

MISSIONARY
Herald

July 1990
25p



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MISSIONARY HERALD

The Magazine of
The Baptist Missionary Society
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Didcot, Oxon OX11 8XA
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1990 Baptist Missionary Society
photoset and printed by
Stanley L Hunt (Printers) Ltd
Rushden, Northamptonshire

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ISSN 0264-1372

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

You might think that an issue devoted to economic issues and to Third World debt had little to do with the work of a missionary society. We are, after all, in the business of sending people – committed Christians – to work alongside Christians overseas as they share the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, economics cannot be divorced from people. Inflation means that necessities like food, clothing and shelter cost more, making life harder for the poorest in society.

In Brazil, it is estimated that there are 22 million children and young people who are living in a precarious situation, many of them on the streets. Fathers leave the family in order to find work elsewhere and often never come back. Mothers are forced to go to work and leave their children locked in the house for most of the day. Some give up altogether and abandon their children.

Economics is about people. It is about jobs. It is about whether they can make ends meet and feed their children on nutritious or just filling food. It is about whether they can afford health care and get to the hospital or doctor in time for effective treatment to take place.

It is about people and people is what we are about in the BMS because we have been commissioned to share the love of God in Jesus Christ 'to the ends of the earth'.

And the economy of the Third World is not remote from us. Our life style, how we spend our money, how we invest, what we eat and wear, what chemicals we use to clean our kitchens, what raw materials our industries use and so much more, affect the lives of others because in this world, God's world, we are all bound together.

DON'T PAY!

Most governments in Latin America are threatened by hyperinflation, depleted currency reserves, falling standards in the quality and quantity of human services and higher levels of poverty and misery.

This is made worse by foreign debt. Between 1980 and 1988, Latin American debtors sent \$572.2 billion to wealthy Northern creditors, although they still owe twice as much as originally borrowed.



MANY CHRISTIANS IN Brazil are already saying that the debt should not be repaid. 'Because,' they argue, 'paying Brazil's \$115 billion debt will only aggravate the misery of the poor.'

'The debt is related to the daily bread to which every Brazilian has a right — not just for survival — but to have a life with dignity,' said Lutheran pastor, Gottfried Brakemeir, at a meeting of the National Council of Christian Churches held in Rio de Janeiro last year.

In 1988 Brazil paid \$17 billion to international creditors. That sum, if spent at home, could have built 81,000 schools for 60 million students or

7.7 million low cost houses for 30 million people.

Despite regular interest payments, Brazil's foreign debt has increased astronomically. It has grown from \$4.4 billion in 1969 to \$115 billion at the end of 1988 even though the country paid £163 billion in interest and principal during those 20 years.

At their Rio meeting, the church representatives called the debt 'neo-colonial'. They said the rich nations, operating through international lending institutions dominate and exploit the poor nations.

The root of the problem lies in changes in the world economy. As the

economic leadership of the United States comes into question, other industrialized nations of the North are competing to fill the vacuum. But Latin America and developing countries in the rest of the world are being left out of the new economic dynamic that is being created.

During the 1980's, as a result of new economic policies, the United States became the largest debtor in the world and also became the recipient of direct foreign investment, primarily from Japan.

For these reasons, resources for other parts of the world have evaporated. Moreover, the international financial

◀ institutions are not filling the gap for the Third World. In fact, the International Monetary Fund is currently receiving more from debtor member nations than it is lending out.

Under international pressure, between 1982 and 1988, Latin America exported 3.5 per cent of its annual gross national product in order to service its foreign debt.

International trade has also changed its character. There has been a move toward advanced technological products and away from raw materials. Due to synthetic substitutes the world is now consuming less sugar, cotton and certain woods than 20 years ago.

In 1965, raw materials and foodstuffs represented 38 per cent of total First World imports. In 1986 they barely reached 17 per cent. On the other hand, First World manufactured goods have been reduced from 30 per cent of all exports to the Third World to 22 per cent.

The clear disadvantage to Latin America because of these international changes means that countries in the region need to reorganise their national economies in order to respond to the internal demands of the majority of their populations. □



BREAKING THE CYCLE OF DEPRIVATION AND POVERTY

The high rate of inflation in Brazil has meant that the wage people receive at the beginning of each month is worth only about a quarter of its initial buying power by the end of the month, reports Iain Walker from Fortaleza, Ceara in the north east of Brazil.

SOME PEOPLE TRY to get round this by buying everything they're going to need for the whole month as soon as they get their salary – but if you're poor and haven't got a freezer, how do you keep fresh food? (Remember it's between 30°C and 40°C all year round in Fortaleza.)

The poor end up living on a diet of beans and rice with practically no meat and vegetable supplement. No wonder there are so many malnourished children! At least there are plenty of wild fruit trees here, but the tragedy is that many people work hard and end up with little to show for it.

We live next to an up-and-coming favela (shanty town) of about 25,000 inhabitants. It's now becoming official after more than a decade of being just squatters' territory.

We pass through the main street every day on our way to work or to buy things from the baker or the chemist who both have decent premises there. Most of the other shops are less hygienic: poor quality meat, fish or fruit lying open to the flies and dust, dogs everywhere.

Young children play naked at the doorways while mothers and grandmothers wash clothes squatting over aluminium basins. They have no sinks or kitchens and probably their water source is a not very deep pump well which produces untreated water. Horses and mules vye with cars for the use of the road. Occasionally cows, pigs and chickens wander down too. The road is being improved at the moment, so you watch your step not just to avoid the refuse but the debris of construction as hand broken stones are set in the dust to provide a firm surface.

There's going to be a local election



soon, so the road improvements have been timed to coincide. Toilets are also being provided for the first time for many residents.

The houses are generally made of brick with ceramic tiles and rough wooden doors and shutters as this is a better favela. Elections are also a good source of building materials.

The poorer houses are of wattle and

drums and Assemblies of God amplified choruses and sermons all blare out at once and often the only thing you can do is put on your own music to drown them out.

We have many friends through the church who live in the favela. Maria-José is one. She is a warm, generous lady with a gift for evangelism and has an evangelistic Bible Study in her house every week. She has a full time job but has to support not just herself but her mother and three children on her small salary.

She has two tiny brick rooms and a larger wattle and daub kitchen/work area which suffered badly in the last heavy rain. She was one of those who



received a toilet from the government recently.

Furniture in her house is scant with a few shelves, a cooker, a plank on bricks for a bench and two worn wicker chairs.

Only the three-year-old has a bed (a cot) – the others sleep in hammocks, slung up at night and neatly rolled away during the day.

