



20p June 1989

How can we keep up with it all? So much is being said, so much is being done, and yet so much remains to be done! At the Baptist Assembly in Leicester we were asked, as Christians, to be good stewards of God's created world and to respect the environment. We were urged to remember the homeless, those being tortured, and children in need. The BMS Annual Members' Meeting passed a resolution about violence and death squads in El Salvador and pledged to stand by our Baptist brothers and sisters in that country. We were reminded of the continuing need to evangelise both at home and overseas and, through the presentation of the BMS Annual Report, delegates were made aware of British Baptist involvement in outreach and mission within twelve different countries and the need to continue in partnership with the national churches.

Throughout it all a note of urgency was sounded. People are suffering, hungry, deprived and oppressed, and the root cause is spiritual. We may be at the beginning of our Bi-Centenary celebrations but there can be no self-satisfied looking back believing that all is now achieved. There is no way that we can opt out of mission, and yet there is no way in which we can do it all.

So it is good to be reminded this month of our partnership with the church in India. We only have four BMS missionaries in India, but that does not mean that mission is coming to an end. The church is there, it is an Indian church and it is trying to understand its mission. The Baptist Church in Mizoram, with its recognition of a very special call to evangelise in India, is so different from the Church of North India. Yet they are both, in their own ways, trying to use the gifts and insights which they have been given to be true to their Lord.

No we cannot do it all, neither are we called to do it all, nor can the church in India, Zaire, Brazil or anywhere else, do it all. But as the body of Christ, sharing our resources in people and wealth, supported by faithful, caring, praying Christians worldwide, we can do so much more together than we could ever do on our own.

MISSIONARY HERALD

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Telex: 94070435 BMSB G

General Secretary Rev R G S Harvey

Overseas Secretary Rev A T MacNeill

Rev D E Pountain

Enquiries about service overseas to: Miss J A Maple

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We share in the work of the Church in:

Angola Bangladesh Brazil El Salvador Nepal

France India Jamaica

Sri Lanka Thailand Trinidad Zaire

WHAT A WELCOME!

by Carole and Angus MacNeill

When Carol and Angus MacNeill visited Mizoram, North East India, last year they were given a 'right royal welcome' by members of the Mizoram Baptist Church. It was their way of saying 'Thank you' to the BMS for bringing 'the good tidings of great joy.'

Pioneers - Lorrain and Savidge

We were never allowed to forget Lorrain and Savidge, pioneer BMS missionaries to Mizoram in the 1890's. Their photographs stared down at us from the walls of church buildings and private houses, with an occasional glimpse of Robert Arthington to remind us of this Yorkshire eccentric's global interest in mission. Often a complete list of the 24 BMS missionaries, who worked in Mizoram over a period of 70 years, was displayed next to the patriarchal portraits of Lorrain and Savidge.

At numerous receptions, welcome speeches never omitted a reference to the past. Yet behind the flowery language lay a sincere thanks to God for the coming of the gospel to Mizoram and for those who brought it.

Today we are reminded afresh of the brave soldiers of the Cross of Christ from the Baptist Missionary Society who came to Mizoram bringing the good tidings of great joy. Because of them, we have now become the children of God,' we were told in a welcome speech at Tawipui.

At one village we met a diminutive old lady with long dangling ear-lobes and eyes as bright as buttons.

'She was a girl when Lorrain and Savidge came to her village and preached the gospel,' we were told.

Erect and firmly holding on to her stick with both hands she looked us up and down. Did we stand in the great tradition?

At another village, an old man watched us walk by and saying *chibai* to as many people as possible. As we passed, tears rolled down his face. This was one of our most humbling experiences, for we knew that in us he was looking far into the past



'Often a complete list of BMS Missionaries who worked in Mizoram . . . was displayed'

 to the coming of the Good News and to the working of God's Spirit in Mizoram.
 We trembled a little at what people were seeing in us.

All this explains the large welcome we received. It is not easy to stand in the back of a jeep, with 62 motorcycles immediately ahead and 30 flag-carrying vehicles behind, and wave to people lining the streets. Did they really know that we lived in a modest semi-detached house in suburban London, often packed like sardines in London's Underground? Why should five, six, seven thousand people cram the centre of Lunglei to cheer us, if it were not because of some inner, deep awareness that in their history God had been at work?

CALLED OF GOD

Others, who understand why Christianity has spread in Mizoram and why the church has grown so quickly into a community of 70,000 and 265 local churches, can reflect on why so much was made of our visit. It may be connected with *Tlawngaihna* — the obligation on all Mizos to be hospitable, kind and helpful to others. It, more likely, has its roots in a strong sense that God has called them specially to himself in a unique way and that, strangely, the Baptist Missionary Society is linked with this calling.

We met the great grand-daughter of Darphawka, the Mizo of the last century, who dreamt of the coming of 'light' for his people out of the west.

'The light may not come in my lifetime,' he said, 'but when it comes, follow it, follow it.'

Darphawka is like an Old Testament prophet who announced the coming of the Messiah, so that when the Good News of Jesus did come with Lorrain and Savidge, the people were able to accept it as something for them and belonging to them.

Today there is peace in Mizoram. The troubles of the past few years are over and

the Mizo National Front contests for power through the ballot box. As a separate state within India, Mizoram has a good deal of autonomy. The language is cherished and the Baptists of the south along with the Presbyterians of the north, make this a predominantly Christian state.

Mizos see themselves as a people apart, proud of their history, their separate culture, their language and their Christian faith. They have come to believe that, like Israel in the Old Testament, not only are they called to maintain the true faith but they are to be a light to the 'Gentiles' around them.

WORSHIP

Worship plays a big part in maintaining the faith. It is a peculiar mixture of old and new, authentic Mizo and imports from the West. Churches are crowded.

As we sat in the packed church at Lunglawn, now part of Lunglei, our neighbour said: 'This used to be the largest church in Lunglei, but no longer.'

'Sorry to hear it,' we said, 'has there been some trouble?'

'Oh no! No trouble. The other Lunglei churches have grown bigger!'

There is obviously no lack of people willing and eager to attend church services.

