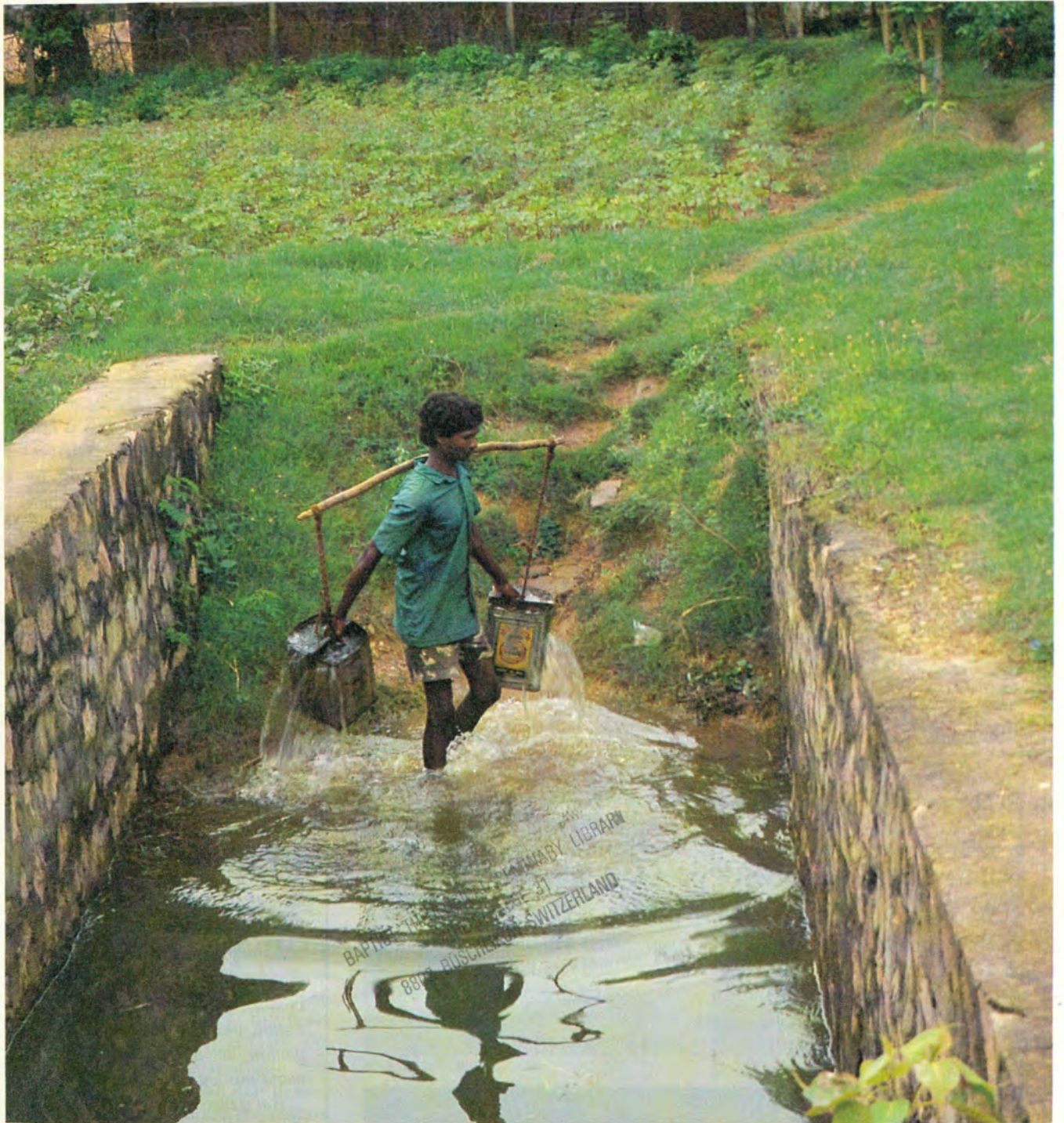


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M I S S I O N A R Y

HERALD



INDIA – SERAMPORE – DELHI · THAILAND · BICENTENARY

PROBING MISSION · 'TENT-MAKING' MISSION · CALL TO PRAYER

FEBRUARY 1992

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HERALD

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Asia and particularly India will always have a special place in the BMS heart. Our links with India go back to 1793, to the days of Carey and Thomas. At one time we had more than 200 missionaries in what is now India and Bangladesh. Today that number has been reduced to four in India and four in Bangladesh.

Yet mission concern for any place does not and ought not to depend on the number of BMS workers situated there. The Church is a worldwide body and in most places the majority of the work, once established, is best done by local Christians. However, that does not mean acting in isolation. In today's world of movement and modern communications we need each other more than ever. The sharing of resources, ideas and even people are vital to the life of the Church.

We have already moved a long way in this direction. The BMS is helping the Church in places like India by offering scholarships to train leaders, grants to facilitate the work of institutions and personnel to complement the work of national Christians. The 28:19 Youth Action Teams are giving British young people an opportunity to savour something of Christian work overseas. Already this is feeding something fresh into the life of our churches. Some of the new initiatives in mission linked to the Fund for the Future, like 'tent making' ministry, promise to make partnership in world mission more of a reality.

But is there still too much of 'us to them' and very little of 'them to us'? How many of our churches, for instance, would find a pastor from Zaire or Bangladesh acceptable to minister to their congregations? After 200 years of mission, why are we still so paternalistic?

FAMILIAR BUT DIFFERENT



**Sue Evans
compares what
she saw in Asia
with her
experience of
Zaire.**

WAS IT THE intense heat, the humidity, the waving palm trees or the small stores on the roadside that made India seem so familiar to me? I don't know. Certainly the culture was very different from what I had known in Zaire.