Their water source is a stand pipe supplying untreated water, but they have electricity from the local power station. Fortunately they don't pay rent – this is a bought house, originally entirely wattle and daub. She and the kids spent Christmas Day with us and she mentioned then that they hardly ate vegetables. She explained they didn't keep so she didn't tend to buy them.

When we made a return visit to her house (she had been too embarrassed at first) we discovered she had a small plot and perhaps could grow vegetables. There were already a few fruit trees. Her mother turned out to be a keen gardener, but was deterred because they had no fence to keep out stray chickens and children and

Top left:
Iain and Anne Walker
with their son Callum

daub and when it pours they begin to cave in. Some houses have concrete floors; most are beaten earth. People try to avoid thatch roofs as an insect which carries a terminal disease lives in thatch.

At night especially the favela is very noisy. Samba music, the theme tunes of the current novels (TV series), songs from the children's Xuxa show, Spiritist



◀ because the soil is so sandy the water quickly drains away.

Having found out what grows in the North East we asked if they could help us in an experiment to see if in a small enclosed container (e.g. a tin or basin) we could solve these two problems and provide cheap, fresh vegetables for the family. Recently her mother and the youngest child were both quite ill. Hopefully this experiment will work and help the family to be healthier and other people will copy the idea.

This is microcosm of the reality in which we are living and we are just two members of a far greater team of Christians trying to help, trying to break the cycle of poverty and deprivation. □



FORCED TO WORK

The worsening economic conditions in Brazil are forcing more and more women to find work sometimes abandoning their children. Gerry Myhill updates us on the situation at the day centre in Nova Londrina.



THE DAY CENTRE has suffered one or two setbacks, one of the main problems being members of staff. Unfortunately the financial resources we have limit us to employing non-professional personnel who are limited in their understanding of what is required of them.

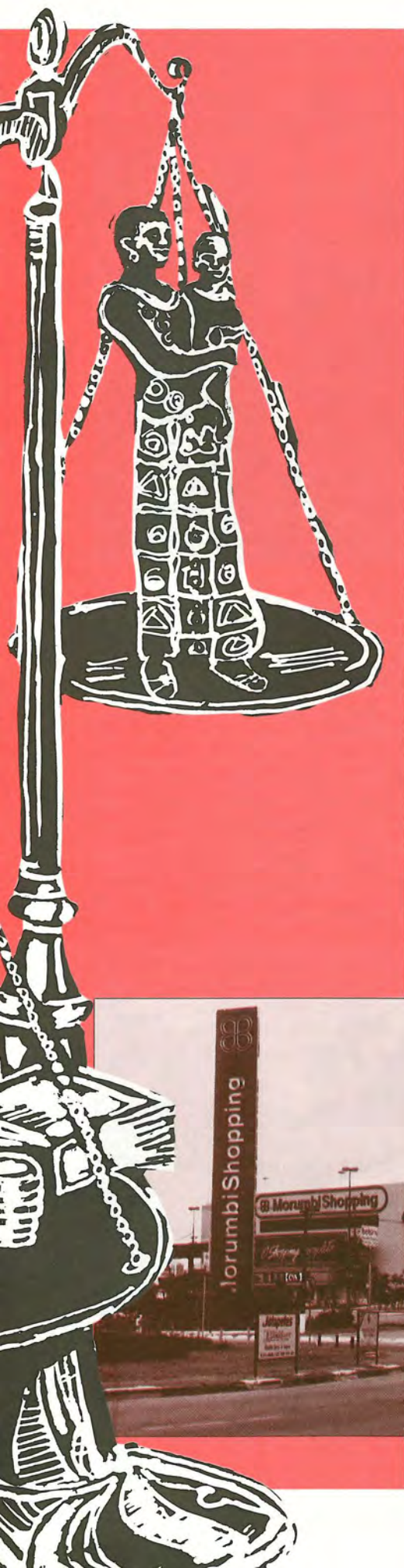
More children than ever are being registered and the waiting list is

growing. Due to the worsening economic situation more women than ever are being forced to find work.

Recently one of the day centre mothers abandoned her three children, all boys, and moved in to live with a man, recently released from prison. He is unemployed and an alcoholic.

She was living on her own with the children, all who have no known father





and apparently her man-friend will not accept her with her children. They are both adamant that they do not want them.

The youngest child of three years, Fernando, has been attending the day centre for two years. Gerald and Raimunda took him into their home

until a family was found who were willing to adopt him. The eldest boy, Claudio, is living with his uncle. But the middle boy, Naim, is the worst behaved and very disobedient so no one is willing to have him.

Raimunda finally persuaded his mother to keep the boy with her until a home can be found for him.

In April, a ten month old baby girl died from pneumonia. She had been registered at the day centre and should have started to attend several weeks before. However, the mother said that the child was suffering from a skin infection and that she would bring her when she had improved.

We have now discovered that the child was being left in the care of her five-year-old sister while the mother was out at work all day. Perhaps things would have been different if she had been receiving the care and treatment that she needed in the day centre. It is difficult to tell.

There are so many children in similar circumstances. Pray for us that we might be led to find those who are most in need. □



Top right:
Day Centre at Nova Londrina

VILLAGERS FIND HOSPITAL TOO COSTLY

Adrian and Sylvia Hopkins returned to Pimu earlier this year and were immediately confronted by the financial problems faced by the church and hospital.



I HAD A LONG session with Dr Nzongo and went over many of the activities and problems of the previous 18 months. He has had to face many problems and he was rather tired of them. At the end of our session he insisted on handing all the administrative jobs back to me and then left for three weeks' holiday.

The biggest problem was one of finance. The hospital had debts of over a million zaires, which was more than a monthly average income, and several salaries were left unpaid. Hospital staff

had been temporarily laid off and are still so.

Over the last three months we have been able to reduce our debt by a half, but many of the villagers can no longer afford to come to hospital particularly as the price of coffee, our only real cash crop, has dropped from 50 zaires per kilo last year to 20 zaires this year.

Last year there were 500 zaires to the pound and now there are nearly 900. The economy is not thriving!

Adrian's parents are well installed in Pimu and helping with the rebuilding

of the church. The church building is going up quite well and soon they will be putting in the concrete beam which will go right around the building to support the roof and tie the walls together.

Pimu is built on very sandy soil and so the structure has had to include a lot of reinforced concrete. However, to transport the cement for the 150 km journey on our side of the River Zaire costs £300 per trip and so far there have been five trips! □



Top: Waiting Room of the Out-Patients' clinic, Pimu
Bottom: Outside the clinic

'WHERE THE SEED FELL INTO THE GROUND AND DIED'

continuing Lesley Rowe's Bicentenary series

Africa: 1814-1914

'Repairing the Injury'

TODAY AFRICA IS sometimes called '*the most Christian continent*', with more people professing some form of the Christian faith than any other land-mass. Its churches are vigorous, lively and growing, putting many Western churches to shame. Missionaries from Africa are now coming to the heathen continent of Europe.

