

MISSIONARY
Herald



Annual Report
May 1990

**TOGETHER
IN CHRIST**



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Bangladesh	India	Thailand
Brazil	Jamaica	Trinidad
El Salvador	Nepal	Zaire

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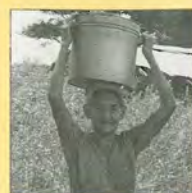
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TOGETHER IN CHRIST

Introduction to the Theme



TOGETHERNESS IS ALL.' This is not a plea nor a message, but simply a statement of fact. Each of us lives her or his individual life, yet none of us can ultimately be separated from the one family of humankind. We are inextricably joined together. As Donne captured it, 'No man is an island.'

There are many reminders of this, for the way we live affects others. When British factories emit noxious fumes, Scandinavian forests suffer from acid rain. The burning of fossil fuels by any one of us affects the atmosphere that protects all of us who live on earth. In family life, grief and gladness are contagious. The discoveries of our togetherness as persons are endless.

None of this should surprise us, since it is the outworking of our common humanity, gift of the God *from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named*. Even if God is not recognised, this does not gainsay the singleness and solidarity of the family of humankind

brought into being by the Creator's loving will.

Sad to say, though, the unity of humankind is continually scarred by the deep lines of our divisions and strife. Even the new liberties discovered in Eastern Europe and in South Africa during this last year have not changed this. We are one human race, yet we are fragmented by pride and self-seeking, both at the personal and the group level. We stand together as people, but too often back to back in opposition or face to face in confrontation. The sin of humankind frustrates the intention of God's love.

Togetherness in Christ is totally different yet equally fundamental. His life and His teaching affirm God's purpose that the people of the single human race should be one family. Jesus demonstrated acceptance of all and indicated that the Good Shepherd knows His sheep and must bring together all, *so there shall be one flock,*

one shepherd. Equally, His death and resurrection make possible that uniting of humankind — *I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to myself*.

What is promised in the earthly ministry of Christ is experienced in the life of the early Christians. So we hear the affirmation, *He is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility*.

We discover that God's purpose is that, *at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The message is clearly that in Him, all things were created in Heaven and on earth and in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself. . .*

In Christ, living, dying, rising, ascending, reigning, is that togetherness, that unity which is the fulfilment of God's true purpose for all Creation and all His creatures.



Being together in Christ is part of the joyous experience of Christians as they are within the fellowship of the Spirit, the Church. In that sense, the Church fellowship is part of the Gospel, always signalling to the divided communities of humankind that reconciliation and togetherness are possible.

The Church, when *she is the Church*, manifests the fact that there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. The New Testament is redolent with the fragrant benefits of being together in Christ.

Nevertheless the fellowship is one of

service. This Annual Report, then, will reflect as clearly as it can the togetherness in the cause of the Mission of Christ that has been experienced through the Society over this last year.

As ever, it is humbling to become aware of the faith and commitment of those who are our overseas partners in the cause of the Gospel.

Many have suffered hardship and persecution that are difficult for us to imagine — how many of us could really empathise with the people of El Salvador as the 'planes roared over their heads and the bombs brought destruction?

Many have a grasp of the worth of the Gospel that makes them eager to share it and to talk of God's grace, while we stand reticent and tongue-tied before those who have not understood and responded to God's love.

Many have perceived truths within the Scriptures that have not enlightened the eyes of our understanding, despite the fact that our bookshelves groan under the multiplicity of Bible translations and commentaries, while they work solely from that portion of the Bible that is available in their own language.

The costly offering made from the poverty of so many of our sisters and



brothers in Christ puts to shame our continued amassing and holding on to the 'goods' (a hopelessly misleading term) of our contemporary society while we talk of sacrificial giving.

As to the lessons in compassionate service and sensitive development that British Baptists could learn from overseas Christians, words would fail to tell the tale! God has given us to each other, though, and by His grace He has used us in the tasks of preaching, teaching and serving His children.

Within Britain, we have entered into a new partnership in Christ, certainly in two ways.

The new offices at Didcot, shared with the Baptist Union of Great Britain, have brought not just proximity but possibility. Possibility, that is, of new levels of co-operation being reached by the bodies concerned.

What has been gratifying, is to see God's providence leading on in the Society's relationships with the Baptist Union of Scotland and the Baptist Union of Wales as well. A restructuring of the Joint Consultative Committee, which brings together the Unions with each other and with the Society, will enable the sharing of information, and the co-

ordination of effort and co-operation in mission as never before.

Surely this is part of God's plan as we see the opportunities for our action together in the light of the changing face of Europe and the World.

Whatever else these pages project, there should emerge the image that all of our togetherness in Christ, within the Church and within the Society, is for the sake of the whole of humankind. We tell the story of the world's peoples and of the people of God. We chart at least some of the path of progress towards the fulfilment of God's purpose that we be truly together in Christ. □

Together in Christ - Who Preaches

Proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom. (Mark 1:14)

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL, preaching, evangelising, telling the story of what God has done and is doing in this world through Jesus Christ so that people may have a change of heart and mind, is at the centre of Christian mission.

Love in action is essential as well, and there are many examples of this throughout this report but there comes a time when we have to *give a reason for the faith that is in us*.

When Jesus set out on His ministry *proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom* and calling on people to *repent and believe the gospel* the first thing He did was to call a group of disciples around Him. Over the brief years of our Lord's ministry, living and travelling with Him, they listened to His teaching and preaching and they observed His acts of love and compassion.

For those who had ears to hear, the preaching, the teaching, the parables of Jesus gave meaning to the things He did. For those who had eyes to see and minds open to understanding His actions put flesh on His words.

As Jesus healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, sat at table with despised and rejected publicans and sinners, broke and blessed bread to feed a multitude and dared to pronounce a person's sins forgiven He was saying, *'This is what God your heavenly Father is like. He cares. He accepts. He is love.'*

The saving nature and the extent of God's love were seen in Christ's suffering and death at Calvary and in the victory of Easter Day.

And then the disciples were commissioned to be witnesses of all that they had seen and heard and experienced. Strengthened by God's Holy Spirit, they set out to tell the story and proclaim the good news. ■



PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS TODAY

WHOEVER THEY ARE and whatever their trade or profession, BMS workers are first of all committed Christians. When they go overseas they become involved in the work and witness of the national church. Working together with local church members they play their part in proclaiming the *'good news'*.

Pharmacists, doctors and administrators take their turn in leading worship and preaching. Nurses go with Bible students to evangelise in new areas. Teachers lead Bible study groups in

schools and administrators and maintenance workers set out on evangelistic trips with local Christians.

So the reports which follow cover only part of what is being done in preaching and evangelism. Nevertheless what is being done is varied and, to use the current jargon, is *'contextual'* in the sense that it is adapted to the situation and understanding of people.

Hearing the good news within the context of El Salvador's suffering and tragedy is more an act of group discovery as people study the Bible together and learn how it relates to what is happening in their lives.

In Brazil the approach is traditional while in Sri Lanka the work, while no less effective, is much more low key.

In all of the situations we highlight BMS workers are not going it alone. They are working with and often under the leadership of national Christians. ■



HEALING THE SINS AND SICKNESS OF THE COMMUNITY

People in El Salvador quickly make the connection between the Bible and what is happening in their own community.

A LONG A NARROW, slippery path come two women, one in her early twenties and another with all the signs of her sixty years showing on her face.

They enter a small, candle-lit home and are warmly greeted with smiles and hugs. The nine people already waiting fairly represent the *barrio's* population. They are two old men, *campesinos*, out of work and lost in the city they never visited until the bombs drove them there; one young man, twice recruited by the military, once released after petitioning from his church and once escaped; and six women from 16 to 78 years of age, who wash clothes, sell tortillas, sell in the market or are maids. Five of them are mothers or grandmothers many times over.

After some light conversation and easy humour, the circle draws together and the young visitor prays. One of the old men leads a song about a young priest killed by a death-squad and how they draw strength from his story to look for the God of Jesus within the *barrio*.

As one of the women reads a passage from the Bible only the two visitors can follow it in their Bibles. The literacy class they began is still new and it will be some months before the others can read it for themselves.

In the story they hear of four people who lower a sick man on a stretcher to Jesus through the roof of a house. The man is cured.

They talk of the relationship between sickness and sin. Whose sin is the cause of sickness in their community? They talk about the team, the community, who cared for the man and had their faith rewarded. They discussed those who were shocked at the incident and who criticised Jesus for blasphemy and yet were afraid of his authority.

Connections are quickly made with the committee trying to organise a clean water supply for the *barrio*. At the moment, water has to be fetched from an impure source, 30 minutes walk down the hill, and has to be paid for. Two of the women are on the committee and there is enthusiastic support for the effort. All contribute to the discussion as they talk of other ways of healing the sins and sicknesses of their *barrio*, and of those who will oppose them, afraid of their success.

Later, other issues of news and concern are shared before they pray.

The young man announces a march to support the National Debate for Peace to be held the following week. One of the women slowly begins to talk of her son, who has just been captured by the army, and her tears bring the silence that opens the prayers.

Some more songs and then they break the circle, but are quickly regrouped around the woman, working out how to support her and her other children and where to go to get help for her son.

At 8.20 pm the two visitors leave down the muddy banks, picking their way back through the tiny houses. Tomorrow they will repeat the process in another small community in the *barrio* where the people have invited two others to attend. □



Water carrying in El Salvador

EVANGELISM TRIP

Last July, Pastor Mudi, who heads the Evangelism Department of the Baptist Community of the River Zaire, Richard Hoskins, and an evangelistic team visited six district centres in the Bandundu Region to hold evangelistic rallies.

IN TOTAL, RICHARD SAID at the time, 'some 19,250 have heard the word of God preached. Of these, 752 people made a first-time commitment and are now in baptismal classes, and

212 others made decisions to return to the church.

'Another 1,944 people had illnesses prayed for and a further 1,104 were counselled individually by members of the team, often ►

◀ into the early hours of the morning.'

When Richard and Sue return to Bolobo, Zaire, after their furlough Richard will work full-time in evangelism. Richard believes that 'the vision for evangelism is slowly starting to grow amongst local believers and within the

CBFZ as a whole'.

At the end of 1988 150 leaders from throughout the region went to Bolobo for a Bible Week Retreat.

'Their journeys by foot, bike and canoe averaged 140 miles. The theme was the

"Light of the World", and on the final evening 115 people dedicated or rededicated their lives to Christ.

'Many of the pastors said that they would start Bible groups when they returned to their work. God is doing a great work of renewal in His Church.' □

OUTREACH IN SRI LANKA

Last year, still in their early days in Sri Lanka, Stella and Michael Hambleton went with a Sri Lankan pastor to visit Pelahela.



Colombo, Sri Lanka

ONCE A MONTH he takes a Communion service at what is an outreach area for **Gonawala**. A fulltime evangelist works, in this mainly Buddhist community, from a restored Baptist church set amongst coconut palms on a rocky hill. The church at Gonawala helps in visitation and backup.

The Evangelist, all in white, met us and escorted us to a very simple, bare house of a poor family. Gonawala were going to assess the new well the family have dug there for financial aid in

putting a proper top to it. The family are new converts and care is taken to try and help the needy and yet not entice converts with easy aid.