In church, the singing can be of a straightforward translation of 'To God be the glory' or 'Joy to the world.' This can be followed by a favourite, a Mizo hymn sung to the tune Cwm Rhondda. It takes a sharp ear to detect anything other than

'Mist filled valleys at the bottom of precipitous slopes'

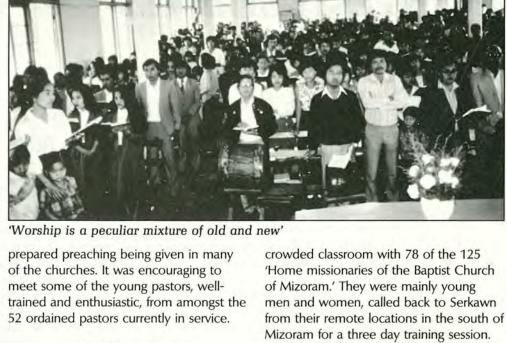


the remotest connections with the Welsh tune. With the big drum and the little drum booming out and the tune turned on its head and beaten out flat and then sideways, the end product seems as native to the hills of Mizoram as the original to the valleys of Wales. This kind of singing brings some of the congregation out to the square in front of the communion table to dance. For some, this means a sedate walk, clapping hands and swaying rhythmically. For others, we only saw women doing it, it means a more ecstatic dance with peculiar backward jerks. We were told that this is part of the strong revivalist element which runs through Mizo church life.

Later in the service a choir, or choirs will sing. The echoes of 'Don't turn back to the things you left behind,' or of a smoothly professional male singer with female backing groups, guitars and electronic keyboard, crooning 'He touched me, O he touched me' still ring in our heads. Some of the singing will always evoke memories of Mizoram. The driver of our car kept playing cassettes of Mizo singing, so the music is all mixed up in our memories with the twisting National Highway that runs like a spine down the centre of Mizoram - ten bends a minute - with breathtaking views of green hills and distant blue ranges, interspersed by mist-filled valleys at the bottom of precipitous slopes.

We did not have an opportunity to sample the kind of preaching given in Mizo churches since we were expected to address every congregation that had gathered to welcome us. Even with a translation, people listened attentively and from conversation we could gather that there is some very serious and well-

Angus MacNeill reporting on his Mizo visit to General Committee



SHARING THE FAITH

The Mizos have a passionate concern to share 'the faith' with others. Without being unaware of the Christian Church in other parts of India — several pastors and leaders have trained at Serampore and at the Union Bible School — they feel that they have this calling to be 'light bearers'. Missionary zeal is spoken about a great deal and put into practice.

In one village a group of children sang about the light of the gospel coming to them and their eagerness to share it with the rest of the world. Looking at the 30 children assembled at the edge of the road, singing wholeheartedly and very tunefully to the background noises of the village cocks crowing and babies whimpering, it was more than a fanciful thought to think of them as future 'missionaries.' We had already sat in a

We also met a missionary on 'furlough' from Northern Assam and drank tea in a small village where the women of the village ran a tea stall in aid of the Zoram Baptist Mission which was supporting two of the young people from that village at work in Tripura.

The current Secretary of the Zoram Baptist Mission, the Rev Thangchina, does not talk in terms of stirring up interest in mission, but of seizing opportunities for even greater effort within and outside Mizoram. 'Perhaps God has called the Mizos to win India for Christ,' someone suggested to us. A chosen people, indeed.

There was a freshness and confidence about the Mizos when they talked about mission. They were still in the first flush of responding to the wider vision. We could detect some familiar problems looming up on the horizon, but the driving passion was there, with 'Early Church enthusiasm' to accompany it.

There are of course some problems in Mizoram. The old agreement with the Presbyterians in the north has broken down and there is the breakaway Pawiran Baptist Church with five thousand members. Secularisation is also creeping in. These dark clouds are there, but for us, in our brief visit, it was the sense of sunshine which predominated.



LORD, HELP US TO BE THE CHURCH!

Geoffrey and Elsie Grose describe the variety of work being done by the Church in Delhi, India

'What went wrong?'

Pradeep had been found with a knife in his stomach; a sad end to a sad person. We had never been able to make out all the truth about him since we had met him that first Christmas.

It is so hot in India from April to September that it is difficult to remember what the cold winter is really like. But it does get cold in Delhi. When there has been a heavy monsoon and the heat of summer has been rained out of the sky, then the winter is likely to be cold. Icy winds sweep down from the mountains and across the unheated deserts and, especially at night, it can be very cold indeed. Pradeep turned up at our door on such a day. He was shivering in a thin and none-too-clean a shirt with thin and paint-marked trousers to match. His mother, he told us, had been in a bus accident and could not get about. He himself had a casual job as painter but one which would not last long. He needed help for rations and warm bedding as he was an out-patient at the local TB hospital and had little strength.

Learning by experience that one never takes a story at face value, we gave some small help to buy provisions for the day and then began to make our own enquiries. We found that he was a TB patient and none too strong. We sought out the place where he and his mother were living along with his younger brother. It was a mere shack of a place — the sort of shelter one would associate with farm animals — and, apart from one bed made of string plaited across a couple of bamboo struts, there was no furniture.

Being entrusted with administering the Poor Fund of the church, we were able to purchase immediate aid — some food and a fire to cook it on, a tin of paraffin oil, and a quilt to give warmth at night. The hospital was found to be

co-operative in giving out-patient medicine and the mother's leg appeared to be mending. Due to the man's weak condition, rations were supplied fortnightly; not too much to discourage necessary personal effort, but enough to ensure that there was daily nourishment. An enquiry made from his home church hundreds of miles away confirmed some points in his story, and all this encouraged the interest of church members. One member helped by processing through the courts a claim by the mother for compensation from the bus company. Some paint, brushes and tools were supplied to Pradeep when he started to do light work.

Later a job was found for Pradeep in a Christian press being managed by a friend of ours. The owner kindly purchased a little one-room shack so that Pradeep and family would have somewhere to live. Because his place of work was some distance away, we lost touch with the man. On one occasion, he called to visit along with a pretty young woman whom he introduced to us as his wife. We had the feeling that Pradeep was pulling through his period of trouble and was set on the road to becoming a selfsupporting and responsible worker. That is, until the day that we met the owner of the press who told us that Pradeep had left the job, sold the shack to someone else and kept the money for himself. Another friend had also found out that the 'mother' wasn't Pradeep's real mother at all, nor was he married to the girl he called his wife.