But barely 150 years ago, Africa had only pockets of Christian influence, mainly on the coast. Fetishism and animism predominated. Such a dramatic change-around could only be God-effected. It is easy with hindsight to pick out the mistakes made by the early missionaries in Africa, but even in their fallibility, they were used of God to achieve great things.

The slave trade, even after its abolition, cast a long shadow over Africa. In Britain, too, the Victorians were beginning to have a guilt complex over what their predecessors had done. Writing in the BMS Centenary volume of 1892, Edward Medley put it like this: '*Christian England is called upon to bear the burden of repairing the injury which England ungodly, or at least grossly thoughtless, wrought in Africa a century or more ago, and it becomes her to be as energetic in propagating the gospel as she was then in driving the slave trade.*'

But it was a former slave from Jamaica who was to begin the Baptist venture into Africa. In an earlier article (*Herald* – April 1990) reference was made to Thomas Keith, whose brave bid to reach his fellow-Africans with the gospel came to nothing. However, his example and vision, were cited by William Knibb in 1840, as he urged the BMS to embark upon an African mission.

This they did, in the following year. Rev. John Clarke, a Jamaican missionary, and Dr. G. K. Prince set out in 1841 aboard '*the Chilmark*', to make initial explorations. After exploring the West African coast around the Niger river, they decided that the small island of Fernando Po would make the best and safest base for their work.

For it should be remembered that Africa was not called '*the Dark Continent*' for nothing. Very little detail was known of the interior: thick jungle and swamp, fierce tribes and disease were all barriers to its opening up. Livingstone and then Stanley were just beginning their explorations. The slave trade, which had ravaged and brutalized the population, especially in the coastal regions, made many tribes wary, if not openly hostile, to any white men landing.

The Cameroons Mission Established

IN 1842, A LITTLE Church consisting of five members was formed at Clarence, the main settlement of Fernando Po.

Clarke and Prince felt that they needed to return to Britain at this stage, to make more people aware of what they were doing and to raise further support. Unfavourable winds took their boat off course and they arrived in Jamaica, where their news created great enthusiasm in the Churches.

When Clarke and Prince finally reached Britain, much interest was aroused by their accounts of Africa. Among their hearers were Alfred and Helen Saker. Saker, who was at the time working in the engineering department of the Government Dockyard in Devonport, was a man with an intelligent and enquiring mind.

Born in 1814 in Kent, it soon became obvious that he was a natural mechanic. As a young man he was converted in a Baptist chapel in Sevenoaks, after being attracted by the singing as he strolled past. He joined his local church, and became involved in preaching and teaching.

With his wife's full support, Alfred Saker applied for missionary service, and after some delay, they were accepted by the BMS Committee for service in Africa. In 1843, Alfred and Helen Saker sailed for Fernando Po, via Jamaica, with John Clarke. After a difficult voyage they landed in Fernando Po in 1844.

Wasting no time, Saker began to use his skills by erecting a house for the missionaries and setting up a printing press, of which he cast the fittings himself. The climate continually hampered his efforts: ants destroyed his clothing, a tornado devastated the roof of the hut, and recurrent bouts of fever put him out of action at intervals. But he refused to be beaten and patiently continued with his work.

His aim was to establish a mission on the mainland, which so far had only seen a temporary station set up at Bimbia north of the Cameroons River. In 1845, Saker and Horton Johnson, a convert from Clarence, landed on the south bank of the Cameroons River.

After lengthy negotiations they settled at King A'Kwas town, about 20 miles inshore. They found that the native population was indolent, influenced by heavy drinking, and prone to bouts of vicious brutality when even women and children would be tortured and mutilated. Witch doctors held sway. Previous European influence had only been bad.

It was here that Saker began to build himself a small house and storeroom, set up a printing press, and to study the language. Patience was the key to all his activities. Slowly he pieced together the words as he heard them used day by day. His practical skills and his basic medical knowledge helped him as gradually he tried to win the people's confidence. It was a dangerous existence, though, for when a violent outbreak occurred, his and Helen's lives were often under threat. At other times he was ignored or laughed at, but over a period of time, people began to be impressed by his honesty and his genuine and patient concern for them. This was so

different from the lies and exploitation they had come to expect from the river traders.

The First Believer

MORE THAN FOUR years after his arrival in the Cameroons, Saker baptised his first local convert. His faithful perseverance must be compared to that of Carey in India, who waited seven years to see the first-fruits of his efforts. No 'hit and run' evangelism for them, but patient, hard work, trusting in God's sovereignty.

After the baptismal service, a church was formed consisting of Alfred and Helen Saker, Horton Johnson and his wife, and the new believer. Together, the little fellowship shared the Lord's Supper.

Tropical diseases were a recurrent problem for all the Europeans working in Africa, and Saker was not exempt. He came back to Britain to try and improve his health, but even before he arrived, the man he had left in charge in the Cameroons had died. The name of Newbigin was added to a list which already included Thompson, Sturgeon, A Fuller and Merrick. In Britain, people were getting anxious. Surely the deaths of so many zealous, young Christians was too high a price to pay for any missionary venture? Perhaps it would be better to withdraw from Africa completely?

In this atmosphere of hesitancy and despondency, Saker wrote a letter to the BMS Committee:

'I have a fear that some of you will be discouraged, and I think you ought not to be. . . This suffering and loss of life show that the sacrifice you have made is large. But ought we to have expected less? Bloodless victories are not common . . . Brethren, I think you will feel with me that we ought not to be discouraged. God afflicts us, let us humble ourselves before Him, and try to bring to His service purer and more devoted sacrifices.'

Saker was never one to advocate what he himself was not prepared to deliver. In 1851, Alfred and Helen returned to the Cameroons to resume where they had left off. Some progress had been made

while they had been away: five more converts had been baptized, and a spiritual searching had begun to grow among the people. Many struggled to learn to read, so that they could study the Scriptures that had been translated into Dualla by Saker.

By 1858, JJ Fuller and his wife were also able to report progress in their mission at Bimbia.

At Clarence, too, the Church was growing steadily. Always, though, there was opposition, and converts and missionaries alike had to face violent attacks. But significantly, the native leaders and chiefs were increasingly coming to

trust in the missionaries: the Africans knew they could be relied on to give impartial advice and sensibly to sort out disagreements.

Meanwhile, the Spanish had revived an ancient claim to sovereignty over Fernando Po. When they took possession of the island in 1845, they promised religious liberty, but by 1848 only Roman Catholic worship was allowed. The penalties for any form of Protestantism were harsh. Despite Saker's efforts to intervene with the Spanish governor, it became clear that nothing could be done.