After the well inspection, we gathered in the little, bare living room for a prayer. The door is suddenly filled with neighbours and their children, listening.

Back in the chapel, a group of women met for the very simple **Sinhala** service and then we knelt on the concrete floor for Communion.

When we said, 'God bless you,' in Sinhala, as we shook hands at the door, they seemed so pleased. A pineapple was thrust into our hands.

Next Sunday, about 100 children crowded into that church with their parents for the Sunday School prize giving. These children represent about 30 homes the Evangelist can visit.

So the Lord's work in Pelahela goes ahead. Many Baptists say, 'But why did the Baptist church, established there before, ever die away? Don't we need more evangelists?' □

AFTER 175 YEARS

SPEAKING ABOUT THE WORK at Cinnamon Gardens, **Kingsley Perera** said that the church must not just be satisfied to exist within its own boundaries.

'Last year we celebrated over 175 years of life and we gave thanks to the Lord. But there is one question we ask ourselves most of all: "Can the Lord thank us for what we have done?"

'At least we are a loyal church but we can only boast of 250 members. That is less than two members for each year of our existence.



'We have to get out of our church building and go into the city, into our communities and into our country as well to show the love of our Saviour to the people. For this we need the support of the BMS.'

'Please pray for the church in Sri Lanka.' □

A NEW WORK

The congregation at Nova Vilhena in Rondônia, Brazil, where Vincent and Sadie MacDougall are based, is only 18 months old. The work got off to a slow start but was encouraging . . .

WE HAVE HAD A STEADY flow of people attending the services, some stay and some go, but we have a good base to work from.

Here life is very unstable, great changes in the economy, movement of families, health and poverty stress, and this is reflected in the attitude and conduct of the people. In this situation we have a small faithful group who are beginning to show fruit in their Christian lives and desire to serve the Lord.

For special meetings our small hall is not large enough and so we have opened the dividing section and we are building two small classrooms alongside the hall. My neighbour, who is a manager in our bank, gave me the wood to build the classrooms.

We have 50 people enrolled in our all-age Sunday School and usually between 35 and 45 attend. Our evening service averages 45 with as many as 90 at special services. We have a good growing youth group with strong leadership and we feel that this will be our main growth point over the next few months. We have 16 members and another twelve Christians co-operating with us. Also a group of non-Christians attends regularly.

. . . then in February this year, Vincent reported:

In recent weeks we have had a real breakthrough with many converts and an increase in all departments of our work. Last week, we had almost 70 people at the evening service and a converted Indian preaching. The previous week seven people responded to an appeal for salvation and restoration. This weekend we begin more training classes for new converts, baptism and church membership. Two young people have dedicated their lives to Christ's service and will be preparing themselves for college training. □

MOBILISING CHURCH MEMBERS IN BRAZIL

We are greatly encouraged by the progress we can see in the work of the Association of Baptist Churches in the City, says Derek Punchard, who is responsible for co-ordinating evangelism in Paraná's Capital Association.

THE PULPIT EXCHANGE we planned for November was transformed into an evangelistic outreach through simultaneous services over the weekend. Fifty thousand invitations and 2,000 posters were distributed. There was advertising on 14 billboards and on the radio and TV.

The results were encouraging, with a good number of visitors in all the churches to hear the preaching of the gospel. Church members were mobilised to reach and invite visitors and 330 decisions were made in response to the appeals.

We are now planning the opening of an evangelistic and counselling centre in Curitiba. We have a hall and two large rooms above the Baptist Bookshop, which was opened on October 27, where we hope to hold daily services, mid-day Bible studies and prayer groups and constant activities including clinics for medical, psychological and spiritual counselling, using members of our Baptist churches.

So far we have one telephone for a counselling ministry and we have launched a campaign for the furniture we shall need, plus the rent and maintenance of the project.

At the present, we are going forth in faith, in the belief that if the work is the Lord's, he will provide. Several of the churches have now raised an offering and others are going to give monthly.

On December 9 we united with other denominations to make a public witness in the central shopping area of Curitiba for the Day of the Bible, presenting in message and music the importance of the Bible for salvation and guidance in daily living.

We have just opened another church in the neighbouring township of Araucaria. It is situated in an area of new development. There were over 30 visitors present at the opening service in a packed building. □

Altair Prevedello, Secretary Paraná Convention, talking to Derek Punchard



Together in Christ – Who Teaches



*Then he opened their minds
to understand the scriptures.
(Luke 24:45)*

NOT ONLY WERE the disciples commissioned to be witnesses of our Lord's victory over sin and death to the ends of the earth, it was essential for them to be prepared and equipped as well. It was vital for them to see the resurrection as more than a one-off event and to understand its significance, within God's purposes, as the climax of all that Jesus had taught and done.

More than that, it was the culmination of all that had gone before in the history of the Hebrew people, of all that was written in the Old Testament.

So Jesus taught them. He opened the scriptures.

"This is what is written," he said, "that the Messiah is to suffer death and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that in his name repentance bringing the forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to all nations."

They now understood their task. They were to bear witness in such a way as to bring people to repentance and to the discovery of forgiveness. ■

TEACHING TODAY

IN MANY parts of the world wide Church there is a crisis of leadership. In some places this is connected with evangelism linked growth outstripping the ability of national churches to train enough pastors and lay-leaders.

In a few cases, often where the church is a small minority surrounded by people of other faiths, visionary leadership has all but disappeared and it is hard to recruit new ministers.

It is a vital part of the BMS role to support the national churches in their teaching responsibilities, in the equipping of this and future generations to be effective witnesses.

In the limited space available we give examples of the way BMS personnel are engaged in lay training in Zaire and Trinidad and of theological education in Brazil and Zaire.

Teaching, of course, is not restricted to theological and pastoral subjects. BMS missionaries staff schools in places like Nepal and Zaire and again, in Nepal and elsewhere, they are teaching job skills.

In all of these instances, they are part of a team of colleagues sometimes drawn from the national church and, occasionally from the wider church. ■

SEMINARY WORK IN BRAZIL

*Robert Draycott teaches
at the seminary in
Campo Grande, Mato
Grosso do Sul*

TEACHING in a Theological College here in Brazil naturally has its frustrations and culture shocks but there is a great sense of finally being involved in what I felt called to do.

We have nearly 80 students about half of whom are studying theology, all the men and a few women. The rest of the women study education. Both groups follow a common curriculum, separating only for some more specialized courses.

I am fortunate in teaching all four years, doing Old Testament introduction with the first years. Then the gospel and letters of John with the second years.

The most enjoyable course has been studying Paul's letters with the third years, partly because of the material and partly because I've seen this group twice a week. Perhaps the greatest challenge has been the Latin American Cultural History course with the fourth year students. It was at this point that I felt the benefit of the M.Th. course and approached the task with confidence.

Naturally enough various difficulties have surfaced over the weeks, most of which will involve a modern church history course, more Biblical courses and a New Testament theology course.

One detail to explain is that one group studies in the morning, while the others work during the day and study at night. This means that the teacher repeats each lesson. The morning students tend to work for the larger churches, or for the Faculty itself, during the afternoon to pay for their studies.



We would like to mention some of the students. **Pastor Henrique** was a friend of ours from Paranaiba in the Eastern Association. His was a good solid four year ministry but his only training had consisted of two weeks a year at a Bible school. He and his wife Marli and three year old Priscilla now live in one room at the Faculty.

Vivian is a third year student who works in our church. She is a keen and faithful worker, but with very little financial support and recently her health has suffered.

Adonias is in his fourth and final year and he shares the preaching with me at Ebenezer Church. He is a capable fellow and we have been able to work well together. He is from the capital of Maranhao, about 2000 miles away and he has only been home once during his course.

He would like to continue at Ebenezer, after he graduates, as a Pastor. The church is growing but mostly through young people who only earn enough to pay for their studies, so at the moment we do not have the resources to sustain a full-time Pastor. □

A REGIONAL SCHOOL IN NEPAL

where Graham and Debbie Atkinson work.

GANDAKI BOARDING SCHOOL (GBS) is situated near the centre of **Lamachaur**. It began in 1965 at the request of local people with the assistance of the International Nepali Fellowship and UMN.

For a short time it was run as a private boarding school before becoming a Government school and being integrated into the National Education council.

In 1985 it was designated as a regional school by His Majesty's Government (HMG) to cater for the Western region of Nepal one of the six regions, each of which was to have such a school within ten years. So far GBS remains the only one of its kind.

The UMN is assisting in the running of the school with six expatriate teachers and an administrator. The aim

is eventually to provide an international standard of education for children aged 10-16 (and possibly in the near future 18).

By Nepali standards the PE facilities are a dream, although unfortunately the staff have had no formal PE training. The staff are Mohan, a chap who has been at the school for many years; Oeepac, a guy who works part time and Bidya, a young lady who plays volley ball at national level!

My job involves half a teaching timetable, curriculum planning and organisation and running of the department. Also the training of the PE staff....

"I've taken on two supervisory PE lessons a week and an aerobics club!" says Debbie. *"I'm also doing a Jackanory spot with the younger kids four times a week. We're reading Charlie and the Chocolate factory, and next we're going to read The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe."* □

TEACHING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Pam Bryan teaches theology at Yakusu where students and their families have to cope with life in a new region.

THE BIBLE SCHOOL here is the Institut Supérieur de Théologie it is known locally as ISTY. There are twelve students and their wives and families.

Although most of them arrived at the start of the academic year - several, for a variety of reasons, came late. The last wife, travelling from her home in Ntondo, arrived late having been on the riverboat for 18 days not the best experience when you are alone with three small children. ▶



Top: Yakusu ISTY Library

Bottom: A class for student wives

◀ On the Saturday morning we knew that the riverboat was due and so the students had a pirogue canoe ready to paddle out to meet her as the boat passed, but the boat came earlier in the morning than expected and they were too late. So we watched helplessly as the boat passed by and then we frantically borrowed the hospital landrover to go to Kisangani to fetch her.

The students here settled down well in Yakusu, a new region for most of them. I have found it interesting as I've watched them, like myself, having to get used to different types of food, as the food varies from region to region.

They have all dug their gardens now in which to grow vegetables so life should become a little easier for them as the vegetables grow.

The first baby has been born and five more are due shortly so we are an expanding family.

Sadly one of the students has been diagnosed as having TB. The treatment for this is very tough and lasts at least a year, so he became quite weak, but is now getting stronger and has managed to keep up with his studies amazingly well.

There is an excellent school for the wives, directed by **Mama Kuvitwanga**. I teach Old Testament to both the men and women, but at very different academic levels. I enjoy this very much. I also teach English to the men. This I find more difficult, language teaching being a specialist subject.

There is an ISTY prayer meeting each Friday and all the students attend. We've been taking time to listen to God a new concept for them. This is very encouraging.

Sadly, relationships amongst the teachers have not always been good. There are problems from the past that I do not fully understand.