This was disappointing and after a long period of 'no see' came the news that Pradeep had died. We never learnt the full circumstances of his death, but it's a sad thing to realise that Pradeep didn't make it good, as we had hoped he would.



DIY in India

Very few men in Delhi have a garden shed or a workbench in their garage. All too few young people develop a hobby. Possibly the reason is that hobbies involve expense rather than income. This reflects not so much poverty, though many people are economically poor, but also a careful husbandry of money. Money is much sought after in India, simply because it is hard to get but easy to get rid of. Few Indian people are spendthrifts. They have to work for what they get and the necessities of life — a home, good food, education — are expensive.

Strange as it may seem, DIY is hardly known so, when it comes to putting up a shelf, that is the carpenter's job; or fitting a new washer, that is the plumber's business; and there are carpenters and plumbers readily available. In Green Park you will see little mailboxes hung up at strategic points along the roadside labelled 'Electrician' or 'Complaints and Requests.' These boxes are put up by the residents' association which employs carefully vetted people as workmen for the particular type of job required. If your door comes off the hinge or the electric plug fails, you drop a note in such a box and, in a day or two, a skilled workman will appear to attend to the job. If the work is not done satisfactorily, you can trace the workman and request the association to have the work done properly.

Not that I used the association's arrangement myself. I had my own tool box and found satisfaction in personally attending to these matters in my own amateur way. And, when it came to distempering the flat, all I had to do was buy a few tins of distemper and a brush for my wife to use — and go out visiting!

'When each part is working properly . . .'

The church at Green Park, New Delhi, is celebrating its Silver Jubilee this year. It is hard to see change when it happens gradually over the years, but it is remarkable to note the way in which numbers have steadily grown. Extensive new residential estates have brought many families into the area, so two large congregations worship one after the other on a Sunday morning and, simultaneously, two Sunday Schools are held for the children. It is great to see the children going upstairs for their classes accompanied by their teachers.

Looking around the congregations, it is interesting to pick out the other helpers. Sitting at the back is Mr T, keeping an eye (and ear) on the PA system, always ready to put extension speakers on the walls outside when there is an extra crowd. Mrs L is there at the organ, happy that no power cut has so far sabotaged her efforts this morning — but, even so, the choir members have already practised the hymns, so they will be able to lead the singing. Ushers are at the door welcoming people as they come in. Later they will pass round the offering bags and remain behind after service to count the money, entering totals in the service register before handing to Mr D, the Treasurer, to bank next day. Mrs A is sitting near the front. She will be gathering the envelopes with funds earmarked for St Mary's — a home for elderly ladies — while Mr K, sitting in the foyer, will take the donations pledged to help pay for the education of leprosy patients' children.

Service over, the people move out of the church. Mr M takes his place near the library ready to recommend good books to borrowers and hoping they will remember to return them. 'Church books have no backs!' he complains. Mrs N stops to borrow a book of children's stories to use in the Bible Club which meets in her home on Sunday afternoons. Bibles and other Christian books for sale are on display outside. Several members of the Women's Fellowship are busy pouring out cups of tea, encouraging people to stay and greet each other, especially newcomers, while Mrs D moves among the crowd handing out the latest issue of the Daily Bible Readings to the hundred or so subscribers. B is also moving in the crowd trying to persuade the Young Adults to finish their tea quickly and move upstairs to the hall so that their meeting can begin on time.

Some faces are missing. Two or three lay leaders will have been leading worship for smaller congregations in outlying areas. Members of the Youth Fellowship have been visiting and sharing with patients in the Cheshire Home.

Many people doing many things; but only on a Sunday? It is as I watch members leaving after their time of worship — housewives, fathers, children, nurses, drivers, doctors, technicians, teachers, civil servants, waiters, small-scale entrepreneurs, bankers, accountants, cooks, engineers — that I see the church and breathe a prayer: 'Lord, help us to be the church we should be!'

Monkey business

Monkeys have a habit of appearing more fierce than they are. I understand that it is part of their normal way of going on to bare their teeth and make threatening advances towards other beings, probably acting on the assumption that if you can scare the daylights out of others, you can get on quietly and undisturbed with your own particular spot of business.

But on this occasion we were going upstairs in a prestigious hospital in New Delhi; not at all the sort of place that one would expect to meet monkeys; but there they were — two of them being driven downstairs by humans from the third floor, and finding themselves cut off by two Europeans coming up from the ground floor. They didn't appear very happy with the situation. Nor were we! We had never read an instruction booklet on what to do when confronted in a confined space with a couple of sturdy but upset monkeys, but we did know that monkey bites can carry rabies and were not at all keen to prove this personally.

As it happened, being squeezed from below and from above at the same time, the pair took off and leapt out of reach, probably more scared of us than we were of them, and the incident passed.

'But why do you allow such things?' we queried from the matron who was known to us.

'What to do?' she replied. 'We try our best to keep them out. Most windows are glazed or netted but the monkeys are so clever they can lift the window handles and get in, and they regularly raid the patients' lockers, running off with fruit and food. Strangely, the patients do not object, for every monkey represents the god Hanuman. If a monkey takes your food, it's a sign that the god has some interest in you and will probably wish you well. So crowds of monkeys make their home on the roof and on the window ledges and, as many hospital workers are good Hindus, no one would think of destroying or maiming an incarnation of one of the gods. There would be a riot! So what to do?'

And that is one of those questions to which there is no easy answer.

'An old man comes to church'

The old man comes regularly to attend service. He tip-taps his way to the front pew, often while the first hymn is being sung, and lets his stick fall with a clatter to the floor. With folded hands, he has a brief prayer and then unwraps whatever floral gift he has brought. Sometimes it is fresh flowers begged or cadged from some garden along the way, sometimes it is a garland of marigolds bought for a copper coin from a flowerseller. Such an offering is then placed near the pulpit, after which attention can be given to the hymn-singing. Not that he reads the words, for frequently the hymnbook is held the wrong way up, but he enjoys singing, and sings in his own native tongue.