The African Baptist believers decided that they would seek a new home, where they could live their Christian lives without persecution. Saker, Fuller and a guide were able to locate an ideal spot in a sheltered bay north of Bimbia.

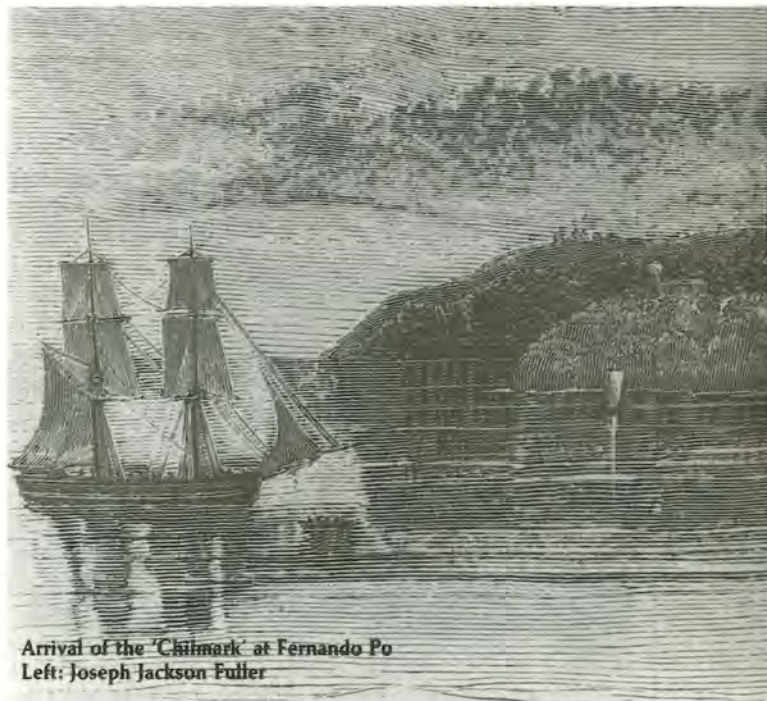
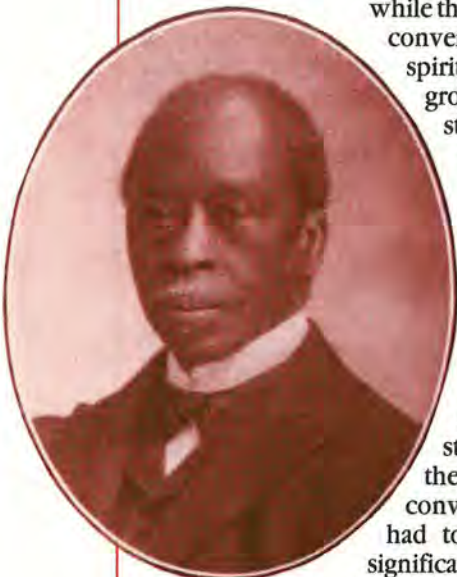
A Christian community, taking the name of Victoria, was formed which was able to have an influence for good on the surrounding area. When Germany later took over the area, the mission was isolated. A solution was found to a tricky situation, by agreeing that a German Evangelical Society, the Basle Mission, should take over responsibility for the work.

Always the British Baptist missionaries sought to work in a spirit of cordial cooperation with their fellow evangelicals in the field, such as the Swedish and American Baptists.

The Work Develops

MORE AND MORE missionaries were arriving to support the work at the various stations. By 1862, the New Testament and Psalms had been translated fully into Dualla. The new recruits had to be versatile enough to turn their hands to anything – engineering, labouring, teaching, preaching, practising medicine. . . Mistakes were inevitably made, but overall there was solid achievement and selfless sacrifice. Disputes arose, as in India, between veterans of the field and the younger newcomers, but compromise solutions were worked out.

In 1866, Horton Johnson died after faithfully serving the Cameroon Mission since its inception. Saker, too, began to weaken and tire. He left the Cameroons in 1876



Arrival of the 'Chilmark' at Fernando Po
Left: Joseph Jackson Fuller

and in the years prior to his death in 1880, he was still able to challenge and inspire British congregations with his vision of Africa. His favourite name for himself was simply 'missionary to Africa'. Among those who rated highly his pioneering activities was David Livingstone, who wrote, 'Take it all-in-all, especially having regard to its manifold character, the work of Alfred Saker at Cameroons and Victoria is, in my judgement, the most remarkable on the African coast.'

In 1887, J Jackson Fuller, another veteran of the Cameroons Mission, retired after 40 years of service. He was held in great affection by the African people.

Just before Saker returned finally to Britain in 1876, a 24-year-old missionary, a former apprentice to a London jeweller, arrived in Cameroons. His name was Thomas Comber. In 1874, George Grenfell, once of Cornwall and Birmingham, who had been challenged by the examples of Livingstone and Saker had become another recruit. These two men worked together in the Cameroons for a time before their famous venture into the interior.

The Congo Mission Begins

LOOKING AT IT from a modern standpoint, it might seem strange that BMS work was limited to a fairly narrow coastal strip for such a long period of time. However, in the last century, Africa was truly 'the Dark Continent', whose interior was largely unknown. It was only in 1871 that the famous 'Dr Livingstone, I presume' interchange took place between the explorers Stanley and Livingstone. This was followed by an East and West expedition by Stanley, lasting 999 days, to trace the course of the River Congo to its mouth. Invaluable geographical knowledge was thus obtained.

Both Comber and Grenfell were keen to penetrate inland from the Cameroons, and had made several exploratory forays. They wrote to the BMS Committee, seeking support for their plans. At the same time, the Committee was being urged by a home supporter to

extend its work to the interior – an argument backed up by the financial means to make it possible.

Robert Arthington, a rich Leeds Quaker, led a life of austere reclusion to enable the majority of his fortune to be used for evangelical enterprises. During his lifetime and then through the bequests of his will in 1905, huge sums were made available to missionary societies. In 1877, he approached the BMS suggesting that the Congo become its next sphere of activity. When Comber and Grenfell received instructions from the Committee to establish a mission along the Congo-Lualaba river they were delighted: Comber is reputed to have thrown his hat in the air with excitement at the news. The men, the money and the geographical knowledge were all assembled in the providence of God.

In 1878, Comber and Grenfell's second trip took them as far as San Salvador, the ancient capital of the region. They were welcomed by the King, Dom Pedro, and San Salvador was to become the Congo Mission's first station. In 1887, five young men were baptized there.