For me, I find that working with men and across a culture can at times be almost impossible. I need to have



God's wisdom to know what is simply cultural and what is Christian. I have felt very crushed and weakened by this problem, which is not yet totally resolved. Happily my neighbour says that I've started singing again so I must be feeling better. □

GETTING A TRAINING PROGRAMME UNDERWAY

Sheila and Peter Brewer have returned to Trinidad, the island they worked in from 1970 to 1977, where they are leading a lay training programme.

MOST OF JULY and August were spent trying to get the Training Programme underway. Sounds simple doesn't it? In reality a lot of sorting out had to be done before a programme could be hastily put together.

The old Princes Town Manse has been renovated as a centre for teaching. Many of the old records and files had to be sorted and such library books and text books as there are put in order before we could start.

Many books seem to have been damaged, eaten by bugs or lost and there are no catalogue cards at all, so it is almost like starting again. Incidentally there is real difficulty in getting books for the library or textbooks for students because of limited foreign currency due to the recession.

So we are spending a lot of time in administration and finance. Sheila is acting as Training Programme Treasurer, but only until a local person can be found to take over.

The first class was held on Monday 11th September with just 17 students. It is on a smaller scale than we had hoped, but this is probably partly because, in the last academic year, the programme did not function properly.

At present I am doing much of the teaching because the Revd Ken Cadette and the Revd Sheldon Dewsbury have both been out of the country for a few months.

In Trinidad recruitment needs to be done personally in the churches, and with barely three months to get ourselves in context, we are blessed that any teaching is taking place. All of it is concentrated at Princes Town. The northern churches are not involved at present, and it has been quite impossible this year to take classes in the remoter areas such as Rio Claro. These limitations are in some ways frustrating, but inevitable.

All experience suggests that no programme gets off the ground without many months of visiting, recruiting and building up relationships.

I am once more teaching at St. Andrew's Theological College it used to be New Testament, Greek and Church History before, now it is Old Testament, at least for the moment.

We have two Baptist students at this Presbyterian college, and I am responsible both for their teaching and their pastoral oversight. It is now possible to have a complete L.Th training there, whereas previously it was a feeder college for the United College of the West Indies in Jamaica. □



EVEN CHALK IS RATIONED!

Janet Claxton returned to teach in Zaire last year after an absence of 20 years.

FORTUNATELY FOR ME it was a slow start at Upoto with many of the scholars and some staff still not

back after the first week. But we were teaching those who were there by 8.20 am on Monday morning.

Two hours of lessons and then the children were set to cutting the grass around the school which had grown rather long in their absence. But at least word got around locally that lessons had begun and many more children arrived during the week.

For me, getting used to a new programme, teaching in French and adjusting to a minimum of facilities will

take a while. Text books for the children are non-existent as far as I'm concerned and I haven't even been able to lay my hands on a copy of all the recommended books yet, even though I started trying in France and continued in Kinshasa.

Even chalk is rationed so I'm glad I brought my own private supply with me. At present, lesson preparation is taking a long time and so is trying to learn so many unfamiliar names.

The school day starts at 6.45 am with

registration in front of the church followed by morning prayers in the church. Then it's up to school for the ceremony of the raising of the national flag and the national anthem.

Lessons begin at 7.30 am with three 50 minute periods. After a 20 minute break there are in theory another three periods but so far we have only got up to four lessons a day, Monday to Saturday. It's a long morning but it leaves the afternoons free for lesson preparation and marking. □

HELPING PEOPLE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR FAITH

"That's how I see my work in Zaire," explains Chris Spencer.

IN ZAIRE, CHRISTIAN education has tended to be the department for any aspects of churches, work which don't obviously fit under the titles of schools, medical work or evangelism. So I tend to define it as anything which helps ordinary church folk to learn more about their faith.

It can be with younger people in Sunday School work and Scripture Union groups. It covers the whole of the women's work. It also covers any form of lay training, organising teaching seminars and producing bible study material.

It covers Christian literature and, also for want of anywhere else, it covers choirs, flute bands and brass bands.

So there is wide range but the definition I normally give is *"teaching about Christ to the church within the church."*

I have spent two years finding out how to set about it. I've actually tried to visit as many of the churches as possible and to do teaching seminars myself.

Normally I would try and do some sessions specifically for the deacons



Baptist bookshop, Mbanza Ngungu

and others in positions of leadership on their responsibilities in the leadership of the church.

Others have been aimed more at ordinary church members. We have looked at stewardship and Christian giving, not just in the financial sense but also in the sense of giving the self and working within the church.

It is important for me to get into as many parishes as possible and for people to see that a missionary is trying to do this job. Not that I can provide all the teaching that is needed but I can set an example which other pastors can follow in teaching seminars. Also, I am trying to show the people that they do need to learn.

The long term aim is not to do all this myself but to produce teaching notes which can be used by ordinary pastors and to organise teaching

seminars within their own parishes.

It is a help to have a visiting speaker. People have heard their own pastor so many times that they don't seem to take a great deal of notice.

We are encouraging parishes to group together to organise seminars. Three or four pastors will go to one church for one weekend and each give some teaching, and another weekend they will go to another church and do the same teaching there. This means that the local pastor isn't doing it all.

The Lower River region of Zaire has something like 16,000 church members. I'm supposed to provide the teaching for that *"congregation"* but there is no way for me to do all the teaching personally. So it is important to train other people to do it. I have to sell the idea of Christian education and then get more and more people involved. □

Together in Christ – Who Obeys

*Yet not what I will, but what you will.
(Mark 14:36)*

THAT "YET" AT THE BEGINNING of the text sums it up. We speak so glibly, sometimes, about the willingness of Jesus to face suffering and death that we forget how he agonised, how he poured out all his heartache to God in prayer. "Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me."

There was no pretence that Jesus was going to face the next few days easily. He was deeply distressed and troubled – overwhelmed to the point of death – because of his impending betrayal. Like all those who lived in Roman occupied territory, he trembled at the prospect of a crucifixion death. At 33 years of age he was still a relatively young man with so much left to do, so much, seemingly, not yet accomplished.

Yet not what I will, but what you will. Jesus could trust his loving Abba, Father not to fail him. That is why he could go on and surrender himself, in loving obedience, to the will of God. ■

Hostel for missionary children, Kinshasa, Zaire



Glasgow '88

OBEYING TODAY

I don't know why I'm here. The situation is terrible. I'm facing so much opposition to the work I'm trying to do that I wonder whether it is all worthwhile. I don't know why God wants me here, yet... here I stay until he tells me to do otherwise.

THE HEARTSEARCHING of a BMS missionary serving in the heart of Africa. Humanly speaking he was fed up with the situation and prepared to pack it all in.

But once again the "yet" speaks of another way of looking at his position. There is the belief that God understands the circumstances much better than any human being and that, in some way not yet discerned, God is slowly working his purposes out. He has his own good reasons for wanting someone to serve in a particular place.

The pressures on missionaries today are considerable. It is hard to be separated from elderly and increasingly frail parents. Children are a constant source of anxiety, especially if they are thousands of miles away at school or in a hostel.

Culture differences seem to become more acute especially as the gulf between the two thirds world and the prosperous developed nations becomes wider.

And yet every year the BMS receives more than 300 enquiries about service overseas. British Christians are still, it seems, prepared to obey the call to go into all the world to make disciples.

However, missionaries have the option of returning home if things get too hot to handle. This past year we have witnessed our fellow Christians in places like El Salvador, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and elsewhere prepared to face imprisonment, suffering, torture, injury and death rather than disobey the call of God. Their trust in him puts most of us to shame. ■

A DAUNTING CHALLENGE

WHAT IS THE LINK between Karen, a primary school teacher from Bishops Stortford, Jenny, a doctor from Leeds and Andy, a man from Newbury, who services Ferraris for a millionaire?

No connection at all until you know that they have been accepted to use their skills overseas, leaving good jobs, which they have enjoyed, to venture out into the new and rather daunting challenge of overseas service.

None of them is talking in gloomy or martyred tones of sacrifice, but for them it is a question of following where God is leading them. It's as simple as that.

Where does an ex-policeman called Kevin, with Linda his wife, get the odd idea of going to work in Brazil, of all places? They were at Glasgow '88 with a group from their church. Kevin got separated from the group in the crowd during a Praise March. He saw, in the distance, a Brazilian flag held high by some Brazilians he had met.

As he struggled towards them, he seemed to hear a quiet voice saying, *"This is what you must do. Leave your own and go to them."*

He and Linda have not hesitated to respond in obedience, in spite of their fears about learning Portuguese.

As the writer to the Hebrews puts it, and what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Neil and Ruth, and of Robert and Catherine in France, of Jane and Les, of midwife Sue, of David and Cath from Glasgow, of Maren from Cowes.

All these are obeying the call of Jesus Christ who said, Go into all the world.... and who gave us an example of obedience to his Father's will. □

GOD CONTINUES TO CALL AND EQUIP

IN BRAZIL, many sincere people are offering their lives for missionary service. This is very much in tune with the priority that Brazilian Baptists place on mission and evangelism. They are now part way through a five year programme to double the number of churches and increase their membership by 1992.

Around 550 missionaries are serving with the Home Missions Board within Brazil itself and another 100 are at work elsewhere in the world.

David and Sheila Brown have the responsibility of selecting and training candidates for service with the World ▶



Andy Wilson



Karen Poole



Jenny Smith



Linda Donaghy

Breakfast at Kinshasa hostel



◀ Missions Board (WMB).

In August David presented 16 new candidates to the Board.

"The presentation was a very moving moment for me because I had accompanied the candidates through their entire process of selection and training."

The work of the WMB has been affected by Brazil's huge foreign debt and massive inflation rate of over 1000 per cent a year.

"This is hard enough to face for those who live and work in Brazil, but for the WMB it is harder still because we have to deal in foreign currency, purchasing mostly dollars," said David.

"You can imagine how difficult it is. In September one dollar cost us five times more than it did in January when our budget was planned."

Yet in spite of all, Brazilian Baptists have not been hindered in their work of mission which they regard as a basic responsibility for all Christians.

"We never cease to wonder at the way our Lord continues to call and equip his chosen ones for this special task." □

THEY'RE NOT THE SWEETEST

But there are Christians in Brazil who have heard and are obeying the words of Jesus: "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me."

HE CAME ALONG to the pre-school in Curitiba. He didn't turn up some days. His mother wondered why he had always been sent home

early and came in absolutely filthy. He obviously just didn't want to go but we eventually got him there and got him settled.

He had certainly been a violent, uncontrollable child. He started to become a much happier, more level-headed child and in fact stayed two years at the pre-school. He couldn't think of anywhere better to go.

But what really changed him were the teachers. They are all Baptist Christians who have heard the call of Christ to reach out in love to children like this.

These children turn up and they're not exactly the sweetest. Their backgrounds and the stories they can tell are not what you would expect to hear from children of that age.