His clothes are simple white cotton cloth, but not too white, for they are handwashed and soon take on the colour of the dusty air. Well-worn clothes, too, so that some members of the congregation ask 'Padre, can't you get him some new clothes?' A simple question to which there is a simple answer: 'Yes;' but no simple remedy, for his family members who show little interest in church attendance find themselves in need of new clothes too, and 'borrow' his. We tried to do our best by providing a

Sunday set of clothes which were kept in the house of a church member who lived near him. On the way to church he would change into the new set, and happily joined the congregation looking spic and span. After worship, on the way home, he would return the new suit for safe keeping until the following Sunday's outing. This arrangement worked well . . . for four weeks. Then, inadvertently, or perhaps under orders, the new suit went 'home' with him . . . and was not seen again.

The doctor at the nearby cottage hospital is a kind person. He knows this old man well and, from time to time, admits him. Three days rest and a little medicine plus regular food helps to restore failing health. 'Padre, can't you give him regular rations?' A simple question to which there is no simple answer: 'Yes, but I cannot leave the money in his hand, for it will quickly be taken by others for another purpose.' Once an arrangement was made for a nearby church member to cook him a meal every other day or so, but this dear soul died and could not be replaced.

What does he remember, this old man? 'I remember working for a pastor once. Sometimes he used to do a carpenter's job

in between acting as a pastor. In those days I was younger. I did the work of bearer until he was transferred and went away. But that was years ago . . . and now I cannot work. I sit in my son's home and watch the children and look at the visitors who come. Many people come to see my son. He helps them get their ration cards and permits for cement and such like. I keep an eye on the family's cow, too. At night she sleeps in a stall next to my own shack. When I cannot sleep, I sing Yishu Masih, mero prana bachavia (Jesus saved my soul) and I sometimes sing all night long . . .' - no doubt disturbing others who have to sleep out under the night sky nearby.

So I watch him as he gratefully accepts a plate of food and, sitting upon his haunches in the time-honoured way, first says his grace with folded hands, then mixes his rice and lentils with vegetable curry. After that he will snooze until Sunday School children start to arrive with their loud chatter and make further snoozing impossible. Then it must be 'up and off,' home in stages, resting here and there along the dusty road. Stick and shoes and cap are gathered up and then it's Salaam — God's peace be with you.

School for non-scholars

Just why it should be so is hard to say but the fact is that the Delhi girls are often better students than boys. This does not mean that there are not plenty of intelligent boys. Far from it! But, on average, looking at the whole picture, we find girls taking their studies seriously and working hard while boys seem to take a much more casual attitude and quickly lose interest in necessary subjects. They have our sympathy up to a point, for it is often difficult in your early teens to see where good scholarship will take you.

On leaving school there is such competition for jobs that anything worthwhile is quickly snapped up. To add to the difficulties of the job-seeker, favouritism is frequently seen. A person will get a post not because of academic qualification but because of a relative or acquaintance who will manipulate the selection procedure.

In many cases, too, there are a number of palms to be greased before an application is accepted/forwarded/processed/considered. So, while good marks and a smart appearance do count for a lot, the boys seem to fight shy of study and adopt an easy-going attitude. Another possible explanation is that, socially speaking, a girl is expected to get married. This involves facing up to the facts of the marriage market. Just as some newspapers in the UK print whole pages of ads for properties or cars, so in India you will find long lists of parents advertising for a suitable boy for their daughter.

Such is the state of things that, along with the girl, a large dowry has to be given, so it always tends to be a boys' market. Hence, throughout her school and college life, a girl will be working not only for academic success but to command an advantage when it comes to marriage. A daughter with a Master's degree presents a more attractive proposition than one with a mere matric pass.

So the outcome, for one reason or another, is that girls seem to work harder than boys, and boys seem more inclined to drop out of their studies. This has been attracting the attention of the church, for it will not help the Christian community to have a high average of dropouts and poorly educated youths.

A CNI bishop sought to tackle this problem but, unfortunately, died before he could accomplish much. However, in his memory, a training school was started a year ago where boys and girls are helped to learn a trade such as machinist, typist, carpenter or fitter. Training is basic and a mechanic in India tends to be on a lower salary scale than a white-collar worker but, nevertheless, it is a start and one which, in time, may help those without scholastic achievement to be usefully employable.

WE STAND WITH YOU FOR PEACE



BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Meeting in session at Leicester, United Kingdom, on Tuesday, 18 April 1989, we the members attending the Annual Members' Meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society of 93-7 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA,

acknowledge,

with gratitude to God, the co-operative links which exist between the Baptist Missionary Society and the El Salvador Baptist Association

but note.

with dismay, the continuing strife and tension within El Salvador, and the escalating level of violence throughout the country despite the recent peace initiatives in Central America.

In particular

we register deep concern that those who strive for justice, peace and reconciliation in a spirit of true Christian compassion for all men and women, are at times subjected themselves to hostile suspicion, harassment and even violence.

Consquently,

reaffirming a belief in God Who wills all peoples, including our own, to live in peace, demonstrating love and righteousness in all their actions and who has given to every man, woman and child the right to be treated with dignity and respect by others,

we proclaim

our oneness with the El Salvador Baptist Association, its leaders and members, as well as with all people who hold to this belief.

At the same time,

we call upon the President and Government of El Salvador

- to seek to pursue peace and reconciliation at all levels of society.
- to ensure the rights of all to live without fear or molestation
- to restrain those who openly or covertly resort to violence in attempts to smother the voice of Christian conscience.

In making this appeal,

we do so in a spirit of humility calling upon the Baptist Churches of the United Kingdom for earnest prayer to God for the land of El Salvador and its people.







A strong call to the President and government of El Salvador to pursue peace and reconciliation was made by the BMS Annual Members in April.

Moving the resolution, Angus MacNeill, BMS Overseas Secretary said that recent events in El Salvador had led to the forming of the resolution.

'We've got very close links with the El Salvador Baptist Association and we recognise that we have a responsibility to be as supportive of that Association as possible,' he said.

'We wish to make it known that we stand by our El Salvadorean brothers and sisters in Christ wherever they are in El Salvador. Especially we stand by those who are in the El Salvador Baptist Association as they face the menacing problems of oppression in their attempts to be faithful to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

As he seconded the resolution, David Martin, BMS Assistant Overseas Secretary, spoke of the death of a Baptist worker in El Salvador.

'Just under two weeks ago, on 5 April, a member of the Emmanuel Baptist Church, San Salvador, Maria Cristina Gomez, went to work at the John F Kennedy School in the usual way. At about half past eleven that morning, as she was teaching her class of eight year olds, three gunmen burst into the room and took her away at gunpoint.