Arriving at Delhi airport at midnight was an amazingly easy experience. Passing through immigration, customs and then on to the rows of pre-paid taxis that awaited tourists arriving off the inter-

national flight seemed so well organised compared to what I had known in Kinshasa.

I was embarking on a five week awareness visit which took me from Delhi to Calcutta, Serampore, Orissa and on to Bangkok, Mae Sariang, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rhai and Hua Hin.

Now, some months later and thinking back on those I met, Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1:4 seem to be very apt. 'I always thank God for you because of His grace given you in Christ Jesus.'

Delhi proved to be a useful orientation, riding in auto-rickshaws, visiting some of the fine old buildings, including the magnificent Taj Mahal as well as seeing some Baptist work.

It was good to meet up with Sheila Samuels, our missionary, and her family. She is chaplain to St Stephen's hospital which has 450

beds, 200 nurses and about 100 doctors.

It was started as a small Mission hospital but has developed into a modern General hospital; 20 per cent of private patients bring in 80 per cent of the income. This income allows not only the poor to be helped in hospital, but also a public health project of vaccination and Maternal and Child Health to be



Sue Evans, who formerly served in Zaire, is now one of the two BMS Representatives in Wales

carried out in the slums of Delhi.

Diptipur hospital in Orissa, was very different. However in both these hospitals we saw the same quality of Christian leadership. Both medical directors talked of a calling to serve God through their medicine.

I could identify so well with Dr

'I was amazed to see these young people washing soiled blankets and sheets when probably most of them had never washed their own clothes at home! What peace and love radiated from that place.'

Suna and Dr Umesh in Diptipur. They worked in a crowded 100 bedded hospital where facilities were poor and electricity was provided by a small generator. Water was pumped from a well in the hospital grounds. In this rural community private patients are few so finance is short and medicines and fuel more difficult to obtain.

Yet in the urban or rural situation it was good to see the staff reaching out in the name of Christ to the community around them.

How challenged I was to see that love in action again in Calcutta. It was a moving experience to walk down a hall where 100 men and women were lying on mats and mattresses on the floor. Mother Theresa's home for the dying provided a haven for poor, wretched people carried off the streets to die in relative comfort. Food and medicine were ministered by the Sisters of Charity helped by young volunteers from all over the world.

I was amazed to see these young people washing soiled blankets and sheets when probably most of them had never washed their own clothes at home! What peace and love

radiated from that place.

A very short distance from Mother Theresa's home but still in the market place is the Kali Temple. Here Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction, is worshipped by the sacrificing of animals. There was an evil atmosphere all around this temple. What a contrast these two buildings were — one signified faith, hope and love midst death, while the other only death and destruction.

The story of Jesus meeting the woman at the well came into my mind. I reflected on Jesus grasping every opportunity to witness about His father to people who would not be found attending the temple. What a lesson too for us in Britain where we often confine our Christianity to a church building.

It was not, however, just medical work that portrayed that mission of love. The visit to Serampore was, for me, a momentous time. The memory and achievements of Carey, Marshman and Ward still remain. What dedication and determination those early missionaries had.

It was a pleasure to be shown around the college by the principal and then the town by a small group of students. One of these young men had been converted from Hinduism and was now studying Theology. I asked him what he felt he had to offer to his fellow Indians now he was a Christian that he didn't live as an Hindu.

'One God and a living relationship with that one God,' was his reply. He explained how Hinduism has many gods but how he had entered into a relationship with The God.



Phi Ler Say wants to see lives changed by Christ

That living relationship was evident in the life of a dear old Karen woman from Burma who we met in Mae Sariang when visiting Jacqui Wells. A Buddhist by birth but converted to Christianity, Phi Ler Say shared with us her life-long desire to see people's lives change because they are Christian.

'That is my mission, my aim,' she said.

At 81 years of age she is still actively engaged in God's work. We visited her simple home where she talked about tithing to God's work regularly each month.

To see lives change was the aim too of the New Life Centre in Chiang Mai where the church runs a home for 65 hill tribe girls so that they can be trained and educated and so not be sold into child prostitution.

The whole visit to India and Thailand was summed up for me when visiting a lonely island which had some magnificent caves. The roof had partly fallen in so allowing a channel of light to fall into the darkness of the caves. This channel of light permitted different kinds of trees to grow up towards the sky, the effect was spectacular. As we gazed at the beauty someone exclaimed that we should sing and so we did. 'Majesty worship His Majesty' was the chorus that we sung. Our guide, a Thai, asked why we were singing, and Jacqui explained to us that this was a concept Buddhists would find difficult to understand.

The Creator God, who stooped to earth to redeem us and make us His children, is the mission of love that we seek to proclaim and show to the whole world. ■

NEW LIFE AND NEW BUILDINGS

'Christmas 1991 was a time of very special celebration for two Bangladesh congregations,' writes Christine Preston. 'They were celebrating in their newly dedicated church buildings.'

Mirpur Baptist Church, Dhaka

ON SUNDAY 12 October 1980 five families met for the first time as a congregation of Baptists in the new Dhaka suburb of Mirpur. Their work had taken all of them out to this rapidly growing area. Despite the lack of roads and facilities it was obvious that in time the area would be an integral part of the bustling metropolis.

By January 1981 the congregation had outgrown the Sammadar family's home and for the next six months met in a classroom of the BBS School for Blind Girls, then back to a second home until a suitable house for rent was found in January 1982.

During this time the congregation had grown steadily. In 1982 the first baptismal service was held and the following year the first wedding. In October 1982 the congregation was recognised as a church and accepted into the Union.



The rapidly growing new suburb of Mirpur in Dhaka

A vicious attack in their building in April 1990 persuaded the congregation to move for worship to the nearby Bangladesh Baptist Sangha Headquarters. At that point the congregation decided it was time to 'rise up and build'.