It was used as a base for other journeys to investigate further afield – some which ended in near tragedy as they were attacked by hostile, sometimes even cannibalistic, tribes. Grenfell began to realise that the only realistic hope of progress would be by river travel: foot travel through the undergrowth was arduous, slow and dangerous, and relied heavily on the cooperation of native bearers.

The need for more workers was also becoming apparent, so Comber returned to Britain to report on their activities and to challenge others to join them.

When Comber set off on his return journey to Africa in April 1879, he was accompanied by his newly-married wife, W Holman Bentley, H E Crudginton and J S Hartland.

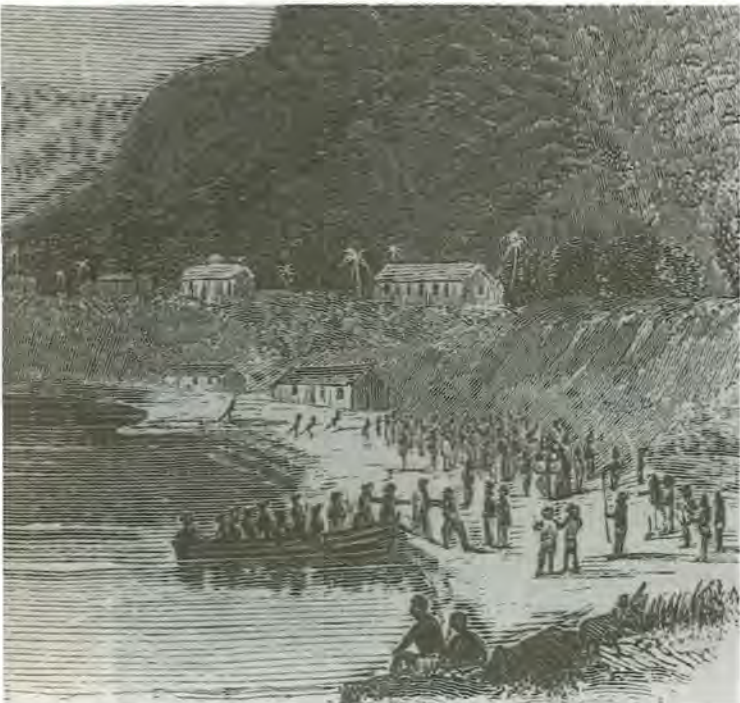
Some years later, in his powerful work *The Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad described the interior of Africa as 'a riot of vegetation – an empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest'.

Apart from these difficulties, the missionaries were faced with fierce animals and the dreaded mosquito. Holman Bentley, in his book *Pioneering on the Congo*, was to write of the horror he felt as he witnessed the terrible cruelties resulting from the slave trade. Everywhere there was fetishism and a terror of evil spirits. Those who talked glibly of the happiness and carefree freedom of the 'natural savage' did not witness what he saw.

The Chains of Stations

COMBER AND GRENFELL reckoned that if they could find a way overland to Stanley Pool, they could manage the 1,000 miles beyond it by river to Stanley Falls, right into the heart of Africa. Many attempts failed, but in 1881, after 21 days of hard struggle, Crudginton and Holman Bentley successfully made the journey overland from Vivi to Stanley Pool.

Grenfell went to Britain to oversee the building of a steamer to be used on the river: 'The Peace' was constructed under his direction, at a cost of £2,000. Robert Arthington met half the cost, and also contributed £3,000 to its upkeep. 'The Peace' was the first of a series of boats used in Africa – it was followed by 'The Goodwill', 'The Endeavour' (sponsored by Christian Endeavour Societies) and 'The Grenfell'.



'*The Peace*' was shipped out to the Congo in pieces, and the deaths of the mechanics who came out to put her together, meant that Grenfell had to reassemble the boat himself, with native help.

The decision was taken to establish a chain of stations along the great Congo River, and six more men were added to the missionary numbers. By 1882, Manyanga (later transferred to Wathen), Bayneston (named after Alfred Baynes, the BMS Secretary, and later relinquished), Underhill, and lastly Arthington (on the banks of Stanley Pool itself) were set up. Each was not only a chain in the link of stations stretching into the interior, but was an evangelical centre in itself.

Once '*The Peace*' was rebuilt, a series of exploratory journeys took place up-river. It was found that the upper river was more densely populated than the lower river region. Bolobo, Lukolela and the district round Ngombe were visited. Even the seasoned missionaries were shocked by the immorality, drunkenness and mindless cruelty they found there, but they were able to use little gifts of mirrors, beads and tins to gain favour in places where they did not speak the language.

Later, Grenfell explored the Mobangi River, a tributary of the Congo, finding it navigable for over 400 miles. He went on to explore the great Lulanga River and the Kasai, as well as mapping out in some detail the Congo itself.

His main interest was always the possibilities for future missionary work, but his pioneering explorations were also recognised in their own right: in 1887, Grenfell received the Founder's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society.

Still the climate was remorselessly claiming its victims. Comber's young wife died within four months of her arrival in Africa, soon to be followed by six other missionaries. Inadequate medical knowledge and protection meant that within the first 40 years of the Congo Mission, 61 missionaries died. Most were young men and women. At home, efforts were made to ameliorate the conditions of missionaries, and medical supplies improved.

In 1885, the appearance of Comber, with his frail bent body, shocked his audience in the Exeter Hall. He was still only 32, but seemed like an old man. His spirit, however, was unbroken: '*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die*', he quoted, '*it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*' His courage echoed that of Alfred Saker earlier, and inspired his listeners. Comber returned to Africa, but within two years, at the age of 34, he was dead. However, his example and that of his fellow-missionaries challenged others to offer for service.

In the first ten years of the Congo Mission nearly 50 men came forward (including such names as J H Weeks, Carson Graham, Ross Phillips, Thomas Lewis, J A Clark, Lawson Forfeitt and Robert Glennie). Missionary wives, too, made great contributions to the work amongst the female population.

How the work was Organized

SAN SALVADOR WAS the base from which the push inland was made. Holman Bentley, the noted linguist of the group, set about learning the Kikongo language and the basis of its grammar. He produced a dictionary and a Grammar, and by 1893 the Kikongo New Testament was completed.

Thomas Lewis, also based at San Salvador, developed his building skills with local materials and Ross Phillips worked on the printing press. Carson Graham travelled to the villages around with an evangelistic itinerant ministry. In 1886-87 a time of spiritual awakening was experienced in the region and a number were converted. In 1907, the first BMS hospital in Africa was opened at San Salvador.

Right from the beginning of the Congo Mission, each Church member was encouraged to be responsible for taking the gospel to their unconverted families and neighbours. The need for trained local leaders was also recognized as a fundamental principle. At all the stations, boys who were identified as having potential to become teacher-evangelists were taken into the missionaries' homes. They worked for their keep, and also received three to four years of systematic training and Christian influence, before going out to spread the good news of salvation in the nearby villages.