'Her body was found later that day, shot and with evidence of acid stains, whether put on her before death as torture or after as some way of disfiguring and disguising the body, it's not certain. Our hearts go out to her husband and four children - ranging in age from 14 to 24.

'We think that she was taken and shot because of her identification with the committee of mothers of disappeared folk within El Salvador, a group that is constantly pressuring the authorities for information about their loved ones who have disappeared. They are a thorn in the side. She was also an active member of the Teachers' Trade Union.





'Her death silences an irritant, an insistant and a dissident voice,' David Martin said.

'Her death is also a warning to others engaged in that same struggle for justice of what might happen to them if they continue. Do we just dismiss Cristina's death as another statistic to add to the 60,000, 100,000, 120,000 deaths in the civil struggles of the last few years (accounts vary)? We see her murder as yet another humanitarian and Christian worker paying the ultimate sacrifice for their beliefs and for their commitment.

'The name of Archbishop Romero is well-known. He died in 1980. Since his death many, many humanitarian and church workers have found themselves restricted, subject to interrogation and searches, disruption of their work, displacement as they've been moved on from areas where previously they have worked and lived.

'All who struggle for human rights in El Salvador have this feeling of being under constant surveillance. For many, the morning post brings death threats and warnings. The General Secretary of the El Salvador Baptist Association, with whom we are in cooperation, has received such death threats.

Despite recent peace negotiations and initiatives and the elections that took place last month, the signs are that violence will continue, and increase possibly, before the first of June when the new extremely right-wing ARENA party — the Nationalist Republican Alliance party — takes office.

This year has seen the emergence of new death squads within El Salvador. One of their first acts was to bomb the premises — the pastoral offices — of the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in San Salvador.

'Last year saw a new co-operation and working together between us and the El Salvador Baptists. In April we took steps to extend and develop this newly-formed link. Now, through this declaration, we are voicing our solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ in that troubled land.

'International opinion is important in El Salvador — a country which depends so heavily for its national budget on foreign aid. It's almost more important that we send a message than the actual words that we may use. Our brothers and sisters in El Salvador tell us that it's appropriate that we send such a message of support.

'When news first came through of Cristina's death, the Baptist Union and the Baptist Missionary Society sent messages to President Duarte and



'It's almost more important that we send a message than the actual words we use' — David Martin

informed the El Salvador embassy here in London. This morning we present to statement vou this for vour endorsement. It sets out the call to the government for justice and peace in the context of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In sending it, we acknowledge humbly that we ourselves are in need of Shalom. We affirm our fellowship links and commitment to the El Salvador Baptist Association and we also address ourselves and call upon our churches here at home to earnest prayer for peace in El Salvador.'

In welcoming the resolution one delegate wondered what could be done, now that through Cristina's death an irritant to the government had been removed.

'What can the Society do to continue this irritant and also what can Baptist churches and individuals do to make sure that, though one irritant be removed, though Cristina has been silenced, the voice of Christ which spoke through her will not be silenced but will speak through us?'

'You will know that there is a network of people who have a concern for Central America, who receive information about events like this and respond,' replied Brian Tucker, BMS Chairman.

'I personally, for example, sent a telex to the President the very next day after the event happened as many others will have done. One way in which people can act individually is to become part of such a network and to act on the information received.

'As we have already been told, we have the assurance of our brothers and sisters in El Salvador that that kind of response, limited though it may seem to us on the sending end, is valuable and does have some effect. I take it that, through this resolution, that is what we are saying. We stand with our brothers and sisters, and we will seek whatever opportunity we have to make our feelings known.'

BMS General Secretary, Reg Harvey, reminded the meeting of the BMS presence in El Salvador through David Mee.

'David Mee's presence is a measure of support and strengthening and encouragement for the folk within the El Salvador Baptist Association that is almost immeasurable. David is actually living and working in one of the most sensitive areas - living in Sensuntepeque and sharing also in work in Niqueresque where the majority of the population are refugees from war zones. Our prayers and our support of his presence and of the growing relationship between the BMS and the El Salvador Baptist Association is also a way of supporting such folk who can continue to make their presence felt in Christ's name.'



DEATH THREATS

David Kopenawa, a Yanomani Indian who was awarded the United Nations 1988 Global 500 prize for defending the environment, says he has received repeated death threats from gold panners who have invaded Yanomani lands in the north-western state of Roraima.

He is the second Brazilian Indian to receive the distinguished UN environmental award. The first Brazilian to win the prize was union leader Chico Mendes, who was assassinated late last year by large landholders in the state of Acre.

In late February, 600 Indians from 15 tribes met in the Amazon town of Altamira. They came together to protest at government's plans to build a dam on the nearby Xingu River. The mammoth Kararao hydroelectric project, costing \$10.6 billion, will flood 1,200 sq. kms. of territory belonging to the Kalapo Indians.

Indian representatives, who arrived with their bodies painted red and black and carried bows and arrows, contend that the project would cause major environmental damage to the Amazon basin. The government insists that the dam is integral to the nation's energy system.

CRITICAL REPORT ON ZAIRE

If reports from Belgium are true, Roman Catholic Bishops in Zaire have prepared a report which is critical of the country.

The report, which is not yet published, is a reflection on 'the Christian and the development of the nation.' In it the bishops have considered the moral decline of the country; problems in education, health and communication; and the exodus of people from rural areas. They call on the nation's leadership to have the political will to improve the situation.

HUNGRY CHILDREN

Some 200,000 children less than 15 years old wander the streets of San Salvador looking for ways to feed themselves and their families, according to a recent report by the United Nations Children fund.

'More and more children are walking the streets because the civil war in El Salvador

has caused a massive exodus from the country to the capital.'

The El Salvador Baptist Association maintains an orphanage in San Salvador and has received into it many children who have lost their parents during the conflict.

ISLAM NOT TO BE NATIONAL RELIGION

Nigeria's President has assured Christian leaders that Islam will not become the state religion. Some Christians have been worried over the implications of a constitutional revision now being prepared.

The number of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria is roughly equal.

What's happening in the Church around the World

STRONGER TIES WITH **CENTRAL AMERICA**

The Baptist Missionary Society is strengthening its ties with Central America.