Land was bought with the help of a BMS grant and the work started. Many local and international groups have assisted so that on Friday 20 December 1991 at 3.30 pm the new single storey building was dedicated with a mixture of solemnity and rejoicing.

The congregation hopes even-

tually to worship on the second floor, leaving the ground floor as a community centre for the use of local Christian groups. But that is all in the future.

Because of the unseasonal heavy rain and bitter winds on Christmas Day the worship service was followed by a fellowship meal for 250 in church rather than in the garden! It was an appropriate way for the building to begin its life.

The 180 members are pastored by the Revd R N Baroi. He is assisted by a 17 strong diaconate and the Revd Nathanael Das as an



World
MISSION
Link

When is advanced planning a disadvantage?

When it means a church is unable to arrange a meeting while their Link-Up missionary is in the UK.

Yes – we know advance planning is important.

Yes – we know speakers have to be booked well in advance (especially in BiCentenary Year).

Yes – we know it would be wonderful if we could book the missionary Link-Up visits a year ahead.

Yes – a year before we do know roughly when a missionary is due on Home Assignment.

But 'roughly' means what it says. The work being done, government regulations, fitting in with other colleagues, not to mention political change, all mean that provisional dates get changed, often by months.

This does not mean that no notice of a missionary's availability is possible, only that a year's notice is not possible. Missionaries are able to give six months' notice of their Home Assignment dates. Once the dates are finalised. Link-Up groups are contacted and asked to work out acceptable dates for a visit. This means that Link-Up groups get five to six months' notice.

Change and adaptation might be needed. You're in the middle of a series – your missionary could add another dimension; you have a Lay Preacher booked – would they really mind standing down for one service; it's Lent or Advent or Harvest – what better time for someone with experience of other parts of the world to share with you; you follow a set course – your Link-Up missionary could see the same material. ■

evangelist.

The special challenges of urban ministry, isolation of young people and concerns for Christian education amongst children all contribute to the excitement felt by the congregation as it moves into a new calendar year and new chapter of its history.

Barisal Baptist Church

Monday 23 December was the day chosen for the dedication of the Barisal Baptist Church. This ceremony was the beginning of 10 days of celebration including dramas, slide shows, carol singing and the more traditional worship services and fellowship meals.

The first church was built and dedicated in 1905 just 76 years after the first missionary Mr Garret entered the district and began preaching. In December 1826 John Smith brought many Christian books from Calcutta and they were well received but it was 1832 before the first baptisms took place. There was persecution of believers but slowly others came to faith and by 1888 William Carey's grandson wrote to BMS in UK describing the encouraging response to the gospel.

The district town of Barisal was a natural centre for education as well as church work so in 1894 and 1914 two schools each with a hostel were built to enable village boys and girls to study and reach secondary education level.

Since 1905 the distinctive red brick church building on the bank of the river at 'Chandmari' had been a feature of Barisal town until it was finally declared unsafe in 1988. During the BBS Triennial Assembly in 1988 the ground was cut and foundations for a new church were laid but, as always, there was great concern about finances. Through the generosity of many here and abroad the church has been completed. Most of the windows are minus shutters and glass but it is hoped this will be completed by the monsoon.

The presence of the District Commissioner, Mr N A Khan, at the dedication, is an indication of

the acceptance the Christians now have in the town. The ribbon was cut jointly by the BBS President, Mr M S Adhikari and Mr Khan amidst great rejoicing, singing and letting off of balloons.

The service inside the church included messages of greeting from the Anglican and Catholic congregations in the town, as well as the wider mission family, in all 16 messages were brought.

The young people's choir led the singing as well as contributing separate items. The morning's programme ended with a shared meal at which approximately 700 sat down. It is the hope and prayer of the congregation that neighbours who come along to the special events will be drawn to find out more about the Lord Jesus Christ. ■



Sarah Prentice

Desmond
and
Sheila
Samuels



Desmond Samuels has been Presbyter in Charge of St James' Church in Delhi for the last three years. He explains what that role involves.

DELHI

in common. The most basic is Christ. Although they don't accept that Jesus is the Son of God, they believe He is a prophet and that He is going to come again as judge. So we start with what is familiar and go on to the things that are different.

Looking to the future of St James' Church I would like to see the congregation and membership growing in numbers, but not just that. I would like to see it grow in service to others so that this church, the oldest church in Delhi, could go on being a witness to the people who live round here that they may see this as a church where Christ is seen and manifested.

I AM IN CHARGE of all the worship and a pastoral committee helps me with the administration. There is an Associate Presbyter who has also been our organist for over 45 years.

Our services, both morning and evening, are in English. The congregation of between 250 to 300 is mainly Indian although we do have some from the British High Commission and the American Embassy. We have a lot of visitors as well.

It is a church with a lot of history so when tourists come to Delhi they come to St James' and worship with us.

The main aim of our work, in a very strong Muslim area, is to do some kind of social work, to serve the people and to show the unity that Christians have.

Some of our members invite the Muslims to their homes for fellowship. Sometimes they come to me as pastor of the church. In fact we have both Muslims and Hindus coming to us and asking for instruction in the Christian faith with the aim, eventually, of converting to Christianity.

We know a little of their religion. A knowledge of the Koran is important, because then we can explain our faith to them. When we talk to Muslims we find that we have a lot



Rickshaws in Delhi

I am a presbyter within the Church of North India which is made up of six different denominations. There is a lot of support and co-operation within the CNI but we do have some doctrinal problems. Take the question of baptism, the Presbyter has to do what the parent of a child wants — dedication, blessing, baptism.

