrival of the first missionaries at Bolobo. The 'fierce and hostile' natives in their grass skirts launched again their spears, arrows and stones against 'Mr and Mrs Bentley' (Richard and Sue Hoskins) in their little boat the *Peace* (*Mark II*, hastily improvised!), and the heathen warriors were again transformed and captivated by baby Bentley – little Abigail Hoskins – who was passed from hand to hand. Sue afterwards said that she understood how hard that must have been for Mrs Bentley!

We saw 'Grenfell' forbidding the burial of slaves with their master at the death of Chief Ibaka; all performed with much dancing. In our 1988 version, the details were explained by a commentator over the loudspeaker to the very large audience watching from the river bank and from our boat. It was fascinating, highly amusing and, more important, it made us all realise what incredible and intrepid people those first missionaries were, with all they dared and accomplished for their Lord.

After that, it was perhaps inevitable that the evening 'Soiree Musicale' was somewhat of an anti-climax. Moreover, the hospitality arrangements seemed, by this time, to have been overtaken by numbers, so that some were more concerned with finding a meal than with listening or singing. Even so, there was no shortage of choirs, both local and from Kinshasa and, of course, the band who, once fed, treated us to all they had learnt together. Between these items, church leaders from the different tribes of the Bolobo area explained how the Gospel had first been brought to their tribe.

A crowded day! There had been very little time for talking with our Bolobo friends or for visiting Bolobo itself, although we made a quick visit to the hospital. Late that night, we returned to the boat, and we left on the Monday morning. After we had waved



Choirs leading singing on boat

goodbye, a motor boat approached, coming from upstream and carrying a sad and complaining cow – a farewell present from Bolobo for us all to eat on the return journey! It was divided up, distributed and cooked; our portion, which we ate with boiled plantains and kwanga puddings which we had bought at Bolobo, was delicious.

The return journey was a time for reflection. Our morning and afternoon services gave much space to prayer together and to thinking over the weekend and its meaning to us. We thanked God for the 100 years of work and witness, for the enormous growth of the church, and for the labours of the early missionaries; and we committed to Him the next hundred years under the indigenous leaders.

New friendships were cemented – there was Mama Winnie from Yalamba, for example, whose father, Disasi, had worked on Grenfell's *Peace*. She found a kindred spirit in Mama Tufwila, whose parents had seen the pioneering days at Ngombe Lutete, and the two old ladies sat on deck talking together in Lingala – the mother tongue of neither.

I discovered then that my talk had resolved a thorny question as to which tribe had

Boat from Kinshasa arriving with 1,000 people



been the first at Bolobo to receive the Good News. I had, very wisely, been kept in ignorance of this controversy so that my findings would be neutral, culled from the early documents!

Early Tuesday afternoon, we arrived at Kinshasa, band playing, cameras snapping, laden with plantains, manio flour, fish and kwanga, and impatient to share these and our experiences with our families and friends waiting at the dockside.

An unqualified success? Well, maybe there had been some hiccups. But Pastor Eboma and the Bolobo church would rest at last, happy that they had had such a tremendous response after all their months of preparations. We thanked, too, Pastor Enguta and the Kinshasa churches for having thought up and dared to put into action our river trip – it must have been quite unique.

I can't help feeling that, as we celebrated the 100 years of Christian work and witness at Bolobo, thanking God for all that was achieved by the Grenfells, the Bentleys, and other pioneers, so these our forebears must have been adding their celestial praise and joyful thanksgiving for the church which our Lord enabled them to found.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Departures

Rev and Mrs J Furmage on 18 August to S W Parana, Brazil.
Mrs C Green on 24 August to IME, Kimpese, Zaire.
Mr and Mrs R Hoskins on 24 August to Bolobo, Zaire.
Mr and Mrs F Gouthwaite on 26 August to Campo Grande, Brazil.
Rev and Mrs L Messeder on 31 August to Campinas, Brazil.
Mr and Mrs D Perry on 31 August to Campinas, Brazil.
Miss R Montacute on 7 September to Kinshasa, Zaire.
Mr D Champion on 7 September to Kinshasa, Zaire.
Mr and Mrs D Stockley on 8 September to Potinga, Brazil.
Mr and Mrs O Clark on 14 September to Kinshasa, Zaire.
Miss A Bothamley on 17 September to Vellore, India.

Arrivals

Rev and Mrs P Cousins on 1 August from Cuiaba, Brazil.

Mrs M Bafende on 5 August from Mbanza Ngungu, Zaire.
Miss P James on 6 August from Cuttack, India.
Mr T Lehane on 21 August from Andhi Khola, Nepal.
Miss S Headlam on 27 August from Chandraghona, Bangladesh. (Private visit.)
Mr and Mrs J Corbett on 16 September from Kinshasa, Zaire.
Dr R Hart on 17 September from Chandraghona, Bangladesh.

Marriages

On 6 August at Worthing, **Rev Max Hancock** married **Mrs Dorothy Beagly**.
 On 3 September at Birmingham, **Mr Tim Lehane** married **Miss Alison Maclean**.

	£
Miss G E Clarke	6,593.54
Miss M Clarke	200.00
Mr C O Hunt	8,000.00
Mr A J Martin	5,000.00
Mrs W Merricks	1,000.00
Miss A Myers	96.64
Miss W M Nicholls	7,046.03
Mrs E F Roberts	100.00
Miss L R Tilt	57.68
Miss E M Ward	48.00
Mr J Yates	50.00

General Work

Anon: £10.00; Anon: £60.00; Anon: £23.00;
 Anon: £20.00.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and anonymous gifts. (To 6 October 1988.)

	£
Miss E Bellingham	3,308.54
Miss M E Buckton	309.50

Relief Fund

Anon: £5.00; Anon: £50.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £50.00; Anon: Parkstone £20.00.

Relief Fund for Bangladesh

Anon: £10.00; Anon: £20.00; Anon: £20.00;
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