When David Mee went to El Salvador just over twelve months ago, we saw it as a "one off" situation,' said BMS General Secretary, Reg Harvey. 'But we had it in mind that there might be a closer relationship and that it might well be God's intention for us to forge stronger links.'

Addressing the BMS General Committee in April, Mr Harvey presented an agreement for full mission partnership with the Baptist Association of El Salvador.

'At the moment, all links with El Salvador are through the presence of David Mee. Should his work end, for any reason, the Society's connection would be broken. So we are now moving to a more formal relationship.'

The agreement makes provision for a mutual exchange programme so that both ministers and laypersons can visit the other country to get to know the churches and 'the theological basis for their work and life.'

At the same time, visitors would be able to share 'the realities of their country and their churches to the other country.'

The way is also opened for the BMS to provide, at the invitation of the El Salvador Baptist Association, short term workers, volunteers, as well as mission workers.

One of the first persons to benefit from the signing of this agreement is Maria Josefa Hernandez, the president of Baptist youth work in El Salvador.

She has come to Britain on a BMS Scholarship to study at Selly Oak, Birmingham.

The General Committee was told that the Society was also investigating the possibility of links with Baptist work in Nicaragua.



INCREASED GIVING



A relatively strong pound against the dollar saved the Baptist Missionary Society from a very large deficit.

'This meant that we spent less than we had estimated in countries like Brazil.' explained BMS treasurer, Arthur Garman.

'Although the churches responded well by increasing their giving to the Society by 3.5 per cent, this was less than the 8 per cent we had asked for and the 13 per cent we really needed.'

The Society ended the financial year with a deficit of £105,204, which has been met out of reserves. Total income for the year was £2,938,250, but expenditure was £3,084,891.

'Although giving to the BMS compares favourably with that to other missionary societies, we can't allow these annual deficits to continue, 'Mr Garman said.

'We have asked the churches to increase their giving this year by 10 per cent, but that was assuming we would reach our target of an 8 per cent increase last time."













YOUTH WORK IN ORISSA

Young people in India face similar problems to those in the West, reports Pansy James, who has been working in Cuttack, Orissa.



In India today there are everincreasing numbers of young people. The streets and bazaars of Cuttack city are full of them.

Thousands flock to schools, colleges and training institutions.

Others spend time on the streets, in cinemas, video shops and sports fields. Others are working hard to scrape a living — at the pedals of a cycle rickshaw, at road-side stalls and tea shops, on building sites — while the fortunate few find regular employment in offices, shops, schools and other institutions.

Many have come in from the villages of Orissa, seeking education or employment in the big city. Most are Hindus, some are Muslims and a few are Sikhs or Christians. Twenty years ago they would have been mostly male but, now-a-days, groups of girls in their brightly coloured sarees or tunics can be seen going together to school or college, to the cinema or

the bazaar, sometimes daring to ride bicycles!

Despite differences in culture and background, these young people face similar problems and have similar needs, as young people in the west. Poverty and unemployment and the fight for education are not the only problems. Children of affluent, respectable families often get into trouble on the streets and the

campus today. The insiduous influence of the worst aspects of western culture — materialism, violence and sex on video, television and cinema screen, and in art and literature — are felt most by young people in our cities.

The Christian church in Orissa works and witnesses among young people, both inside and outside the church. Here are some glimpses of that work in which I have been privileged to share.

The strongest youth movement within the local churches, is Christian Endeavour. CE in Cuttack is lively, effective and youth-centred, with a local CE group in every area of the city where Christians live.

On our campus we have two groups, one for the teacher training students and one for Buckley Girls' Hostel — groups run by the girls

Pansy James (left) and Indian Christian workers



themselves with minimum supervision from hostel staff. Our girls are particularly fond of expressing their faith in songs, dance and drama.

There are joint activities for all the CE groups, such as Bible quizzes and competitions, rallies and retreats, and an annual All-Orissa CE Camp during the autumn vacation.

In many places CE groups take part in gospel outreach, especially through music and song. Girls from non-Christian backgrounds attend and participate in the CE groups in our hostels. The All India CE Union tries to meet some practical needs by giving scholarships to needy students.

Another way of helping Christian youngsters to real faith and commitment has been the growth of Vacation Bible School work in Orissa over the last ten or fifteen years. Originally held only in one or two big city churches, now these programmes are arranged in many places with the support of our Scripture Union/CSSM staff workers.

In Puri, I attended several times a residential VBS organised at our Diocesan Children's Home, with participants from all our homes and hostels and from small village churches. The first year I went prepared to teach a class of senior boys up to 18 years old, but found myself leading a group of young men in their twenties, some already graduates and one a sewing teacher - such is the hunger for God's word amongst our people. The next year we had to put on a maximum age limit! The daily routine of our VBS-cum-Work Camp (see panel) would probably be quite unacceptable to young folk in the west.

Coming from a Christian Union background at university, I was

delighted to find similar groups springing up amongst college students in Orissa. The Union of Evangelical Students of India (UESI) and the Evangelical Graduates' Fellowship (EGF) had begun with small groups at Madras and Vellore some years before.

They began in Cuttack in the late 1960s and have since spread to many other places in Orissa. We now have a full-time staff worker behind their college library during their free periods, bringing non-Christian classmates with them.

In Orissa we usually hold training camps for believing students every summer vacation and evangelistic camps open to all in the autumn vacation, utilising our mission school compounds in various places. We also have local gettogethers on some of the many festival days when college classes

RISING BELL: 5 am

WORK: for 2 hours, clearing up a derelict compound

BREAKFAST: 7 am (porridge and tea)

BIBLE SCHOOL: 8 am-10 pm (chorus time, worship, solid Bible teaching in classes)

LUNCH: 1 pm (rice with egg or fish curry)

AFTERNOON REST: 2-4 pm

WALK: on the beach: 4-5 pm

EVENING ACTIVITIES: by the young people: music, dance, skits, drama

SUPPER: 9 pm (rice with curried vegetables)

LIGHTS OUT: 10 pm (sleeping on mats on the floor)

supported by donations from our EGF members.

EU groups in college or student union buildings — facilities are limited anyway and often the authorities are hostile. Small prayer cells and Bible study groups meet in hostel dormitories, in homes of Christian lecturers, on verandas or just under the trees. We had good Bible studies with women students who met on an open veranda

are suspended. The UESI have the vision of raising a testimony to Jesus Christ in every campus in India — they have made a good start, but still there are hundreds of colleges and millions of students unreached by the gospel.