We have orders of service for baptism of children and for believer's baptism. There are churches





Sheila Samuels went as a Baptist missionary to Delhi in 1962. She married Desmond in 1979 and now works as a chaplain at St Stephen's Hospital.



which were made up of members from Baptist or Methodist backgrounds and they continue to follow their traditions.

The CNI is growing. There are, of course, splits in some areas, but most of our bishops are young men full of ideas. It is very encouraging.

Mission is important. From the northern area there are 18-20 people who are working overseas. The partnership between Indian and British Christians is important mainly through sharing, not of material goods, but of ideas.

I believe that there could be an exchange where young people from Britain could come over here and spend time in homes where there are young people and our young people could go to Britain.

I would like to give thanks for the 200th anniversary of William Carey. British Baptists in particular have been a great help in missionary work here in India. If it had not been for Carey and many other missionaries who came and gave their lives in our land perhaps India would never have come to know about Christianity. So the Church here is grateful to all missionaries and particularly to William Carey and the Baptist churches.

I AM INVOLVED mainly in pastoral work with patients, but when the students come I shall be taking English and Bible study classes with them.

We get a lot of Muslim patients because of St Stephen's borders on the old city and on the business area, where the wholesale market is. In terms of chaplaincy work it is a matter of talking to people, being there, encouraging them and praying for them, whatever religion, whether Muslim, Hindu, Sikh. When they pray they ask me to pray with them.

**SOUTH WEST AREA
B I - C E N T E N A R Y
C O N F E R E N C E**

— Theme: —

**GREAT
EXPECTATIONS**

*The Christian in the
World Today*

**SATURDAY
4 APRIL 1992
10 am – 4.30 pm**

WESTBURY-ON-TRYM
BAPTIST CHURCH, BRISTOL

*Details from: Revd Peter Amies
Tel: 0275 875563 or
Miss Pauline Trounson
Tel: 0297 442583*

There is no feeling of hostility because I am a Christian. It is very fulfilling to see people who have been very ill and dejected realising they are getting better and saying, 'Your prayers have helped us.'

What special ministry does the Church have within India? If Christians are truly Christian they are being the salt of the earth or a light in dark places.

A number of our Christians are in high places, those who are really educated and have worked their way up. When we were at the Cathedral one of the members headed up the security for the Prime Minister. She had, apparently, asked for him. I always think of when Paul said, 'There are saints in Caesar's household.' Christians are trusted by others.

I think the main frustration of my work is that I am trying to do two or three jobs at once. I am trying to run a home and family and do a job of work at the same time.

The church tends to be inward looking. Outreach, if there is any, is being done by the people who live in the 'colonies' around the city. Before, lots of them lived in the mission compound and it was a very closed community. Now it is breaking up. So I am hopeful for the future. ■

AFTER THE PIONEERS

India and Bangladesh from 1914 by Jan Kendall

Imagine an area the size of Europe, but with 800 million people. This country has 16 regional languages as well as many tribal languages and local dialects. This is the India that William Carey sailed for 200 years ago.

Travel in your mind to the neighbouring country, which has over 100 million people in an area the size of England and Wales; one of the poorest countries in the world, where only 0.3 per cent of the population is Christian. This is Bangladesh, the province of Bengal where Carey first began his work.

A sub-continent where the work that BMS has been part of is as diverse in conditions, culture and the preaching of the gospel as say, Sweden, Bulgaria, Italy and Turkey.

North India as a General Area including Orissa, Mizoram and Bengal

By way of background it is important to note that in 1957 in order to strengthen the links between them, the

four Unions that were working in this area: Bengal Baptist Union (BBU), Baptist Union of North India (BUNI), Utkal Christian Church Central Council (UCCCC) and Baptist Church of Mizo District (BCMD) formed the Council of Baptist churches in Northern India (CBCNI).

Not all Baptists joined, and BMS continued to support those who wanted to join and those who did not.

North India as a Geographical Area

Even in this sub-division which covers four provinces there are several disconnected areas from Ludhiana and Bhiwani (Punjab), and Delhi (a province in its own right) in the north, Agra and Baraut (United Provinces) and Patna, Gaya and Monghyr in the east towards the western border of what is now Bangladesh (Bihar Province).

There is now only one BMS missionary left in this region: Sheila Samuels who works in Delhi. She is



Baptisms at Mabripada, Kond Hills

married to a Presbyterian of the Church of North India and both assists her husband and helps the chaplaincy work in the Delhi hospitals.

Orissa

Orissa is an area as compact as North India is scattered; it is a coastal province lying between Bengal and Madras. In 1970 in the city of Nagpur about 3,000 people from six different church backgrounds gathered in the grounds of the (till then) Anglican Cathedral and declared they were in union and would become one Church of North India (CNI). Orissa was one of the two dioceses formed and a Baptist minister became the first bishop of that diocese. Within Orissa a number of Baptist churches withdrew from the CNI and they exist as independent Baptist churches.

Today two of the four BMS missionaries in India work in this province, but there was a time when there were more missionaries working here. Cuttack was the capital of the province until 1960 and had a church run boys' school, a girls' high school and a Women's Training College. BMS missionaries have served in all three.

Carole Whitmee is working at Balangir where there are girls' and boys' boarding schools and a dispensary. The Women's and Children's Hospital opened in 1907 remains at Berhampur, and is where Betty Marsh is based. From admitting 60 in-patients in its first year, in 1967, its 60th anniversary saw in-patient admission at the 3,000-4,000 mark.