When the teachers speak to them about sin the children add a few more sins that the teachers haven't thought of. But they also show them in a very real way the love of Jesus. Like all children they respond to this. □

I DON'T UNDERSTAND

*I don't understand Lord
why you should want me here
to serve these men and women.*

*Yes, this country is crying out for help!
People are sick
and there are few doctors.
Children are hungry,
but the land which should feed
them is eroding away.
They would willingly learn,
if there were those who could teach.*

*But why me Lord?
It's so hard
battling against misunderstanding
fighting the harshness of
mountain, wind and storm,
making sense out of confusion,
continuing to serve in the face of
ingratitude.*

*Lord
teach me to work with these people
as you would work.
May I know that even when
I give my all,
it is nothing beside
your gifts for me;
may I share that love
which cares and serves
and never fails when people
reject and spurn;
may I serve and in serving bring
glory to my Lord and not myself.*



THEIR FAITH IS SO REAL

Often terrified, Christians in El Salvador have learned to trust and obey their Lord. "They don't look like heroes," said one visitor, "but . . .

THE CHURCH in El Salvador is really the church as it ought to be and the Bible is the life of the people once again. Their faith is so real and connected so intimately with every single thing they do.

A Baptist lady told me of the day the soldiers visited her and searched her house for four hours.

"I had psychologically prepared myself for it because I knew they would have my address and I was determined to keep my serenity throughout. And I did!

"They found a hymn, one that we often sing about freeing slaves.

"You have invented these words," they said.

"These are guerrilla words.

"Well, actually they come from Isaiah," I said.

"OK. Show us."

"At that moment I was so nervous, but fortunately I had marked my Bible and was able to show them:

"The spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners . . . (Isaiah 61)

"They backed off when they saw it was actually in the Bible."

The fact that the Bible talks about freeing people was obviously too much for the soldiers. But that woman was brilliant and so unlikely. That is the wonderful thing about El Salvador. I met people who didn't look like heroes and heroines in any way whatsoever, until little by little their story emerged. □



Sarah Prentice

JUST AN APPENDIX

No matter how much a missionary prepares for it, there is no escaping the agony of culture shock. Sometimes, this is linked with the frustration of waiting for officialdom to produce the papers necessary to begin work.

SPIRITUALLY I AM learning a lot. Being cut off from family and friends, who know us well, makes us more dependent on God. Many times when I feel lonely, he reminds me that I'm not alone, that he is always by my side.

God's timing is best, but recently I've wondered why he would want me to go through a time of feeling useless. I was thinking that if someone were to ask me which part of the Body (of the Church) I thought I was, I would probably say the appendix! The appendix has dubious worth, if any at all.

Then he reminds me that I am still his child and I don't have to earn his love it is unconditional. These are positive things, but, although they seem to be so basic, we still need to be reminded of them. □

THE CHRISTIAN MOSAIC

God, your church is a mosaic of pieces large and small, of many colours and shapes whose differences, when blended make a thing of beauty not possible for any piece alone.

Help us to be trusting as you fit us together. Grant us the grace not to find fault with our neighbours but to hold onto them with genuine love knowing that however ill-matched we feel we may become a perfect fit to you Who see the whole picture.

YOU HAVE CALLED ALL PEOPLE

Gracious God, you have called together a people to be the Church of Jesus Christ. May your people be one in faith and discipleship, breaking bread together and telling good news that the world may believe that you are love, turn to your ways, and live in the light of your truth.

Together in Christ – Who Rejoices



*... and Jesus and his disciples
had also been invited to the wedding.
(John 2:2)*

Jesus was a good mixer. He liked to be with ordinary people. He enjoyed their company, especially if they were celebrating something like a wedding.

There were those, of course, who criticised, *Look at this man! He is a glutton and a drinker, a friend of tax-collectors and other outcasts.* (Luke 7:34)

But for Jesus, life was not grim and gloomy. Amidst its pain and sorrow there was always room for joy. Indeed, he compared himself to children playing at weddings (perhaps an echo of his own childhood).

So it is not surprising that we find Jesus being invited, with his disciples, to a wedding. He must have been regarded as the ideal guest. In contrast to his more

serious minded and sober cousin, John the Baptist, he could be guaranteed to help any party go with a swing.

Jesus, by his very presence, changes the water of life into wine. Wherever he goes scowls are transformed into smiles and laughter takes the place of tears for isn't joy one of the fruits of his spirit? ■

REJOICING TODAY

WITHOUT BEING triumphalist
there are many things we can give

thanks to God for. There is the fact that as a missionary society we have been in existence now for nearly 200 years. We are going to celebrate our Bi-centenary – plans are now well advanced – and we are going to enjoy the occasion even while remembering our failures.

Then there is the continued support of BMS work. Each year the home churches recommend new missionary candidates, old and young, to the Society. They faithfully engage in the ministry of prayer for the work overseas and they give generously for that work.

And because we are not in the work of mission alone but as part of the worldwide Church, we share the rejoicing of our brothers and sisters in Christ. ■

Together in Christ

BMS Workers and National Churches

ANGOLA

IGREJA EVANGELICA BATISTA
EM ANGOLA

General Secretary:

Rev Alvaro Rodrigues

BMS missionaries:

Colin and Marcia Pavitt

BANGLADESH

BANGLADESH BAPTIST
SANGHA

General Secretary:

Rev James S Roy

BMS missionaries:

Phil Commons

Valerie Hamilton

Sue Headlam

Christine Preston

Suzanne Roberts

BRAZIL

BRAZILIAN BAPTIST
CONVENTION

General Secretary:

Rev Orivaldo Pimental Lopes

*BMS missionaries working with
BBC and the different state
conventions:*

David and Sheila Brown

John and Norma Clark

Chris and Marion Collict

Angela and Roger Collinson

Peter and Susan Cousins

Tim and Rosimar Deller

Margaret and Roy Deller

Kevin and Linda Donaghy

Christine and Robert Draycott

John and Maria Dyer

Ana and Avelino Ferreira
John and Valerie Furmage
Jean and Michael Gardiner
Frank and Peggy Gouthwaite
Kathie and Martin Hewitt
Barbara and Keith Hodges
Debbie and Paul Holmes
David and Sue Jackson
Sadie and Vincent MacDougall
David and Catherine Meikle
Evelyn and Lee Messeder
Gerry and Johan Myhill
Mary Parsons
David and Jean Perry
John and Yvonne Pullin
Derek and Joanna Punchard
David and Joyce Stockley
Margaret Swires
Arfon and Janet Thomas
Anne and Iain Walker
Daveen and Michael Wilson

EL SALVADOR

EL SALVADOR BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION

General Secretary:

Rev Carlos Sanchez

BMS missionaries:

David and Rachel Quinney-Mee

FRANCE

THE FEDERATION OF
EVANGELICAL BAPTIST
CHURCHES

Executive Secretary:

Rev Jean Pierre Dassonville

BMS missionaries:

Neil and Ruth Abbott

Catherine and Robert Atkins

John and Sue Wilson

INDIA

CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA
BAPTIST UNION OF NORTH
INDIA

Secretary: Mr John F Masih

BENGAL BAPTIST UNION

General Secretary: Mr B K Biswas

*BAPTIST CHURCH OF
MIZORAM*

General Secretary: Rev Hrangena

BMS missionaries:

Ann Bothamley

Betty Marsh

Sheila Samuels

Carole Whitmee

JAMAICA

JAMAICA BAPTIST UNION

General Secretary: Rev Cawley Bolt

NEPAL

UNITED MISSION TO NEPAL

UMN Executive Secretary:

Edgar Metzler

BMS missionaries:

Jane Andrews

Debbie and Graham Atkinson

Ruth Berry

Barbara and Harold Blake

Heather and Richard Cameron

Jeremy and Ruth Clewett

Susan Frame

Tim Lehane and Alison MacLean

Suzanne Linnell

Pirjo and Stuart Little

Sheila Loader

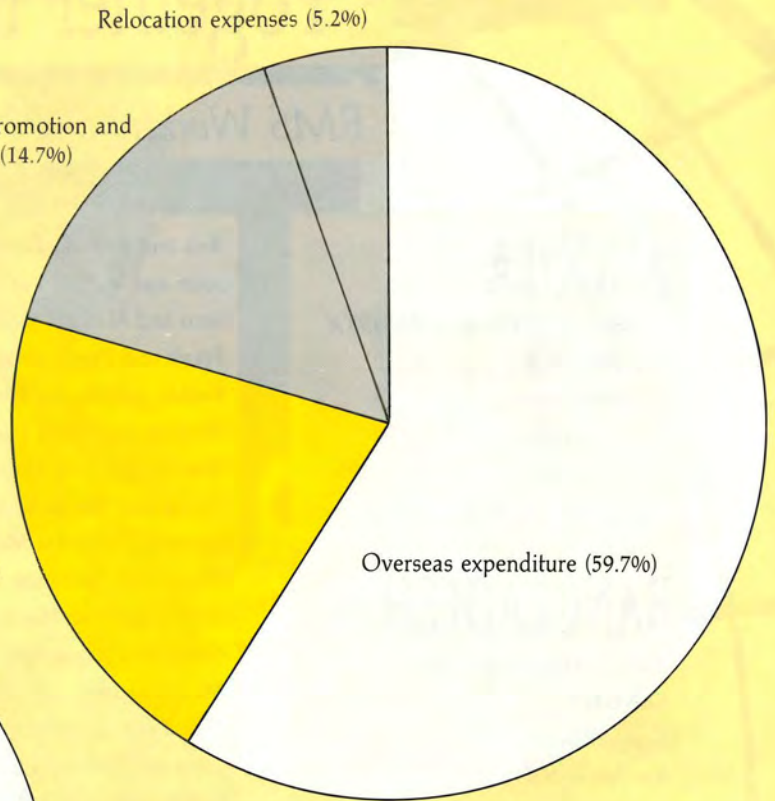
Andrew and Linda Mason

The Baptist Missionary Society ended the year with a deficit, most of it related to the move from London.

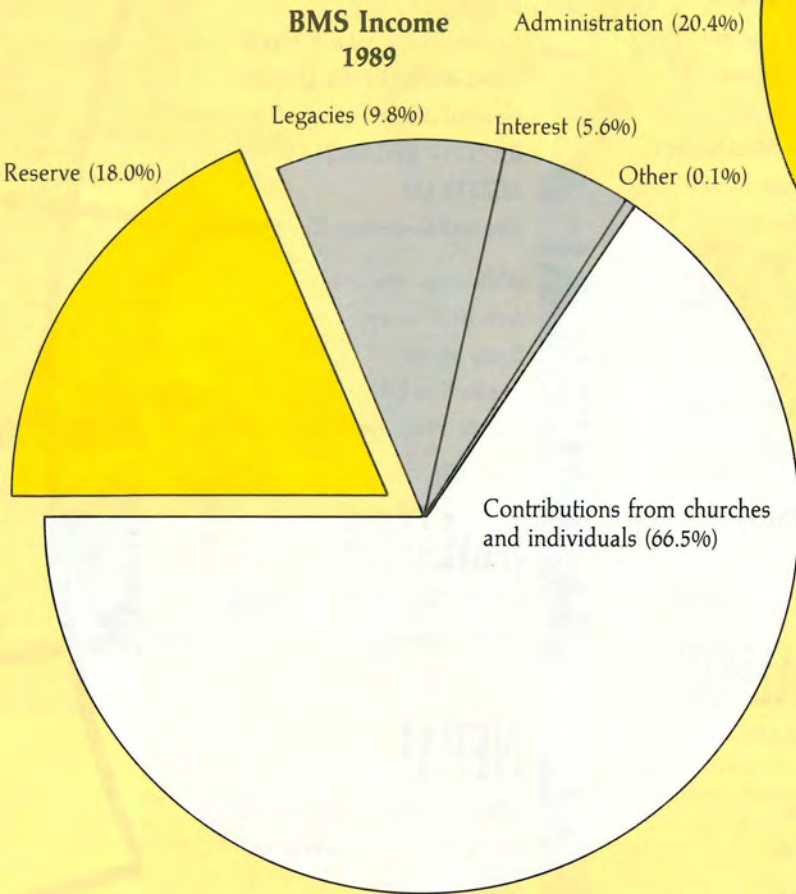
'The relocation to Didcot made it an unusual year,' said BMS Treasurer, Arthur Garman.