From what is now Angola and the lower river region (Wathen and Kibentele, in particular, owed much to the influence of Holman Bentley), the missionaries pressed on to establish further stations in the middle river region.

In 1886, a new station was opened at Lukolela, above the Stanley Pool. This required land clearance to build a hut, and efforts to win the confidence of the local people, the Ba-yans. They were not unfriendly, merely puzzled by the presence of non-trading white men at first. Over a period of time, though, their trust was earned.

In 1888, another new station was begun at Bolobo, where contact was made with three district groups: the Batende, the Bobangi and the Moie. George Grenfell decided to base himself and '*The Peace*' at Bolobo. By 1895 there were 30 church members, a boys' and girls' school, a printing press and an industrial training operation.

Lily de Hailes was a remarkable single woman who carried out a wonderful work amongst the women and girls, and also ran a dispensary from Bolobo. However, it was not until 1908 that the BMS accepted in principle, the work of single women as part of its regular policy.

In 1910 the hospital at Bolobo was opened, which became particularly successful in the treatment of sleeping sickness. But the BMS medical work in Africa, so well-known and respected now, was only embryonic in these early years. Only three doctors joined the staff in the first 29 years of the mission.

Yalemba and Upoto (or Bopoto) also became the sites for mission stations. Each became the centre for a vast geographical area. Work began at Yakusu in 1895, with important Church and educational work. In 1904, a hospital was opened there.

Writing in the Centenary volume of 1892, Edward Medley expressed thus the feelings of the time towards the Congo Mission: '*We are but at the beginnings of things, but in the first-fruits of the field we have the sure promise of the harvest.*' For it should not be forgotten that progress in the early days of the Mission was often painfully slow. There was much pioneering work to be done, both geographically and spiritually, and after 20 years of labour in the Congo total church membership stood at only 500. But, as Comber had said, the seed had indeed fallen into the ground and died. The brave sacrifice of so many lives, which had anchored the Congo Mission so firmly in Baptist affections, was going to bear much fruit for the glory of God, in the years that lay ahead. □

GOD HAS NOT OVERLOOKED THE POOR OF BRAZIL

Paul Holmes explains how the new economic measures instituted in Brazil are working.

WITH AN INFLATION of over 36,000,000 per cent during the 1980's something had to happen and with the inauguration of Brazil's first democratically elected President for over 30 years, it has!

In a radical move to restrict the money supply and starve the inflation, personal and commercial bank accounts have been reduced to approximately £200 or £400 depending on the type of account.

This compulsorily borrowed money is deposited in blocked accounts with the Central Bank for 18 months.



Account holders will receive six per cent interest per annum and the compounded sum will be repaid in twelve equal payments.

Brazilians have suffered various forms of compulsory government borrowing in the past, but the hope is that this government will succeed in

defeating hyper-inflation and in keeping its promise to return the money.

This measure, as such, hardly affects the very poor who are the worst victims of the economic situation in Brazil. The real shock of the measure is being felt by the middle class and by business.

How will a mega-company like Volkswagen here in Sao Bernardo be able to pay the next wage bill? The new Brazilian currency (cruzeiro) can be purchased, with blocked cruzados novos, at large scale government run auctions of the currency. The successful bidders will certainly be paying more than the national one to one conversion rate.

In many countries, the immediate way forward would be to initiate mass lay-offs and drastically reduce production. But the government has almost immediately closed the door on the possibility of labour lay-offs and entire industries are trying to discover some way of continuing under the present conditions.

So far, the President's strategy has dealt a staggering blow to the corruption and nepotism that permeate the heart of this nation. Furthermore, prices and salaries will be pegged on a steadily reducing scale over the next months. Already a supermarket manager faces a possible five year





◀ prison term for remarking product prices over the tabulated levels.

Foreign exchanges have also been affected. With very few cruzeiros available to buy foreign currency or products and with companies rapidly changing dollar reserves in order to buy much needed cruzeiros, the bottom has fallen out of the dollar and sterling market.

Obviously this affects people like missionaries living and working here, but we're more worried about Brazilian missionaries in other countries since, with church and mission board



deposits slashed, it may prove very difficult to get money to them.

The compulsory borrowing measure, while reducing the money supply and relieving Brazil's massive internal debt problems, is contrary to the country's constitution. But there is a widespread feeling that people are prepared to sacrifice some of the rights gained in order to be free of the scourge of inflation which, by its very nature, most oppress the weakest and poorest.

In the light of what's been happening in Eastern Europe nothing should have surprised us, but we've been surprised. God has not overlooked the poor and oppressed of Brazil, a people oppressed by a very different political and economic system.

We had anticipated working in a climate resistant to the call of God for justice and righteousness to flow mightily and persistently. That's not to say, 'We can come home now!' We're still eager to announce and demonstrate and live the good news of Jesus Christ for the poor.

It saddens us that in all this ferment many churches carry on as if nothing has happened, not even sparing a moment for prayer or reflection on all that is developing. A leader of one grouping gloomily anticipates the imminent arrival of the day of wrath because his organization's funds are blocked. Perhaps he is gloomy because he anticipates a question about why all this money was buried in a bank account as opposed to being liberated on behalf of the poor and needy. □



COMMUNION AND CROSS IN ZAIRE

'A community that is immersed daily in pain and suffering bows before God who identifies with them,' says Richard Hoskins.

SIX HUNDRED OF us gathered one Sunday at Bolobo, after the normal morning service, for the Church's monthly celebration of Holy Communion. It was a slow, meditative, yet Spirit-filled service lasting an hour and a quarter in which the Cross was the centre of focus.

For those fresh-out from Europe, the almost dirge-like solemnity can be both surprising and off-putting. On this occasion even the final hymn, which is usually of a more triumphal nature, was the Bobangi version of *'There is a fountain filled with blood.'* Yet before hasty conclusions are drawn it is well to consider those who come to Communion each month and why they gather at the foot of the Cross.

Student pastor and Mama Libosola were there. They are concluding studies at the Bolobo Bible Institute before returning to their area to be in charge of a local parish.

Some years ago their first child, a boy, died and over the subsequent years Mama Libosola became pregnant again. They prayed for a boy and, in February, to their great joy, God gave them a big baby boy. But the joy was to be short-lived. After just a week, he died of a complication which would probably be treatable in the UK.

What does the Gospel say to people like this?

Further out in the interior of rural Zaire, families gather at monthly Communion, the focal point of monthly ecclesiastical life. All who gather know the meaning of real suffering.

Most will have witnessed the death of one or more of their children and each is as precious as any child anywhere in the world. Last year, I counselled one mother who has just three of her nine children still living. Suffering of all sorts is a part of daily life in Zaire.