The Kond Hills

A long drive from Berhampur zigzagging round hairpin bends through the forest brings one to the Kond Hills. It was here on Easter Sunday 1914 that the first converts, an entire family, in this region were baptised. We find it difficult to understand and evaluate the cost of such a commitment to Christ in which one solitary family goes against all traditional patterns of society by making a decision totally unacceptable to the wider community. But this is what Bisu and his family did, and it proved to be the turning point. Other families followed his example, and by 1920 there were 30 baptised church members. The first years of the Kui church were also those of the First World War, and this actually helped to expand church growth. One of the missionaries, Edward Evans, was asked to form a Kui Labour Corps and accompany it to Mesopotamia. He forged such friendships and links with members of the Corps that many became candidates for baptism on their return to the hills in 1919.

Freda Laughlin, a missionary, describes in a letter the conversion of an entire village Dombinaju (1927):

'Early in 1927 there was a Mass Movement in this village. Instead of just a few Christians there, 44 became enquirers, leaving only one or two animistic families. On Christmas Day 1927 these enquirers were baptised, including the headman and his wife, his sons and daughters. It was a time of great rejoicing. The village was renamed Kristian Naju. All these folk



worshipped with us at the Mallikapori Church, till that building, though it had been enlarged, was too small to hold all the worshippers. So the Kristian Naju members formed a church of their own, and for some time worshipped in the school. Later they wanted a church building of their own, and set to work, cleared a site at the top of a small hill, dug the foundations, carried stones and laid them, made and burnt bricks, collected timber, bought corrugated iron and toiled in the hope of completing it before the rains set in. In this they were unfortunately disappointed, and parts of their walls were washed away. Nevertheless they waited and persisted, till in 1935 the Church was opened amid great rejoicing and can be seen for miles around.'

By 1930 membership totalled over 400 baptised believers, who, together with many 'learners' met for worship in 16 centres. Three evangelists were appointed, and each church appointed its own Daduru (elder brothers) and Balsaka (elder sisters) who were a link between missionaries and the church, particularly regarding new inquirers or matters of church discipline.

The dry season of 1931 saw the first Deri Sobha or Great Meeting which was to become an annual event, a kind of Annual Assembly, a source of joy and inspiration to the churches. For the first Great Meeting the Mallikapori Christians built a wattle and leaf shelter to act as accommodation for the entire Christian population of the hills. On the first evening, the Monday, a great ring of cooking fires encircled the camp, and then on Tuesday morning business began, lasting through to the Thursday. Evangelists were appointed, church rules drawn up, and matters of discipline responded to, and the rest of the time given over to devotional sessions.



Above: Village children in East Pakistan (Bangladesh) being given Christian teaching in 1964

Right: Early baptism in the Lushai Hills (Mizoram)

Below: Primary School at Dinajpur, Bangladesh



One thousand five hundred people attended the closing meeting on the Thursday night, many of whom then had to walk back 25 miles to their own villages.

It was as if the church was just growing spontaneously. Schoolboys brought their parents; isolated Christians brought groups; groups brought their relatives.

In 1936 the BMS stated in its Annual Report:

'In the Kond Hills there are now 18 organised churches (and nine more baptised groups without a church building); ten whole-time evangelists; a membership of 932; five new chapels built by themselves this year; the printed Romans added to the Gospels and the Acts (and 1 and 2 Corinthians ready for the Press, thanks very specially to Mrs Evans); three more Elementary Schools and two Adult Training Centres, and two students being maintained in the Cuttack Theological College.'

At the Annual Meeting in 1950 a long-awaited Constitution was introduced and accepted by 49 churches in the Kond Hills. The 1950s saw the Church consolidating rather than expanding further, but since then the work has still continued steadily.

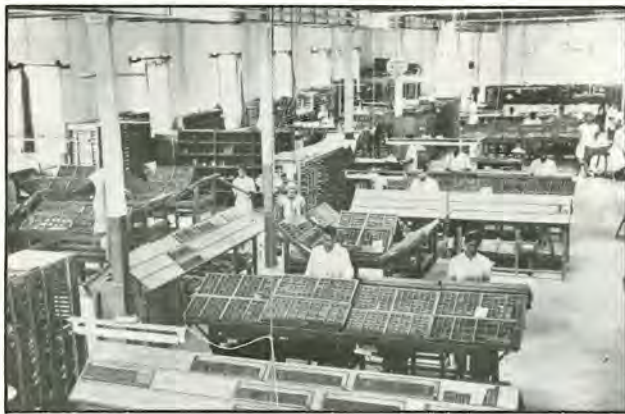
1964 saw celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the first baptism, and during that year 27 new churches were formed.

And the good news is that the church is still very much alive here and growing!

Mizoram

This is the most isolated area of India; formerly the Lushai Hills, it is on its north-east border adjoining the Chittagong Hill Tracts. To get here from Calcutta would involve a 24 hour journey up-river by boat to Rangamai; then two days by canoe, and then three days hill-trekking! It was in this hill country of Mizoram that Lorrain and Savidge, and two pioneer missionaries began their missionary work in 1893, and a BMS presence remained here until 1977. The church here has continued to grow, not so much because of the preaching of the missionaries, but more so because of

the great evangelistic zeal of the people. In the slack season where there is little work in the fields to be done, the Christians went on tour, preaching and singing the Gospel, visiting different villages, and in so doing, won many for Christ. Today, it is estimated 95 per cent of the population are Christians. In the 1930s an experiment in church union took place here. The north was traditionally Welsh Presbyterian, and the south, Baptist. When it was felt necessary to unite baptised Christians into one church, the question remained which church? It was decided to adopt a modification of the Church of the South, both followed their own teachings in matters of doctrine, whilst recognising and appreciating the other's teaching. Church members, providing they were in good standing in their own churches, were recognised members of both churches. Southern representatives attended the Presbytery Council meetings of the north and vice versa. Sadly and somewhat inevitably this is not the case today. The development of Mizoram and the consequent greater mobility of the people, particularly those who have come to work in the capital, has led to Baptist churches being established in the North, and Presbyterian churches in the South. On the plus side this church has now established its own missionary society, the Zoram Baptist Mission; it has at least 100 workers, and is self-supporting financially.