'The overall deficit of £694,781 is much larger than we are used to particularly when contributions

BMS Expenditure 1989



BMS Income 1989



and donations are up by nine per cent.'

Churches and individuals gave £2,558,159-£210,784 more than the previous year.

'But this was not sufficient to meet our normal operating costs by about £155,000,' Arthur Garman said.

He spoke about the delay in disposing of the Society's London headquarters.

This meant that the capital reserve had to be used to finance the purchase and the fitting out of Baptist House with the result that we lost about £219,000 in interest.

'On top of this, our normal operational costs rose by £20,000, redundancy payments and removal to Didcot amounted to £200,000 and then there was the overlap of staff, printing of new stationery and additional depreciation on new furniture and equipment which came to £123,000.

'So a large part of the deficit relates to the move and to the capital finances, but the most important thing to remember is that our actual income was £155,000 less than we needed for our normal operational costs.'

INCOME		
31.10.88		31.10.89
2,347,375	Contributions and donations	2,558,159
274,375	Interests and dividends	217,001
353,775	Legacies	378,789
3,664	Other	5,459
2,979,687	TOTAL INCOME	3,159,408
105,204	From reserves	694,781
3,084,891		3,854,189
EXPENDITURE		
	OVERSEAS	
1,366,398	Direct Overseas	1,506,278
132,891	Missionary Training	108,429
69,490	Scholarships etc	73,854
111,725	Missionary Retirement costs	135,819
88,582	Supplementary Services etc	123,423
225,000	Building, equipment, transport	300,000
1,994,086	TOTAL	2,247,803
56,212	CO-OPERATIVE WORK	53,015
579,985	ADMINISTRATION	785,802
454,608	EDUCATION, PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT	567,280
	HEADQUARTERS RELOCATION	200,289
3,084,891	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3,854,189

Dermott and Joy Morris
Katie Norris
Janet Prentice
Joy Ransom
Ian and Sally Smith
Alec and Dianne Street
Fred Swindell

SRI LANKA

SRI LANKA BAPTIST
SANGAMAYA

General Secretary:
Mr L Kariapperuma

BMS missionaries:
Michael and Stella Hambleton
Lynda and Paul Henstock
Joy Knapman

THAILAND

THAILAND BAPTIST
MISSIONARY FELLOWSHIP
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN
THAILAND

General Secretary:
Rev Dr Boonratna Boayen
KAREN BAPTIST CONVENTION
General Secretary:
Mr Sunny Danpongpee
LAHU BAPTIST CHURCHES
General Secretary:
Mr Suwit Damrongphong

BMS missionaries:
Christine and Geoffrey Bland
Jacqui Wells

TRINIDAD

BAPTIST UNION OF TRINIDAD
AND TOBAGO

General Secretary: Rev V A Cadette

BMS missionaries:
Peter and Sheila Brewer

ZAIRE

BAPTIST COMMUNITY OF THE
RIVER ZAIRE

President:
Rev Koli Mandole Molima

BMS missionaries:
Wilma Aitchison
Stephen Allford
Margot Bafende
Elizabeth Baker
Jane and Leslie Bromley
Alan and Janice Brown
Pam Bryan
Barbara and Tim Bulkeley
Christopher and Marie Burnett
Dannie and Margaret Calder
Susan Chalmers
David Champion
Deanna and Owen Clark
Janet Claxton
Jackie and Michael Cranefield
John and Ruth Davis
Edith Dawson

Alison Dutton
Brenda Earl
Robert and Ruth Ellett
Rosemary Giboney
Carolyn and Steve Green
Maggie Hester
Angela and Timothy Hinchliffe
Adrian and Sylvia Hopkins
Annie Horsfall
Richard and Sue Hoskins
Gwen Hunter
Freda and Hugh Kennedy
Carol and Michael King
Ann and Gordon McBain
John and Rena Mellor
Ruth Montacute
Eunice Murray
Bernie Olding
Christopher and
Lynette Outram
Mary Philpott
Karen Poole
Denise Price
Mary and Timothy Reed
Pam and Steve Syemour
Elizabeth and Richard Smith
Christine and
Christopher Spencer
Ian and Pauline Thomas
Roz Williams
Maren Wilmott-Borberg
Alan and Ruth Wood
Pat Woolhouse
Foster and Jean Wright
Andrew Wilson

Location not yet decided:
Jennifer Smith

PIMU TARGET SMASHED

NO! Not another programme for dieting. The PIMU PLAN is the name of the BMS project for Young People and Children.

Over the past two years, more than 400 churches have registered and shared in a scheme to learn about and to raise money for the hospital at Pimu in Zaire.

Participating in the Project has been enjoyable, stimulating and challenging at least that is what all the letters received from those who have been Pimu Partners have indicated.

The project, which was launched at the Baptist Assembly in 1988, set out to raise £50,000 over two years towards the cost of rebuilding Pimu Hospital. Many of the existing buildings, with walls made of mud bricks, were falling down and the whole hospital was in need of modernising and extending.

In fact, well within the period set aside for the project, the target has been smashed and a new one set at £60,000. The new target reflects the amount actually given to Pimu by BMS.

More important than the money which has been raised is the interest and enthusiasm for mission which the project has created.

The longer project time has given youth groups, Sunday schools and churches the opportunity to plan events and use the resource material in the four Pimu Packs which have been specially produced to help those participating in the project. □



Working on Pimu Hospital



MUCH TO PRAISE GOD FOR

Carole Whitmee, in Orissa, India, rejoices in the way God is using former hostel boys.

THERE IS A SMALL Bible School in Balangir, started at the beginning of 1989. It has 20 students who will eventually become pastors of village congregations. They are young men with a keen desire and commitment to serve the Lord.

The highlight of the Diocesan Council was the ordination of a number of young men, one of them a former hostel boy. All are presented for ordination by the Secretary of the Pastorate Union in which they are serving. The Secretary of the Balangir Pastorate Union the biggest in the Sambalpur diocese is another former hostel boy, now a graduate teacher. Both had been in our sponsorship programme and it was so thrilling to see them in these positions of leadership and being used of God for his glory.

There is so much we can praise and thank God for, much we cannot understand and much is uncertain. But our faith and trust is in the Lord. □

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

ONE OF THE GREAT successes of BMS promotion is the Birthday Scheme. Although it has been running for many years, it has not lost its appeal.

Simply and effectively, members of British Baptist churches are enrolled by their local church "Birthday Scheme" Secretary. Each birthday they receive a BMS Birthday card, an offering envelope and an invitation to share their celebration with people around the world.

In 1989, more than £155,500 was added in this way to the BMS medical work funds. This money was then used to make grants to BMS partner churches for hospitals and clinics, for medical equipment and to pay the salaries of national and BMS medical personnel.

Two years ago, the birthday cards were improved! Better photographs and a larger card ensure that recipients are given a visual insight into the lives of people living in partner countries.

Each year, four new birthday cards are produced and stocks are quickly "eaten up"! The Birthday Scheme is a regular and important feature of BMS promotion and news of churches joining the scheme, or of more people being enrolled is warmly welcomed. □



WOMEN MINISTERS IN JAMAICA

THE JAMAICA BAPTIST Union has accepted its first lady candidate for the ministry. Miss Doreen Wynter began her training at the United

Theological College of the West Indies in September.

The decision to recruit, train and ordain women to the ministry was made at the 139th General Assembly of the Jamaica Baptist Union held last year.

"For over a century, women have served the churches as deaconesses, deacons, lay-preachers, secretaries and treasurers," announced the *Jamaica Baptist Reporter* in its coverage of the Assembly.

"However, we have never had a woman as pastor of a church or circuit. From now on, women will be among our ministerial students at the College. They will fulfil weekend appointments in the church and at the end of their four years of training will leave UTCWI as probation ministers."

"The great challenge will come to us when they become available to receive a call to become pastors of churches or circuits."

For many years the BMS contribution to the work of the Jamaica Baptist Union has been through a lecturer at the UTCWI. The Society continues to support Baptist work on the island but, since the return to the UK of Keith and Jaqui Rigin, there are no longer any BMS workers there. □

WEAVING AWAY

THE WEAVING PROGRAMME at Chandraghona, supported by Operation Agri and the Baptist Missionary Society, is helping to provide jobs and income for a number of ladies in Bangladesh.

"We have 26 ladies working in the project," reports Sue Headlam. *"They are all destitute. Because they have been exploited for most of their lives, they expect nothing."*

"So it has been a joy for us to see them develop as people and smile. Their health has improved and they are taking a pride in their work as they develop their skills. We watch their children go to school and start to play."

"As a result, the status of the women in the community has improved and we have the bonus of seeing those who, although Christian by birth, have never gone to church now attending."

"We pray that as we develop this work, that not only do we give jobs and wages to women and enable a traditional skill to continue, but we never lose sight of our aim to give total health to the people — health of body, mind and spirit." □



28:19 THE TOUR

JUST WHAT WAS 28:19 The Tour? Despite all the publicity, the many articles and The Tour itself, there are some who are still wondering just what those numbers refer to.

Taking the verse, which is often called The Great Commission, in Matthew 28, verse 19, the BMS organised an eleven venue, nationwide tour to take the message to young people that the words which Jesus spoke to his first disciples are still relevant to the church today. And we emphasised that young people have an important role to play in the work of world mission.

Steve Chalke and John Passmore, BMS Young People's S



THE MOVE

FOR MANY BMS STAFF members, 1989 was dominated by one thing The Move.

We had talked about it, laughed about it, prepared for it, and then it finally came.

In August, removal vans headed out from London to Didcot in Oxfordshire, carrying a myriad different files, books, papers, and equipment. They also carried the BMS and Baptist Union of Great Britain into a new era and a new expression of partnership.

Before "The Move", the BMS said farewell to a number of valued staff members, including Claud Turner, the Administration Secretary, who has retired after faithfully serving the BMS for almost 30 years; and Cyril Price, Assistant Financial Secretary, who has continued to serve the denomination by working for the Baptist Housing Association in London.

The 'settling in' period went very well, as we became accustomed to an 'open-planned' style of office layout, well designed furniture and equipment, and not least, Didcot itself!

The new members of staff have brought a sense of refreshing newness to the Society, and we are grateful for their dedication, often in the face of adversity!