It is in this context that the Gospel has come to Zaire and it is in this

context that the Church gathers at the foot of the Cross each month for Communion. If it is true, as Liberation Theology asserts, that experience and practice dictate theology, then nowhere is this made more clear than in the suffering church of rural Zaire.

A community that is immersed daily in pain and suffering bows each month before God who has come down, identified with them, become one with



them, and has ultimately hung on a cross both for and with them. God who the ancestors acknowledged as a distant Creator has now been revealed as at one with the African.

So for Tata and Mama Libosola and for the countless others — unnamed because few mention them, voiceless because they are seldom heard outside their own land — for these Zairian Christians it is to the Cross of Christ that they can come each month. There they pour out their misery to a God who is amongst them continually crucified and who holds a future, and therefore a present, hope of salvation. □



Ban Lifted

The Bangladesh government has lifted its ban on the Injil Sharif, the Bengali language edition of the New Testament, which it imposed on February 13.

The Injil Sharif, which was translated by Dr and Mrs Viggo Olsen, of the Memorial Christian Hospital in Bangladesh, was regarded, by the vocabulary it used, as offensive to Muslims.

The news of the lifting of the ban was given widespread press coverage and it has now become the number one best seller among Bengali books in Bangladesh.

Sweeping Changes

In Zaire sweeping changes in the government and political system are planned. The country is in a one year transitional period by the end of which 25 years of one-party rule will change to a multi-party system.

It is reported too that the country is abandoning the courtesy titles of 'citoyen' and 'citoyenne' for the former usage of 'monsieur, madame and mademoiselle'.

War and Drought

A devastating drought is affecting the south and central regions of Angola. According to Colin Pavitt, BMS builder in Angola, people are dying in their

hundreds.

'Stories are being received of people eating the roots of plants and the bark off trees — some of which are poisonous.'

The UNITA guerilla force has destroyed part of the only water pipe into Luanda the capital. It took a week to repair and in the meantime several people died because there was no clean water.

'Recently UNITA has blown up 40 pylons carrying high voltage electric cables in a place where there is no easy road access to set about repairs,' he writes.

'Factories, traffic lights, petrol pumps, water pumps, frozen goods, bakeries — almost everything has stopped.'

Condemnation

France's Council of Christian Churches has sent a message to French Jewish leaders condemning the recent attacks on Jewish cemeteries.

Twenty Years

The Church of Christ in Zaire (ECZ) is 20 years old this year. Headed by Bishop Bokeleale the ECZ, which used to be known as the Protestant Council of the Congo, groups together all the protestant communities including the BMS partner church the Baptist Community of the River Zaire.



Delayed Justice

It is now more than six months since the brutal assassination of the six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter, in El Salvador, and still no one has been brought to trial.

A US congressional commission that visited El Salvador in February concluded that the killing of the Jesuits was part of a continuing programme of human rights abuse conducted by the Salvadoran army.

The report coincided with statements made by Catholic Church officials claiming that almost every member of the army harbours an attitude of anger and suspicion towards members of the religious community.

The US commission recommended that the army be completely overhauled to put an end to such crimes and free the judicial process from military pressures.

International leaders are impatient with the slow pace of the judicial proceedings. Every day new obstacles are appearing. A diary kept by Colonel Benavides has disappeared along with a log from the military school.

Four soldiers on guard duty on the night of the killings have been sent to the US and Panama to study.

Most observers doubt whether anyone will ever be sentenced for the crimes and believe that Colonel Benavides, who is reported as sunbathing on a beach whilst under 'arrest', will ultimately be released.

Freedom?

The church in Nepal is hoping that the country's new constitution will include religious freedom. Conversion to Christianity is banned in Nepal and over the years many Christians have been imprisoned because of their evangelistic work.

However, after many demonstrations, riots and much violence, King Birendra has announced that political parties are no longer illegal and has declared his willingness to move towards a constitutional monarchy. But there is still a great deal of uncertainty about what will actually happen.

On Easter Sunday, several hundred Nepali Christians marched in the centre of Kathmandu and the police did not attempt to stop them.

Two Deaths

*The deaths coincided.
They came together.
The dates
October, November 1989.
A momentous moment
of change
in Eastern Europe.
But no change in
El Salvador.
Not change in Colombia
where democracy is not
known
was never known.
Amidst the celebration of
change
We mourn of dead.
Our two dear dead friends
our martyrs who did not
live
to become martyrs.
Who simply lived a good
life
a caring life
a love-thy-neighbour life.
But that meant death
in Latin America.
Ignacio shot
down.
Murdered
by savage beasts
by uniformed beasts
removed from their own
from all humanity.
Penny struck
down
by cancer.
Two lively, loving people
now dead.*

Pamela Collett

Welcome!

We welcome the Revd Helen Matthews, as the new BMS Junior Education Secretary. Helen, who studied at Spurgeon's College, has recently joined the staff as a member of the Promotion Team with responsibilities for the 15 and under age range.

'I feel surprised that I can do the things I most enjoy, like writing for children, as my job! Writing plays and inventing cartoon characters used to be what I did in my spare time.



'I feel excited about the possibilities! I hope to get around and meet lots of children to find out what most interests them in world mission. I know many people who work with children long for materials which will help — let's have your ideas!

'I feel encouraged. Life in the ministry can be lonely at times, and I am very much enjoying working as part of a team. This is an exciting time for the BMS as it enters into new partnerships overseas, and I am delighted to be part of this work.'

Good News from Nepal!

We praise God for the following press announcement from Ed Metzler of Interserve:

'His Majesty the King, on the advice of the Prime Minister, has granted amnesty to all religious prisoners in accordance with the Constitution of Nepal and given instruction for dismissal of all cases against persons awaiting trial for religious activities.'

We rejoice in the new freedom for our sisters and brothers in Christ in Nepal. Surely this is an answer to the prayers and action of many Christians within and far beyond Nepal's borders. We

continue to pray for the Nepalese people, still with needs and problems, asking that God will continue to bless them with the outworking of His purposes.

Unacceptable

Unacceptable conditions in youth shelters has caused a Rio de Janeiro Family Court Judge to suspend a recent order to detain children under the age of six, who have been abandoned on the streets.

In one of the shelters there are more than 260 girls between the ages of four and 17 who are mistreated and who lack essentials such as showers, beds and tables.

In some cases, the girls stay in this location, originally created as a transition house, for more than a year without working or going to school.

According to official statistics, at least 22 million children and adolescents in Brazil live in precarious conditions. The majority earn about \$25 a month, approximately half the minimum wage.