Bengal

Although some of Bengal is in what we now know as Bangladesh, we will first look at the part of Bengal that has remained in India.

Work still goes on around the Calcutta and West Dinajpur areas in a number of Baptist churches which remain including the Lall Bazar Church (now Carey Church). There are also various schools and colleges which continue Christian work including Serampore College. The Calcutta Mission Press (described by a Hindu publisher as '(it) is more than an institution in Indian history, it is a temple of printing in India') which was so prolific for so many years, was disposed of in 1970.

The partition of India in 1947 is something that we have not touched upon. This mainly affected the church

in India in the fact that it caused family separation, and therefore hardship.

East Pakistan/Bangladesh

Obviously all that was happening in India also affected the church in East Pakistan. During the period 1920-1940 there was one overriding factor which inhibited the growth of the Church in this country, and this was the growth of nationalism. Although, the Church was supported by British Missionary Societies, though not by the British Government, this distinction was not clear to the people, and so it became a very unpatriotic thing to become a Christian, as it appeared to be siding with the West against one's own country.

The following years were one of world war, when problems of famine and inflation were much more real to the Bengali people than the task of spreading the gospel.

The 1947 partition between India and what was then East Pakistan had the consequences of dismembering the Christian community, separating families and creating refugee movements. As time went by there was little communication between West Bengal and East Bengal. Also the Church found itself as a minority in an Islamic state and underwent real (if unfounded) fears of Moslem persecution. They survived by not drawing attention to themselves, and not attempting any obvious proselytisation.

In 1958 the Baptist Church in East Pakistan began to be administered separately (previously it had been administered from Calcutta), and the first Secretary appointed by the BMS to do this was Gordon Soddy. Since the Independence of Bangladesh in 1971 BMS missionaries have been involved at all levels of work and work continued in the fields of education (both primary and high schools except for village primary schools which were locally staffed); hospital and leprosy work: Chandraghona being the main example, and agricultural work initiated by David Stockley. The struggles have not only been political; repeated cyclones and floods have devastated this land and swept away property and lives. In this situation the church has worked alongside the people.

Since the early days of pioneer missionary work BMS missionaries numbers have decreased in this area, until today, for a variety of reasons, we only have four. The Church is still conscious of being in a predominantly Moslem country, but there are still many areas for which we give God thanks. Whilst some are recanting others are becoming Christians.

The Church in India and Bangladesh is a lesson to us all to wait for God's timing. It was in the late 1950s and the 1960s when many missionaries came out of India for a number of reasons (sickness, retirement, visas not being granted) and there was a feeling that the Church would not be able to stand. But this was not so. And the church has come through these trials, and worked through all the problems, and is thriving without being dependent on the missionary presence. ■

SERAMPORE COLLEGE, INDIA



by Dr J K Daniel,
the Principal

AT SERAMPORE COLLEGE we have 2,600 students studying arts, science, commerce and theology and they are all non-residents. They come at 10 o'clock and they leave at 5 o'clock. Now we have more than 65 theology students most of them studying for a BD first degree in Theology. This year we also have a second branch in Master of Theology in New Testament and six students are studying for that. The theology students come from all over the country, so you can see almost a mini India in the Theology section. The wish of the founders – William Carey, Marshman and Ward was that theology should be done along with other secular disciplines, which we preserve. And this is most valuable because in the whole of the country, only here these two are done at the same

Some students at Serampore



place.

As you know, this college was given a special charter in 1827 which has given us the status of a university and therefore on the basis of it the senate was formed in 1918. Today, about 32 theological colleges all over the country are affiliated and give theology degrees like BD, MTh and BTh. So Serampore is a parent institution for theological education for the whole country. When I say theological education, it's for all the Protestant churches. It has been the fountain head of theological education. My own personal disciplines are mathematics and Christian theology. In theology I have specialised a little more on social ethics and I have also published a few books related to social ethics.

My wife and I came here in March 1990 and I have seen the strength of this institution by its long heritage but at the same time these old institutions need a little bit of new pride! Otherwise we become very archaic! As I look at the old colleges it is a satisfying kind of experience. The local people in Serampore and, for that matter, in this whole area, have a great regard for Dr William Carey because he gave a dictionary in Bengali and developed the Bengali post. Of course he worked not only in Bengali but in many other languages too. So the college is very well appreciated by the people of all faiths, and no faiths. ■

NEEDED OVERSEAS

BRAZIL

★

Three people for pastoral, church planting and association work

★

Two social workers for church related community work

★

One health educator for church related programmes

ITALY

★

Three pastors

NICARAGUA

★

Co-ordinator for theological training by extension

★

Doctor with speciality in anaesthetics, neurology or ophthalmology

CHINA

★

Two TEFL teachers for work with the Amity Foundation

NEPAL

★

One nurse educator

★

One dentist

★

One forester

★

One mechanical engineer

SRI LANKA

★

Ministerial couple for district work

ISRAEL

★

Qualified Anaesthetist for the Christian Hospital in Nazareth

A CHRISTIAN FUNERAL

by Geoff Bland

POR PAT-SEE had been ill for several months with liver cancer. So we weren't surprised, when we arrived at Pone Tong one Sunday, to hear that he'd died overnight.

The family, I am glad to say, seemed to know the required procedure, because neither we nor the church elder had a clue!

The tradition here is for Christians to be buried, not cremated like the Buddhists, but the church has no graveyard and no one had ever been buried at Pone Tong before.