Please pray for the young people of our churches in Orissa that they may commit their lives to the Lord and go out to share the love of Jesus with their friends and neighbours.

MISSIONTALK MISSIONTALK

MISSIONTALK

NEW BMS WORKERS



Working at BMS headquarters for seven years has not turned SUZANNE LINNELL away from mission work.

'In fact, I am looking forward to working in Nepal,' she said. 'I have seen at first hand the care BMS gives to its missionaries and that is what has drawn me to serve in this way with the Society.

'I first had a talk with Joan Maple, BMS personnel secretary, in the summer but I had to wait until December before I heard whether there was a place for me in Kathmandu.'

Suzanne, who lives in Enfield, is one of four new candidates accepted for services overseas by the BMS General Committee. She is a graduate in German and Russian from Bath University and it was while she was in Germany, in 1980, that she was baptised as a believer.

She began work at Mission House in 1962, working in the Accounts Department. Since 1984 Suzanne has been secretary to Claud Turner, BMS Administration Secretary and she will be doing a similar kind of work for the United Mission to Nepal.

After training at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak, it is hoped that she will be able to travel to Nepal in January 1990.

She won't be the only Mission House person in Nepal, however. Another of the BMS secretaries is preparing to serve with the United Mission to Nepal, this time with the support of the Methodist Church Overseas Division.

ROGER and ANGELA COLLINSON are preparing to go to Brazil.

Roger, who comes from South Shields, has been minister of Stoke

Road Baptist Church, Gosport, since 1984 during which time he has studied at Spurgeon's College as a church based student.

He has spent 33 years in the Royal Navy, 13 as a rating and petty officer, and 20 years as a commissioned officer. Since 1957 he has served in different positions within the Naval Christian Fellowship — as newsletter editor, trustee, treasurer and chairman of trustees.

Angela was baptised at Mutley Plain Baptist Church, Plymouth in 1966. She spent two years in the WRNS and has served as records secretary for the Naval Christian Fellowship. She was, for a while, deputy registrar of births, deaths and marriages and has served six years as a magistrate in Gosport.

Roger and Angela have four children aged between 18 and 24.

After one term at St Andrew's Hall, Selly Oak, they hope to travel to Brazil in the Autumn to undertake, after language training, pastoral, teaching and evangelism work.



The standard of music at the BMS hostel in Sao Paulo, Brazil, should rise in the near future if ARFON and JANET THOMAS have anything to do with it.

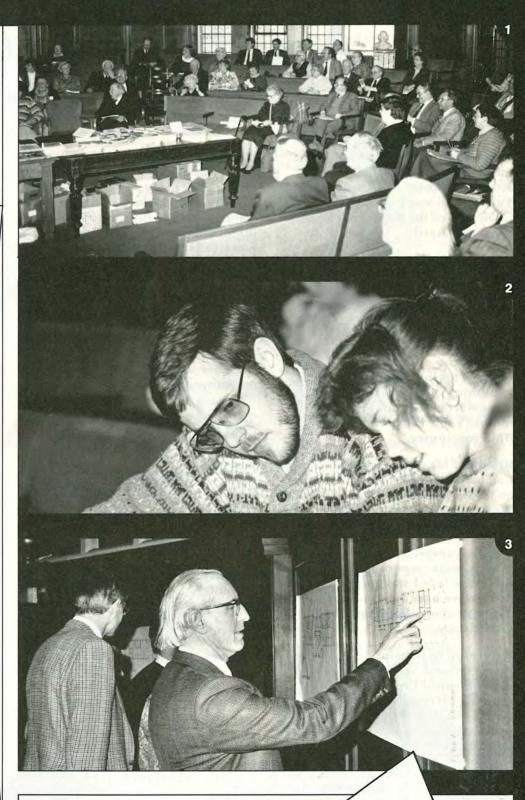
They are both in membership with Manvers Street Baptist Church, Bath and have been accepted for service as hostel parents in Brazil.



They have run a children's choir forr twelve years travelling with it both within Britain and on the continent. Janet is a music teacher and Arfon a self employed electrician.

They have two children, Darren 15 and Elizabeth 9.

After one term at St Andrew's Hall they hope to go to Brazil later in the year.



A memorable meeting of BMS General Committee. In March it met in the Council Chamber of Baptist Church House for the last time before the move to Didcot.

2. Two committee members examining their agenda papers. . . .

3. The Rev Fred Stainthorpe trying to work out what's what in the Didcot plans. MISSIONTALK MISSIONTALK MISSIONTALK

MISSIONTALK

A CHILD OF THE BMS?

Well almost, but not quite! 'I'm not literally a child of the BMS, but I often feel like it,' said the Rev Brian Tucker who was inducted as Chairman of the Baptist Missionary Society in April.

Brian went to Jamaica when he was 13 when his parents became missionaries on that island.

'But my parents were always deeply and actively loyal to the BMS long before they actually became missionaries of the Society. I was brought up to think of mission as something of central importance, of great worth — my aunt on my mother's side has been a lifelong BMS missionary.'

Brian did his secondary education at Calabar High School and then went on to the University College of the West Indies, then only about three years old.

'I did a General Science degree, but, what is more important, I met Helen there, the lady I was going to marry. So now we have a permanent domestic reminder of worldwide Christianity.

Returning to Britain, Brian did two years National Service in the Royal Army Medical Corps. It was a way of avoiding carrying arms without actually having to decide whether I really was a conscientions objector. He then went to Regent's Park College for ministerial training.

He has served in four pastorates: Leigh, Lancashire; Moss Side, Manchester; Fordhouses, Wolvernampton. He is currently serving the Baptist Church at Saffron Walden in Essex.

The first three pastorates were in industrial areas and the middle two had in their fellowships more members of West Indian origin than British – an interesting and valuable experience.

During his time in Wolverhampton, in 1979, Brian served with the BMS in Zaire.

'It was a year away from my church, but it was only just over six months teaching theology at Yakusu, Zaire, if you consider the preparation and deputation time involved. It illuminated my thinking very powerfully. It made me stop and think about the whole missionary enterprise. In particular it made me consider the relationship between the culturally conditioned Christianity of the west and the emerging styles of Christianity in the rest of the world. How can the west encourage and assist her sister churches into inappropriate shapes and attitudes?