El Niño

According to meteorologists, the warm ocean current known as 'El Niño' has reappeared in the Pacific Ocean. 'El Niño,' caused by ocean water which heats up near the Equator, occurs every five years, causing flooding and drought in many parts of Latin America. It usually lasts between 18 and 22 months.

VIEW POINT

Why do Missionaries leave?

I am surprised that up till now no one has hit the real reason for this.

A few years ago I found a short history of the BMS in the Barrhead farmhouse. After reading I had deputation in a London church. When the youth fellowship asked 'Why do missionaries come home?' the answer seemed obvious. They do not die any more.

The mortality rate among first term missionaries has been cut almost to zero since the last century when few ever returned from Africa.

It thus seemed logical that since they survive longer the Lord is able to complete the task He has for them in one situation and so call them to another. This often happens on the field so we should not be surprised if many of these new tasks are in Britain as well.

**John Furmage,
Paraná, Brazil**

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE DYERS

John and Maria Dyer were appointed as missionaries in 1977. They have been involved in church planting work in Brazil since 1978, latterly in Antonina. They have one son, João Marcos.

7.30

am

John gets up and makes tea while Maria goes off to buy bread. Two missionaries are newly arrived from Britain and will be looking after the hostel children. They join us for breakfast. João Marcos soon impresses our visitors with his eating skills and table manners.

8.15

Two girls arrive who will travel with John to Tagaçaba. They had come to Antonina for the special Service to mark the beginning of the second year of our Lay Training Course. One of them, Vera, is a new student.

8.30

John leaves for Tagaçaba, 60 kilometres away. After breakfast, Maria gets João Marcos and herself ready for church.

9.30

Maria, João Marcos, our colleagues and Edina (a girl from the Baptist seminary in Curitiba who is also spending the weekend with us) attend the Second Baptist Church just across the road from where we live. Maria is leading the Sunday School this morning.

10.00

Having driven back the seven kms from Tagaçaba, John arrives in Potinga where he teaches the adults' class on the lesson about the Golden Calf and answers questions about the work of the Litoral Association. Afterwards a lady wants to speak with John. She has been involved with the Jehovah's Witnesses and is confused. Should she worship Jehovah or Jesus she asks, betraying her fear of the pluralism which that particular sect sees at the heart of our belief in the Trinity. John asks a couple from the church to take her under their wing. David and Joyce Stockley also offer to help with a home Bible Study course.

12.00

John has lunch with the Stockleys over which they talk leisurely about a range of subjects which was all washed down with a delicious glass of homemade passion fruit juice.

14.00

Back in Antonina everyone is enjoying forty winks having succumbed to the effects of the roast chicken or the heat or both. Edina slips off to do a visit with the Young People to Elizia who has been diagnosed as having stones in her kidneys and will have to go to Curitiba for treatment.

14.15

John leaves the Stockleys for Serra Negra some 15 kilometres further down the dirt road where he visits Dori and his family. Dori is manager of the local palmito factory and John hopes will agree to become Assistant Church Secretary of the Serra Negra church. This would give a broader base to the leadership of the church which has been something of a one man act for many years. However his hopes are dashed as Dori does not feel able to accept at least for the moment.

16.30

In Antonina it's time for a stroll down to the beach about 10 minutes' away. It's less hot now and there's a cooling breeze coming off the bay. We can see Paranaguá in the distance and sit and chat for a while until we notice the dark clouds approaching.

18.00

We are back home for tea and get ready for church.

18.30

John arrives in Tagaçaba for the evening service and communion. Just enough time to pop in and see Neusa and her husband Amirai at the Good Samaritan Dispensary where Mary Parsons also works.

19.30

In church while a storm rages outside the whole time and the lights go off and on at regular intervals. It's the first time they've had communion for many months and there's a packed congregation.

In Antonina the young people are singing a song in English that Maria taught them at our recent Retreat.

21.30

At home we stay talking. Our colleagues go to bed. Maria and Edina wait for John to arrive.

23.30

The car draws up. It's John with shrimps for tomorrow's lunch.

23.45

So to bed in time to catch the midnight news from London.

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*indicates election by cooptation.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

ARRIVALS

- Mrs M Parsons**
on 11 April from Potting, Brazil
- Miss D Price**
on 13 April from Bolobo, Zaire
- Miss S Headlam**
on 25 April from Chandraghona, Bangladesh (Private holiday)
- Miss P Commons**
on 25 April from Dhaka, Bangladesh (Medical visit)
- Miss J Knapman**
on 28 April from Colombo, Sri Lanka
- Mrs S Samuels**
on 12 May from Delhi, India
- Mr D Champion**
on 12 May from Kinshasa, Zaire (Compassionate leave)
- Mrs M Bafende**
on 14 May from Mbanza Ngungu, Zaire (Compassionate leave)
- Miss R Berry**
on 17 May from Ampipal, Nepal
- Mrs J Thomas**
on 18 May from São Paulo, Brazil (Private visit)
- Mr & Mrs O Clark**
on 21 May from Kinshasa, Zaire (Medical visit)
- Mr & Mrs M Wilson**
on 22 May from Trapia, Brazil (Mid first term holiday)
- Mr & Mrs D Perry**
on 24 May from Morretes, Brazil
- Mr & Mrs A Street**
on 25 May from Kathmandu, Nepal
- Mr & Mrs R Cameron**
on 26 May from Kathmandu, Nepal
- Mr & Mrs I Walker**
on 26 May from Fortaleza, Brazil (Mid first term holiday)
- Rev & Mrs J Pullin**
on 28 May from Paranaiba, Brazil (Medical visit)

DEPARTURES

- Mr & Mrs R Hoskins and family**
on 1 May to Kinshasa, Zaire
- Miss M Swires**
on 18 May to Campo Grande, Brazil
- Miss J Knapman**
on 25 May to Colombo, Sri Lanka

BIRTHS

- Deborah** was born to Ian and Pauline Thomas on 24 April 1990
- Philip Nicholas** was born to Michael and Carol King on 3 May 1990. He weighed in at 8lbs 9oz

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LEGACIES

Elsie Grace Elves	84.22
Clifton William Huddy	1,000.00
Florence May Nichols	109.04
Mr W C Loveluck	500.00
Emily Gladys Forse	8,612.41
W R F Hall	187.27
Miss K E Flaxman	50.00
Mrs J G Bull	250.00
Emily Beatrice Isles	200.00
Mary Gwendoline Batten	300.00
Olive Withers	2,000.00

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Anon:	£50.00;	Swansea:	£7.00;
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Workers

ZAIRE

Doctors, Nurses,
Physiotherapists,
Secondary School
Teachers

NEPAL

Dentist

Please write to

Joan Maple,

Personnel Secretary