After we had settled in, Sue Le Quesne decided that the time had come to retire gracefully from the scene. We are grateful for Sue's long history of service with the BMS, starting with leaving for East Pakistan in 1957 to her return to the Home Staff in 1982, latterly as Promotion Co-ordinator. She has been succeeded as Promotion Co-ordinator by Sian Williams.

We welcomed Michael Quantick as the new Administration Secretary who, prior to joining the staff, had worked in local government in Torbay.

The Move has brought in its wake new ways of working. The 'AwayDay' has become a familiar expression to staff. The Promotion Team and Area/National Representatives are keen to meet regularly to plan both the production of resources and strategies for the future. This started recently with a successful 'AwayDay' at a nearby Quaker Retreat Centre.

The Overseas Department has also held 'AwayDays' to take time to think and plan for the future. □



Martyn Joseph, Steve Chalke and Shout Theatre Company joined forces with the BMS to put on a programme which included songs, drama, video and straight talking to put over the message. There was plenty to enjoy, loads to laugh at and much that challenged the 7,232 people who shared in 28:19.

Each night ended with a challenge for those there to consider what God had been saying to them throughout the evening. Nearly 500 young people responded and of those, over 400 indicated that they wanted to get involved in serving God, either in Britain or overseas.

28:19 The Tour happened in October, but the effects are going to be felt and seen in the lives of those young people and throughout the world for a long time to come. □

secretary



Together in Christ – Who Loves



THE HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP

Margaret Swires works in Campo Grande the capital of the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul. She has been helping to set up a project called "Baptist House of Friendship."

WE STARTED OFF by going along to community meetings to try and find out what the community felt their needs were. These were in *favela* or slum areas of the city.

There were some needs we felt we couldn't meet but we knew a government organisation that could and we were able to put them in touch.

They said there was a need for pre-school education and remedial work. We actually did start remedial work in one *favela* in a building that existed which belonged to a church.

Then we started pre-school work because there were a lot of children in the *favela* who were supposed to be receiving education but the local

government and the state government had no facilities to teach them.

Basically the whole project is funded by two different government organisations. They have money for work in the slums which they then pass on to us, after they have had a look at what we are doing.

It was very much hand to mouth. We had a promise, the first teacher we ever had was paid by the local Baptist association. The children are now sponsored by World Vision and we hope to have a lot more support from the local churches. The initiative was theirs and so the enthusiasm, we hope, will continue to be theirs. □



When he saw the crowds, he had compassion. (Matt. 9:36)

THIS WAS NO MERE intellectual concern for the needy of the world thought out in isolation. It was quite literally a "gut reaction" the Greek text has that meaning.

We all react to crowds in different ways. For many they are a threat or a noisy nuisance. For others they are a place to lose oneself. And for some, latching on to legitimate grievances, they are a rabble to stir up for a cause.

But when Jesus saw the crowd, within his heart, his stomach, his bowels with his whole being he felt the pain of the people. He was moved to love.

"They were worried and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. So he said to his disciples, The harvest is large, but there are few workers to gather it in. Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest."

The compassion, the love, the pity that Jesus had for the crowd was more than feeling. Jesus was not one for shallow, tear-shedding sentimentality. His was active, costly compassion. It was a love that compelled him to reach out to

touch the lives of sick, lost, lonely people, a love that led him to the costly sacrifice of the cross. ■

CHRIST'S LOVE TODAY

FROM ITS BEGINNINGS, the BMS has always been involved in a holistic ministry. As one missionary put it a few years ago, "You can't preach about a loving God without showing that love in your lives. How else can people know that God is love?"

Whilst the BMS is first and foremost a missionary society and not an aid agency, the gospel we proclaim is centred in God's loving heart. We are called to reach out in the spirit of Christ to all in need and to have compassion on the crowd of hungry, sick, disadvantaged and oppressed people in the world today.

That love is shown in a variety of ways – health, agriculture, development and social work – all linked with the work of the national churches and according to the priorities which they set. ■

Left: Favela

Below: Margaret Swires teaching children



LEAVING PROSPERITY BEHIND

"Does God have something to say through me?" asks Michael Cranefield.

HOWEVER OFTEN we make the journey from Zaire to Britain, or back again, there are tremendous adjustments to be made.

These changes are not necessarily related to the climate, although we left Britain in a heat wave and arrived in Zaire as the cooler weather began.

We have left behind the prosperity of Britain (where we are not especially well off!) to live amongst the poverty of Zaire where we are seen to be infinitely wealthy.

One of the places where I occasionally lead services is the ▶



◀ Caravanserai. It has been built as a sort of lodging for those who come to the hospital from afar, but who don't need to be hospitalised but who need to be nearby for regular out-patient treatment.

The occupants are mostly very poor this is not a five star hotel! Those with the means to do so, or who have family or friends in the Kimpese area, stay elsewhere. Many of those who stay at the Caravanserai are Angolan refugees. This camp doesn't resemble an African village; those living there are simply thrown together, with none of the family ties and long associations normal in a village setting. They are strangers to each other.

It can be a depressing place where the sick and the poor are put together. Can God speak to these people? Does He have something to say to them through me? These are the questions I ask myself and yes, he does speak to those who come and hear.

In miraculous ways a foreigner, who speaks the language with difficulty, who knows nothing of poverty or need or sickness as they know it, is used as a channel for God's word. □



HE WAITED SEVEN MONTHS . . .

"Centres offering specialist eye treatment are still few and far between in Zaire," reports Hugh Kennedy. "A very long (and expensive) journey might be necessary for the patient seeking care, and few can afford it. . . ."

PASTOR BUHAMBU works in the CDCZ (Disciples of Christ) church at Mondombe, at the eastern border of the Equateur province. Aware that his sight was failing, he set out on the long journey to Mbandaka, in April 1989, when he heard that I was visiting Bolenge on a week-end visit.

He arrived at Bolenge just after our departure. The doctor there diagnosed glaucoma, prescribed medical treatment, and the pastor (and accompanying daughter) waited for seven months at Bolenge for my next visit, to have the necessary surgery done.

Sadly the visit I arranged for November 1989 had to be cancelled, for reasons outside our control, whereupon the pastor and his daughter

caught the next plane for Kinshasa and turned up at IME a day or two later.

Tragically, very little sight remained, but he had his operations in an attempt to conserve what remained, and just as we left to come on furlough, they left on the long journey home. □



SLUGGISH WORK IN BRAZIL

David and Joyce Stockley report on the agricultural work at Potinga in the Brazilian state of Paraná.

SANTINO, THE FARM Manager, commented that we have completed lines of field beans for the first time at CEBADER. These are the fields from which we were lifting three kgs of line slugs per day, last year, and where we had to re-plant maize four times to obtain a crop.

We experienced three floods in our lower fields, and closing the road for

more than 24 hours. We had little boys splashing about removing slugs that climbed up the young maize plants. Then suddenly we have no more slugs, or only one or two here and there. Hand picking from our traps of vegetable matter, and the floods had reduced slugs to a manageable level.

We have not relaxed our guard but to see row on row of un-attacked beans is very exciting!

We are grateful to 'Operation Agri' who have researched experimental stations around the world for us, and have come up with ideas, illustrated leaflets in different languages and the 1989 book on slugs and snails in World Agriculture!

In the mid-winter season we were able to visit neighbours who still have slug problems to advise them in their situation. Slugs are a contact, an excuse for a visit, a mode of entry! □

... A COMMON INJURY

MAMA BOPOPI is the cheerful, bustling, always active wife of Bolobo Primary School director Bopopi. Committed Christians she and her husband have faithfully worked for the church for years. One Saturday afternoon she turned up unexpectedly at our door, at IME, very worried and distressed. A couple of months previously she had injured one eye badly with a piece of wood while working in her garden (a common injury) and had lost sight in it.

However a few days previously her other eye, up till then normal, had become painful and sight was rapidly going from it. It was easy to understand why she was so worried and her family so distressed. She and her helper stayed with us in our home for some weeks while she was treated. The eye was being threatened by a combination of inflammation of the cornea, and glaucoma, and there is no doubt that, untreated, that eye would rapidly have gone blind.

We prayed, and with medical treatment followed by an operation, the condition settled and sight in the eye returned to normal. She is now again her normal active self back in Bolobo. Praise the Lord! □

ANDHI KHOLA

Tim Lehane and Alison Maclean work on the Andhi Khola Hydro Electric project in Nepal.

THE ANDHI KHOLA Hydro Electric power plant is getting nearer and nearer its finishing date, even though it is pushed further into the future each time they hold a planning meeting.

Almost all the construction work is done now; the dam was finished the day before the first pre-monsoon

floods swept down the river and covered it over, and all monsoon the dam was a glorious sight.

It has been designed so that the water will flow over it when the river is high, and it's great to see the water pouring over in a graceful arc, and know that it was created by lots of people with very basic tools and simple technology.

From the dam, some water is channelled through to the top 'head race' tunnel, which goes through the hillside and comes out at the central work site, where they are building the control building for the operators of the power station over the very large hole in the ground which will channel the water down to the powerhouse, 250 metres below.

This large hole, the drop shaft, recently had to have rock bolts inserted into its sides. Tim designed the platform from which the rockbolting was successfully done, and soon they'll be attaching the metal tube, the 'penstock', which directs the water into the turbines in the powerhouse, to these bolts. The main work at the site these days is down at the powerhouse, in preparation for the arrival of the turbines and generators.

The installation of the penstock, and the turbine/generating equipment will be difficult and dangerous, and we ask for your prayers over this wisdom and care are needed.

With seven years of work, two kilometres of tunnel, 250 metres of dropshaft and the excavation of the powerhouse behind us, we have never ceased to give God thanks for His protection over the work, as there had been few accidents leading to serious injury, and no deaths.

But this record of which we had become proud means nothing now, as a Nepali worker in the powerhouse was recently killed by electric shock. His family has lost their only son, and the project has been painfully reminded of the dangers involved in bringing change and development to this country. We are still in the early days after this accident and up till now fear, recriminations and demoralisation aren't apparent, and we pray that the workers' morale and spirit can be restored. □



COMMUNITY HEALTH IN BANGLADESH

We hold a clinic at the Karnaphuli Paper Mill, near to Chandraghona, each Monday afternoon, reports Sue Headlam.

WE ARE ABLE to help the children of the poorer families to improve their health, but since we have only been doing this work for seven months we have a long way to go. There is a population of 50,000.

We use two classrooms in the primary school, so we have a lot of competition from children learning by rote when we try to listen and speak with the mothers.

In the Primary Eye Care Programme, we have seen 1000 primary school children and have found around ten per cent of them with problems.

I was amazed at this high figure, but the experts say it is to be expected. Our problem now is where to refer the cases we cannot deal with.

I was invited, in February, to visit the Bandarban Hill Tracts. It was an amazing visit and so different from our Chandraghona area, perhaps more like Thailand.

The journey, an adventure in itself, was along a new dirt road for 19 miles into the interior. We visited Mrung, Tipera and Bawm villages. The people had to walk miles to collect water from a stream. Being the dry season, even that source was sparse.