However the family had arranged for a plot to be made available on the village 'common' and to hold the funeral the following Wednesday afternoon. Until then the coffin, quickly prepared by villagers, was displayed in the large, open-fronted downstairs room of the family home and a Christian worship service was held each evening, in accordance with local (Buddhist) custom.

Chemicals were injected into the body to delay decomposition but even so Tuesday would have been the preferred day for the burial, except for another local tradition that prohibits Tuesday as a burial day, in the belief that on that day the spirit of the departed is more likely to remain to haunt the place.

The Christians don't share this superstition but do respect the feelings of their neighbours. Por Pat-see was in his sixties and had been a Christian for many years, although five years ago he had drifted away from the Lord. Some months ago he recommitted his life to God and we visited him at his home whenever we were in Pone Tong.

'His coffin was brightly decorated with gold paper, cut into pretty patterns, along with flashing coloured fairy lights.'

The last time we saw him we had taken the guitar along, thinking that he might find encouragement in listening to a song from that morning's service. He was not content merely to listen. He sang along, praising the Lord with us!

His coffin was brightly decorated with gold paper, cut into pretty patterns, along with flashing coloured fairy lights.

'It looks like a Christmas tree!' said Kristi and David.

Although strange to us, it is of course only a variation of our tradition of using flowers to provide some cheer. There were beautiful floral displays too but all made of paper mounted on polystyrene sheets.

Using the home as 'the chapel of rest' produces other cultural anomalies. Friends and relatives come in to sit with the body and show their respect, including the lighting of incense and candles particularly by the Buddhist mourners. Meanwhile just a few feet away others are watching the television!

A death is very much a community affair and by the time we reached the house on Sunday morning the village loudspeaker system had been erected in order to broadcast traditional laments regularly throughout the time until the funeral.



Similarly about 70-100 villagers gathered each evening at the home for the worship services. All but the family and the Christians sat outside but because the house was open-fronted this didn't matter. It felt like one crowd and the loudspeaker carried the words to all.

Nor did it seem to matter much

Pat-See (the son) led the procession

Geoff and Chris Bland have been working in Thailand since 1989



that a number of those who had come to show their respect sat playing cards and gambling throughout the service!

There was a lot of genuine inte-



Por Pat-See's widow by the coffin in her home

rest in what Christians do when someone dies and of course each night was a wonderful opportunity to tell of the sure and certain hope of eternal life that Christians have through faith in Jesus Christ. On Monday evening I was the preacher, a particularly pleasing experience.

On Wednesday afternoon, even more people came for the funeral itself. After a service in the house, the coffin was loaded onto a pick-up truck. With a local school band at their head, followed by Pat-see (Por Pat-see's son) carrying a large cross, about 150 people made their slow way through the almost deserted village to the burial place. Those who weren't in the procession were in the fields.

The somewhat plaintive music was frequently punctuated by the loud noise of fire-crackers, set off by the Buddhist men aboard the pick-up in the hope that this would frighten away any unwelcome spirits.

At the graveside, under the shade of the canopies made out of old parachutes, there was a further short service before the interment in a one metre deep brick-lined grave, which was then sealed with a concrete lid.

Before the lid was put on, each mourner was given a little earth, wrapped in a twist of coloured tissue paper, which was then tossed complete into the grave. Into the grave went some of Por Pat-see's clothes, along with all the garbage



Passing the Church



At the graveside

from the previous day's mourning in the home — used incense sticks and candles, and even the discarded wrappings from them and the matches used to light them, plus the paper floral tributes but not the fairy lights!

It was certainly an interesting event, and it had an interesting postscript too. We returned to Pone Tong 11 days later and were a little surprised to find that the villagers had reacted strongly and negatively. This was not to the services or clear gospel-preaching — Buddhists are very tolerant along the lines of 'it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe something — but don't expect me to believe it too' — but to the burial.

Initially they had agreed cheerfully to this but a combination of a practical realisation that land used like this can't then be used for anything else, plus the deeply held superstitious fear of ghosts (associated here, as elsewhere, with graveyards) meant they had decided that in future there'd be no more burials.

In turn, the usually complacent group of Christians were more agitated than we had ever seen them. Most of them are elderly, so the matter is a proper and very personal concern for them. But in addition, despite the distinctiveness of being Christians, they are not used to feeling the displeasure of their Buddhist neighbours. ■





Former Missionaries Association

More than 300 former BMS missionaries have now linked up with the FMA, but Neil McVicar, who is FMA Correspondent, says that he is still waiting to hear from at least another 250 people who have served with the Society.

If you wish to know more about FMA please write to Neil at: The Manse, St Ninian's Baptist Church, Sanquhar, Dumfriesshire DG4 6DX, Scotland.

After the War

Now that a peace accord has been signed between the El Salvadorean government and the

guerrillas a massive reconstruction plan is being considered.

The plan which will cost an estimated US\$900 million over five years, will cover the rebuilding of the country's infrastructure. Sabotage during the 11 year civil war has affected nearly all economic sectors. The electric system and telecommunications network fare the worst, followed closely by the railroads, roads and bridges, and sewer and sanitation services.

In addition about 800,000 people will need emergency government assistance. They include demobilised guerrillas and soldiers, about 150,000 displaced citizens and repatriated refugees and more than 550,000 people living in the former conflict zones.

Evangelical Growth

Evangelical Protestant work is growing rapidly throughout Latin America. In Brazil, for example, Evangelical numbers multiplied 3.6 times between 1960 and 1985. It is estimated that, at the present rate of growth, by

the year 2010, Evangelicals will constitute 57.4 per cent of the population. The rates for Guatemala (126.8 per cent), El Salvador (66.5 per cent) and Puerto Rico (75.1 per cent) are even higher. The lowest rates are to be found in Mexico, Venezuela, Uruguay and Paraguay.