'Back home, it's sharpened an emphasis which I hope my ministry has always had – of trying to ensure that in all our church worship and church life, we are aware and respond to the work of God in all the world.'

Speaking about the direction he thought the BMS should be taking, Mr Tucker said that it was difficult to put it into words without overdoing it.

But I think the strength of the BMS has been that it is an inclusive rather than an exclusive Society. It is inclusive in the very different contexts in which it works. It is inclusive in the very different types of work which it undertakes. It is inclusive in the many different churches from which it draws its strength and support, and it is inclusive in the many different kinds of persons it accepts and deploys as missionaries. It is important that it should guard that inclusiveness and not become a monochrone society.

I appear to be looking backwards, but it is important for us to be true to our heritage and not easily swayed by transient emphases or fashions. When we are at our best, we have proved to be a fairly open sort of society - open to new discovery, new enterprises, new ideas, new influences. We've certainly demonstrated that in the very recent

past like our re-discovered ties with western Europe, the new relationships with Central and Latin America and even the new style of working which we have been learning through the United Mission to Nepal – learning how to live under some restraints and still be a valid mission agency.

So I would hope we can maintain this. It doesn't mean that we necessarily know what's going to happen or in what direction you'll be going, or that we have a cut and dried route mapped out. But we do expect that there will be a way there waiting and that it will open up and that the challenge will be whether we have the insight and the courage to recognise it and accept it when it appears.

So what will be happening especially during the next year?

'Well there's the move to Didcot. It will give us all kinds of opportunities because it will cause a bit of an upheaval. It has provoked a certain amount of rethinking about how we do things together.

'It's giving us headaches and has caused some individuals personal distress, but I do think that we ought to be able to get hold of it as a positive opportunity to do things better, to do things more imaginatively, to do things perhaps a bit more purposefully, and, of course, to do things in a much more natural relationship with the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

I also hope that during the next twelve months we shall be able to produce a theological statement. This has yet to be talked over to the BMS committees, but it can help us to work at our relationships in perhaps a slightly more purposeful and creative way.

I feel quite excited, and privileged to be the Chairman of the BMS. At the same time I feel slightly overawed + but I am looking forward to my year in the BMS Chair'

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Miss L Davies on 1 April from Kathmandu, Nepal.

Miss C Whitmee on 5 April from Balangir, India. Mr and Mrs S Seymour on 14 April from Ntondo, Zaire.

Mr C Pavitt and Miss M Chaves on 17 April from Luanda, Angola.

Departures

Rev and Mrs G Bland on 10 April for Bangkok, Thailand.

Rev and Mrs R Deller on 11 March to Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Miss J Knapman on 11 April for Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Births

On 9 April, in Zaire, to Mr and Mrs J Davis, a daughter, Stella Elizabeth.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and anonymous gifts. (To 15 April 1989.)

Legacies

	~
Edna F Ball	2,538.15
Miss M Bicknell	7,500,00
Mr and Mrs R Bissell	300.00
Miss M Clements	50.00
Mr F Coles	53.19
Mrs Kay Dilley	345.45
Miss Annie Halls	20.41
Miss Sylvia T Hawkins	200.00
Mrs Jane Hogg	50.00
Miss S A M Jones	100.00
Mr Thomas G McFarlane	741.24
Mrs L E Nichols	25,799.36
Mrs N E L Reeves	100.00

Mary Thomas Florence Jessie Turnbull Mrs L Wills Rev and Mrs H E Ward

General Work

Anon Ayr: £40.00; FAE Aberdeen: £20.00; Anon Darlington: £20.00; Anon: £20.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £30.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £40.00; Anon: £20.00; Anon: £40.00; Anon: £20.00; Anon Thirsk: £20.00; Anon Northampton: £50.00.

1.200.00

150.00

500.00

500.00

Relief Fund (Income) General

Women's Project (Home From Home)

Anon: £5.00.



WE CAN ALL SHARE IN WORLD MISSION! The letter from K W Anstey in the March Missionary Herald was very interesting. He suggested that in entering new fields of service the BMS was in danger of spreading itself thinly, with little hope of effective mission when the ratio of population to missionaries was so enormous. As an example, the relocation of Jacqui Wells from Bangladesh to Thailand was cited.

I read Mr Anstey's letter with particular interest, as we are about to join Jacqui in Bangkok.

Behind the letter is a concern for cross-cultural missionary work among the Asian communities in the UK. I warm to that and say 'Amen' to it. But that in itself is no reason for questioning sharing in mission-partnership elsewhere. Nor is the ratio of population to missionary particularly relevant in this — after all, ministry in any place is to be a certain community not to a theoretical pro rata proportion of the whole population.

In any case a primarily statistical consideration seems to overlook what to my mind is the most significant aspect of Christian mission in another land.

There are no limits to the number of British Christians who can share in global mission through prayer. Certainly in the past the ratio of missionaries to population in most countries was higher, but my own conviction is that, nevertheless, the

main factor in missionary effectiveness then was the committed prayer ministry of supportive Christians at 'home'.

Today the need for that kind of prayer is just as great, not just for missionaries, but for national churches around the world. Yet sadly, as the number of missionaries decreases, the illogical conclusion is often arrived at that prayer for God's mission in those countries is now somehow less important.

As Chris and I leave for Thailand, we know that our own direct influence there will inevitably be limited. But the presence of three BMS missionaries there provides a real opportunity for an untold number of Christians in Britain to pray for that land.

The need is for a vision of the world church to which we belong. New involvement in El Salvador, France and Thailand reinforces that perspective — as would also the kind of cross-cultural mission by BMS missionaries in the UK that Mr Anstey proposes. But the question is not how few missionaries are present in any particular place. Rather, how many Christians are taking advantage of that contact and the opportunity it provides to pray intelligently for the church there?

GEOFF BLAND, BANGKOK, THAILAND

NOTICES





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water engineer – for two year project to up date hospital water supplies. Write in for full job description.

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Qualified accountant with some knowledge of French.

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SOCIAL WORKERS – preferably with CQSW for work among deprived city dwellers.

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evangelists and lay leaders. Not suitable for couple with young family.

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