They had no health care at all and no access to medical facilities. I regretted not having immunisations, Vitamin A capsules and worm medicines with me.

I mentioned that I would love to help set up something for them and the government officers escorting us jumped for joy! There are many obstacles, not least the security of the area. On that visit we had two jeep loads of armed guards as an escort. Working in this area would be an exciting opportunity. □

Together in Christ – Christ Who Suffers

"Can you drink the cup of suffering that I must drink? Can you be baptised in the way I must be baptised?"

*"We can," they answered.
(Mark 10:38)*

THIS IS ABOUT THE COST of discipleship. It is about putting our lives on the line for the sake of the gospel. It is about being open to the hurts and sufferings of other people – about being torn apart by them – as our Lord was. It is about choosing to be where Christ is,

alongside disadvantaged men and women the world over, as he combats those evil powers which grind them down. It is about taking up our cross daily if we are serious about following him.

These are not easy words for they speak of life being poured out in love for the sake of the world. As one commentator puts it, *"They are words with blood in them."*

"This cup ... when we drink from it, we are sharing in the blood of Christ." ■



SUFFERING TODAY

NO ONE SEEKS MARTYRDOM willingly, but there are times when, as a Christian, you have to stand up and be counted.

As one person in El Salvador put it at the height of the conflict there last November: *"I don't know much about politics, but from my Christian perspective I can't help siding with the poor. If this makes me a leftist in the eyes of the government, so be it."*

At moments I have feelings of being completely lost and impotent, but God is supporting us. From my house I could see bombs being dropped and in desperation I called upon God, *"Where are you?"* and the answer came, *"What are you doing to stop this?"*

That is the challenge which many of our fellow Christians are having to face as they open their lives to the sufferings of men and women. They are more than sympathising they are opening themselves to the same hurts, they are feeling the same pain and they are a dying the same deaths. ■





OUR ONLY PROTECTION IS YOU

"We feel strengthened by your support." That is what one Baptist leader in El Salvador affirmed at the height of the renewed fighting last November.

OUR ONLY PROTECTION is you. On one occasion a lot of us were sheltering in a church building in a poor part of San Salvador. We were lying on the ground because rockets and bombs were falling all around. Then one man spoke to me.

I don't how to describe this to you, but we aren't alone.

And we weren't. Many people in Britain were praying for us and we knew that what was happening to us was not going unnoticed. □

TORTURE, BEATINGS AND PRISON

AT LEAST 144 NEPALI Christians are awaiting trial at the present time.

"Most of them have paid bail and are required to report monthly to the court until their cases are finalised," said one recent account of the situation in the country.

"But 21 are still being held in police custody and another ten are in jail three serving six years for preaching and making disciples and another serving three years. There are a further 35 men and women who have received sentences from various courts, but have not yet been placed in jail. The sentences vary from a few months to seven years."

These are probably only a fraction of the numbers involved. Because of the remoteness of many groups of believers and the difficulties of communication, it is virtually impossible to determine the exact number of Christians involved in legal persecution.

Torture and beating of prisoners, ►



◀ especially while in police custody, is practised as a matter of routine in the villages.

Nepal is the only Hindu kingdom in the world and the king is worshipped as an incarnation of the god Vishnu.

So the growth of Christianity is seen as a threat by many people and from its beginnings the church has known opposition.

Until now, Christians have accepted the reality that it is against the laws of their land for anyone to change faith and have not encouraged the world Christian community to highlight their plight. Indeed they have seen persecution as part of the birthright of every Christian to suffer for the faith. □



Pokhara, Nepal

DISAPPEARED

MICHAEL, WHO COMES from a non-Christian background, was due to be baptised on the first Sunday in September. Kingsley Perera, the pastor of Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church, Colombo, Sri Lanka, had arranged to meet him and other baptismal candidates for a final training session.

"But Michael did not turn up. In fact he had disappeared," Kingsley said.

"No one could find him. Had the army taken him? If so we thought there was no hope of his returning."

His distraught wife, a Buddhist, and his two young sons were cared for by church members and there was a great deal of prayer for him.

The pastor left Sri Lanka for Britain, in order to begin some theological studies, still not knowing what had happened.

Then after four and a half weeks Michael turned up in church one morning. It was true. He had been taken by the army as a terrorist suspect and finally released when it was realised that he was innocent.

"You can imagine our joy at his return," said Lynda and Paul Henstock, who are working at Cinnamon Gardens while Kingsley Perera is in the UK.

"Michael was baptised on 22 October, the church's 176th anniversary, and his wife is now attending church with him." □

IF WE COULD HAVE CHOSEN SOMEWHERE FOR HER TO DIE . . .

When Abigail, the daughter of Sue and Richard Hoskins, died in her sleep last July they were glad it was in Zaire where they received "great love and support from our African friends, who know so much about suffering and grief."

WHEN WE FOUND Abigail in the cot the first person who came to the house, after our colleague Richard Smith, was Pastor Eboma and then in very quick succession all the church leaders.

The first thing, in fact, that Pastor Eboma did was to pray with us. You could tell immediately that he knew exactly what we were feeling. He didn't need to think about it, he knew exactly what was going on. In Britain this might be awkward. But there in Zaire, he was on our level because he had been through it before. And that was true of all the others that came to the house.

They all came in, one after the other. Every pastor or church leader and many of the lay people. They came and they shared stories about their own lives, about their families and about children who had died. □

It was just amazing. They were just saying, "You can go through this as Christians. You can come through. Don't go back on us. Come back to Zaire. Don't go and leave us. We've been through it too."

In a sense this confirmed what we already knew. We said that if we could have chosen a place for Abigail to die, and to go through all that her death meant, it would have been there in Zaire. And obviously it had to be Bolobo because we knew the people there.

Also our suffering has enabled us to enter into their suffering. When we go back we will be different. We should be able to communicate in a special way when we counsel people or when we are there with them. We hope that means that we will identify more with them because they all know what suffering is about. □

OFF THE STREETS

ONE OF THE CHILDREN who came to the crèche was extremely sick and so we took him to the hospital. He had pneumonia, was malnourished and dehydrated. We gave a lot of back up support both to him and his parents.

When we visited his home we discovered that his father was extremely ill. He was dying. However, the family had connections with the Adventist Church and with their help we got him to hospital.

He actually had cancer and was operated on. When he started recover we were able to give support to the family and to help them with medicines because he couldn't work.

He normally made his living by selling ice cream on the streets. His wife went out washing clothes and so needed to put the children into a crèche.

If the House of Friendship in Curitiba, Brazil, had not been there to help, both Father and Son would have died.

We helped the mother through an emotional crisis involving caring for her child and a very sick husband.

The family has continued with us. We have two children in pre-school plus that little one who is now pre-school age. We do remedial work with the older two, one of whom has quite severe learning difficulties.

The food they get at the project helps to spread out the family income. It has helped them in raising their son. It has taken their children off the street, taught them different values and given them some hope for the future.

If somebody hadn't intervened well the little lad would have died and probably father would have died as well. In which case mum was at the stage of abandoning the children. Four other children would then have been on the streets. □

A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

MORE THAN 4,000 people made a public commitment to Christ during the Festival of Joy and Hope held in Cuttack under the ministry of Luis Palau.

Orissa has a higher concentration of Hindus than any other state of India, largely because of the vast number of temples, which, in the Cuttack area alone, number 3000. In recent years there has been considerable antagonism to Christianity in several areas, leading to the persecution of Christians and even destroying church buildings.

So the results of this Festival are really a remarkable achievement and an initiative that says much for the dedicated commitment of many lay people who had the vision for it. □



Together in Christ – Who Challenges



France, an "Open Door"

*I have placed before you
an open door (Rev. 3:8).*

THIS IS A MESSAGE to the church at Philadelphia which is strategically placed in Asia with many opportunities to reach out to the neighbouring districts.

Jesus is pictured here as the one holding the key which opens the door of opportunity. It is a reminder that he sets the agenda not those who sit and decide in councils and committees.

When Paul was on his travels in Phrygia and Galatia he tried to preach in the province of Asia, but was prevented. "And when they tried to go into the province of Bithynia, the spirit of Jesus did not allow them."

Jesus had other plans for Paul as he opened the door into Macedonia and Europe. ■

THE CHALLENGE TODAY

OVER 100 YEARS AGO, when the BMS had to leave the work in the Cameroons new opportunities were presented in the Congo. In this century, when the door to China slammed shut in our faces, the way was opened to go into Brazil and later Nepal.

Today, as it is increasingly difficult to get BMS workers into India and

Bangladesh, God has been opening new doors of opportunity in Thailand and France. At the same time, national Christians like the Mizo Baptist Church, have been hearing the call to evangelise their own countries.

There is no lack of opportunity to serve as a missionary society. The BMS has been receiving many requests from overseas churches to come over and help us. As always, we recognise that the decision is not the Society's but God's and it is his will that we shall seek before embarking on any new venture.

It is good to report that the challenge we accepted to work in France and Thailand is now coming to fruition. Our workers in these two countries are now coming to the end of their language training and beginning to settle into their work. ■

OFFREZ LA BIBLE

While Catherine and Robert Atkins have been studying at the French Baptist Language school at Massy they have been linked with a local church.

WE HAVE BEEN WORKING at Vitry-sur-Seine and one of the tasks I have been assigned, while Catherine finishes language study, is to go to market at neighbouring Villejuif and look after the Bible stall.

Vitry itself is a Communist municipality and the church has been refused a place on the market. Villejuif is Communist as well, but the mayor seems a little more understanding, although he never replies to my letters when I ask for a hall to show a film. Come to think of it, the Catholic priest doesn't seem keen to loan us one of his chapels for a monthly service at Villejuif either.

So, every Saturday morning sees me vying for a good spot around 8 a.m. We are casual traders and look for a place on the fringes of the covered market. Most weeks I end up next to a couple of evangelical gypsies selling moulded pewter.

Evangelical Gypsies? Why yes! Take a look at your copy of *Operation World* under France. *There has been growth among ... a number of smaller evangelical groups. The most responsive have been the Gypsies, with nearly half their total number now church going as a result of a remarkable people movement.*

Every week, a different member of the Vitry church comes along to help out, but really it is a glorious opportunity to listen for two or three hours to one person's version of the French language and make a few contributions myself.

The church didn't reckon to sell many copies of the Bible, perhaps one every three or four weeks. They



"We know what we want – equality, jobs and peace"

seemed to think more in terms of establishing a presence on the market. They used to fling as many Christian books as they could onto the table.

Near to Christmas we used the slogan, "Voici Noël: offrez la Bible," "It's Christmas, give a Bible."

We wrapped up New Testaments as presents and just displayed them amidst the tinsel. People came to look

at them and then bought those we hadn't wrapped up! Three one week. Four another week.

One day a burly fruit stall holder wanted a Bible because he'd been in a hunting accident and was grateful not have lost his sight. I don't know what to think of the reasoning, but then again I've never been in a hunting accident so I wouldn't know. □

GOD HAS OPENED A DOOR

The first BMS workers in France for many years, John and Sue Wilson, are about to settle into a church at a place called Bron.

BRON IS SITUATED on the east side of Lyon in an area of population growth which embraces people of various nationalities.

We are pleased to be able to respond positively to the invitation of the

French Baptist Federation to work with a small group of Christians who have been meeting there during the last six years.

They meet in a "Protestant Centre" for their Sunday morning service and ▶

◀ mid-week Bible study; they also take turns to pray together in each other's homes.

Apart from the central Baptist Church in Lyon, which has supported and encouraged this group, the Bron church is only the second Baptist Federation church in the Lyon area

which has a population second only to Paris.

We shall be living on the third storey of a high rise block of flats. This apartment became available to us only after a special plea to our link churches to pray. We are so thankful for the large living room which will enable us

to use our home for outreach and hospitality to our neighbours.

We were thrilled to find an open-air market on the door step of our apartment block. Its North African flavour indicates an opportunity to make contact with Muslims as well as un-churched French people. □



IT'S A PRIVILEGE TO BE HERE IN SUCH DAYS OF OPPORTUNITY

Problems with language have been causing some irritation to Geoff and Chris Bland who went out to Thailand early last year. They are looking forward to settling down to work, later this year, at a place called Udon.

YOU MIGHT WELL suppose that after almost a year here we are, by now, getting settled and adjusted. Apart from the prospect of a major upheaval when we move to Udon, we recognise that we are entering a period of peak frustration.

The chief reason is the ongoing struggle with the language. We continue to make slow and steady progress, and this is encouraging, but at the same time our halting and often misunderstood conversation also

underlines how far we have to go before we can really communicate at a more useful level.

In church we understand only a tiny fraction of what is said, while even in easy conversation with sympathetic helpers, the chance of mishearing is considerable.

Opportunities for giving out and for serving are very few and far between. Initially this was a not wholly unwelcome relief after the constant demands of pastoral ministry,

especially with so many new things to learn and experience, but by now such lack of opportunity is irritating.

In spite of this, it is not hard to keep smiling. This is due, partly, to the assurance of being in the will of God and partly to the numerous compensations of living in Thailand.

We feel privileged to be here in such days of new opportunity for the gospel and the church and to be able to learn in our lives so many lessons that we would never have known in England. ▶

◀ We move to Udon Thani in August. We expect this to be a bigger and more difficult transition than coming to Thailand initially proved to be. Udon is in the north east of Thailand in an area known as Issan which covers about one third of the country and is traditionally poor. There are few Christians in the area. The 20 or so churches we shall be working with are spread over seven different provinces.

We had a warm welcome from all the people we met when we visited the area. We were impressed by the church leaders who were all around our own age. They impressed on us the need for someone to exercise a ministry of Bible training and encouragement to the pastors in the far-flung churches.

All four of us found Udon a much pleasanter town than we had expected and the children's positive reaction to being there was a real answer to prayer. If it had been feasible to do so, we would have gladly left behind the comforts of Bangkok and gone to live there right away.

There is no shortage of opportunity for the church in Thailand. Like in many other Asian countries, society is in rapid flux. The majority of young people, who make up half the population, are eagerly embracing Western materialism. The willing acceptance of this philosophy, fuelled by its widespread availability through modern communication technology, is doing more to transform traditional culture in a decade than Western imperialism ever managed to do in a century or more.

The old religions are not abandoned altogether, but allegiance to them is increasingly token and traditional.

This is, of course, what has happened to Christianity in the west and, in itself, it can scarcely be seen as a good thing. Yet with it will come both a spiritual vacuum and a new opportunity for the Christian gospel to be heard and received. That gospel is not just "another religion". Rather it is the good news of salvation to all who believe and we are increasingly aware how much such news is needed here. □



IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW HOW THEY THINK

The first BMS worker into Thailand was Jacqui Wells. She is no newcomer to missionary work having served in Bangladesh from 1975 until 1988 when visa difficulties prevented her return. A new country, of course, means a new language . . .

MY LANGUAGE STUDY is going well. Believe it or not, I am in my last module of formal Thai language study. At present I am studying Buddhism and when I complete this unit I will have been studying for ten months.

I do feel that I am getting the hang of it. God has been good, helping me day by day as I have studied. We do serve a God who is faithful and who delights in blessing his children.

The module in Buddhism is very important because about 94 per cent of Thais are Buddhists. It is important to know what they believe and, more important, to be sensitive to their thinking. If we are going to be able to share the love of Jesus effectively, we must know how our Buddhist friends think and to know how to present the Lord Jesus Christ and his good news.

Please pray for us as we attempt to do this, that we may be able to make firm friendships with Thais and through friendship that the opportunity will come to share Christ. Here in Bangkok it is easy to have many acquaintances but it is hard to have real friends. Perhaps I am wrong, but the Thais seem to back off when the friendship becomes a real one.

I am fortunate to have the help of a very good teacher. She has a very

good ear and knows immediately when you have made a mistake. She has tremendous patience and a good sense of humour as well.

The Bible module was a real treat. I really enjoyed the challenge of trying to acquire the Bible language it is a high language with a special vocabulary and pronouns.

Well, we learnt to pray in Thai and we began each day with prayer. Often the prayers were short, but that did not matter.

We had various assignments but the main challenge was to teach a Bible story and to preach a sermon. My Bible story was the parable of the wise man and foolish man and then I chose to preach on servanthood.

It took hours to prepare and was a nerve-wracking experience. It was interesting to appreciate how we should present the gospel to the Thai. It is important not to turn people off by our terminology. It is important to think as the Thai thinks and to share the good news in ways they will understand.

Jacqui is now moving from Bangkok to the north of the country, near to Chiang Mai, to work among the Karen people where she will be engaged in Sunday school and women's work. She is now setting out to learn the Karen tribal language. □





Come over and help . . . in Nicaragua . . . and in the new Europe

REFLECTING BACKWARDS OR ONWARDS?

A MIRROR CAN be used for self-examination, reflecting on what one is seen to be. The previous pages have been of such narrative and of such reflective a nature, mirroring the Society's work in mission partnership over the period of just one year.

As in a heliograph, a mirror can be used quite differently, signalling on a message for all who will to read. This, too, the pages have endeavoured to do, recognising the challenges we perceive in Christ, the open doors through which he invites us as a Society to fulfil his great Commission.

What will be the response of the BMS to the opportunity of those open doors? What should be the way forward within the years designated a Decade of Evangelism?

Some patterns of life ahead are already emerging. The fresh cooperation within Britain between the Unions and the Society, may, under the guidance of God, lead us on to those roads of obedience that are as yet 'unclassified'. What dangerous bends of decision-making will need to be negotiated or what steep gradients of effort will have to be overcome, no-one yet knows. Beginning to appear are the prospects for partnership within Europe, of World Church ministry within Britain and of

mutual representation in our relationship to the overseas church bodies. Will there also be a re-examination of the shared tasks of mission within Britain?

The title of this Annual Report is actually the theme for the Baptist World Alliance Congress being held in Seoul, Korea in August this year. Immediately preceding the Congress, the Society is

convening a Partnership Consultation for all of the overseas partner churches together with the representatives of the BMS.

What exciting vistas come into view as we look to multi-lateral co-operation through such a consultation. A ministry from Mizoram to Trinidad, from El Salvador to Zaire? A reaching out to the millions of street children and young people of Brazil by the young members of churches in Angola? Will the Society act as an enabler or as a junior partner to foster such multi-lateral cooperation?

In Christ, who knows where the togetherness in commitment will lead?

What is beyond doubt is the call for all of us to abide in Christ. None of our hopes or dreams, our ambitions under God, will ever become reality if we have strayed from him. Our Lord himself warned, I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me, you can do nothing.

The invitation is still for us to put our faith in Christ and then to express our love by going forward in mission together. □



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THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

is looking for a

SECRETARY FOR THE BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

The person appointed will be one with a vision for world mission and the ability to encourage and inspire others in a forward-looking celebration of the Bicentenary of the Society in 1992. A good awareness of the present work of the BMS and of the breadth of the Baptist constituency is essential.

Whilst some promotion is included in the task, the Bicentenary Secretary will carry administrative responsibility for special productions of literature and AVCs, for arranging various types of international visits for supervising the special events of the celebration and servicing the needs of any major fund raising. Appropriate expertise and skills are required.

The appointment will be for a period of three years.

Applications including full CV or request for further information should be sent to:

Reverend R G S Harvey, General Secretary
Baptist Missionary Society, PO Box 49, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8XA
Envelopes marked 'Confidential – Bicentenary Post' should reach the above address by 31 May

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

ARRIVALS

Mrs C King
on 2 March from Ngombe Lutete, Zaire
Dr S Roberts
on 17 March from Ruhea, Bangladesh

DEPARTURES

Miss E Wilson
on 7 February to Kinshasa, Zaire
Mr and Mrs A Thomas
on 9 February to São Paulo, Brazil
Miss S Loader
on 3 March to Kathmandu, Nepal

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LEGACIES

Elsie Grace Elves	1,100.00
Margaret Spolton	500.00
Ruth Lilian Oakeley	1,000.00
Mrs Edith Freeman	1,033.44
Miss Annie Wilds	200.00
Miss E B N Lindsay	2,000.00
Mrs O W Morris	500.00
Mr J B Latham	2,000.00
Miss Ellen Allen	316.19
Douglas, Edinburgh	1,000.00
Miss Elsie Lovatt	1,000.00
Mrs Gladys May Bullock	995.02
James Henry Boon	100.00
Mrs G M I Washington	9,839.98
Clifford Sellick	10,000.00
Edith Taylor	1,000.00
S K Oakham	1,000.00
Elizabeth Sinclair	1,000.00
Helen Hardin	6,925.97
Beaton, Taunton	5,000.00
Mrs M F Barker	651.51
Mrs E C Webber/E M Doidge	1,420.00
Miss Daisy Bucknell	50.00
Miss M E Larbalestier Carter	23.32
Miss G E Paramour	3,316.74
Mr and Mrs William Holloway	30.00
Mrs M A E Bennett	3,022.34

GENERAL WORK

Kent: £250.00; via BUC: £2.10; Whitstone: £6.00; Cornwall: £20.00; Paisley: £250.00; Aberdeen: £20.00; London: £70.00; Andover: £10.00; Winchester: £25.00; via North Staffs Evangelical Alliance: £30.00; Bloomsbury: £500.00; via BAC Workers' Christian Fellowship: £5.20; Anon: £10.00; Oldham: £10.00; Charities Aid Foundation: £50.00; Oxford: £5.00; London: £10.00; Surrey: £29.00; Kent: £2,500.00; Darlington: £100.00; Leicester: £110.00; via Evangelical Trust Ltd: £250.00; Darlington: £30.00; Reading: £50.00; London: £14.05; Bloomsbury: £200.00; Warley: £13.00; Aberdeen: £20.00; Stirling: £15.00; Durham: £25.00; London: £20.00; Durham: £25.00; Charities Aid Foundation: £68.38; Newcastle: £33.40; Andover: £10.00; Anon: 19.60; Chelmsford: £80.00; via General Committee: £42.01; Anon: £20.00; Durham: £35.00; Anon: £43.75; Anon: £30.00; Romford: £50.00; JANON: £15.00.