Above: David Champion
Below: Karen Poole



Hungary

Two Zaire missionaries, David Champion and Karen Poole, are now in Budapest, Hungary, teaching English.

Both Karen and David are teachers at the Zaire British Association School in Kinshasa. They were evacuated in September along with most of the other Zaire missionaries.

David is working with church leaders from Eastern Europe at the International Baptist Lay Academy (IBLA). Karen is teaching English at a primary school and a secondary school and will also be taking two evening classes at IBLA for pastors and pastors' wives.

Initially they expect to be in Budapest for six months but, depending on the situation in Zaire, they could extend their time in Hungary.

IBLA

The International Baptist Lay Academy in Budapest, which is linked to Ruschlikon Baptist Theological Seminary (BTS), Switzerland, offers month long courses throughout the October-May academic years. It also holds special summer conferences and seminars.

According to Errol Simmons, Acting Director of IBLA, 'Some students may stay for the eight month school year, but most will come for one, two or three months.'

IBLA opened with special courses in July 1990. One of its functions is to prepare students for further study at BTS. Because teaching at Ruschlikon is in English all students must take a 'Test of English as a Foreign Language'. So IBLA students improve their language skills while studying theology in English.

'IBLA is a pilot project,' Errol Simmons explained.

Youth Chairman

John Passmore, BMS Young People's Secretary, was elected, at a meeting in Glasgow in January, as Chairperson of the European Baptist Federation Youth Committee. He will hold the post for two years.



New UMN Member

At the annual meeting of the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) Board of Directors held in Kathmandu in November, the 39th member organisation, the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, was welcomed.

As a result of recent changes in the country, the Nepali representatives at the Board were officially nominated by two Nepali church organisations for the first time. The Board also heard reports on the present activities, status and plans of the Nepali churches.

The UMN Board would like to see relations with the churches of Nepal strengthened and it hopes it will be possible to respond to requests from churches in a unified way.

Long-term strategic planning was also discussed and again it was emphasised that UMN's Christian identity must be clear.

According to the Annual Reports, UMN expatriate adults total 270, working in 170 government-approved posts. The annual budget is \$12 million.

Missionary Myth

A telex sent to mission headquarters outlined the urgent need for a number of 'willing and skilful missionaries'.

In transmission, the message which eventually arrived asked for a number of 'skinny and wilful missionaries'.

From *Vision* the magazine of the Australian BMS.



The Present Tents

New initiatives in mission through the £2 million Fund for the Future.

How many of you have lived 'Hand worked overseas?' asked the minister one Sunday morning.

It was an ordinary Baptist church, with just over 100 members. So they were all surprised when just about two-thirds of those present raised their hands.

'That's not typical,' you might say. But it does emphasise the fact that many of our church members do live for longer or shorter times in other countries. They go as teachers, diplomats, business and professional people or as members of the armed forces.

How do we see their role? Do we just say farewell to them, asking them to keep in touch? Do we regret losing, for the time being, their skills and insights as part of our church family? Or do we see them as 'missionaries', Christians sent out from our congregations to fulfil, in some way, the Great Commission to 'make disciples'?

There are many countries in the world where Christian missionaries, in the traditional sense, are no longer welcome. In others visas for missionary work are rationed, or very hard to obtain. Yet the challenge to mission has not disappeared.

Ten pressing mission issues, facing the church, have been identified:

- The many unreached people of the world.
- Expansion of Islam and other religions.
- Urbanisation and growing cities.
- The large proportion of young people in the developing world.
- Better communication and travel.
- Unmet basic human needs.
- World and local based injustice.
- Environmental issues.
- HIV infection and AIDS.
- Cooperation and partnership with former mission churches. (1)

Picking up just one of these issues – others will be explored in later months, it is estimated that something like two billion people have never had the gospel presented in a way they can understand. This includes as many as 11,500 ethnic groups. Two thousand of these groups, 1,000 major cities and 30 'close' countries are largely unevangelised.

The Berti people of Sudan are given as an example in the latest *AD 200 Global Monitor*. 'We have computed their population, as of 31 December 1991, at 179,460! So far, we know of no Christians there, no churches, no missions, no scriptures, no literature, no broadcasting, no visiting

The challenge of unreached peoples



evangelists, no gospel – nothing.

Such issues challenge us to explore new ways of 'doing mission', and of using the people resources available to us.

That great missionary, the Apostle Paul, earned his living by making tents. Carey established the work in India by, amongst other things, looking after an indigo factory. Such 'tent-making' ministry has an honourable history in the church.

The BMS sees the many Baptist church members who live and work overseas as the modern 'tent-making' missionaries. The opportunities of mission are there, the people are there. We now need to bring people and need together. The BMS intends to use part of the £2 million Fund for the Future to set up a programme of training, preparation and support for people willing to serve in this way and to link them with the work of local Christians overseas.

For more information about the Fund for the Future write to Owen Clark, BMS BiCentenary Secretary.

(1) from *Vision* the magazine of the Australian BMS. ■



CALL TO PRAYER

23-29 FEBRUARY

Italy and Israel

The BMS is committed to finding pastors to work with the Unione Cristiana Evangelica Battista D'Italia (UCEBI). The invitation to renew links with Italy came in 1990 and was welcomed by the BMS and the Home Unions as a way of bringing British and Italian Baptists closer together for mutual enrichment.

'Only 50 per cent of the population of Italy indicate any interest in the Roman Catholic Church and not all of them are particularly committed as Christians. So there is a massive evangelistic task to be done,' reported Angus MacNeill after a visit to Italy last year.

Another area where the BMS had links in the last century was Palestine. Last year, the BMS agreed to work with the Edinburgh Medical Mission in the search for doctors to work in the Christian Hospital at Nazareth. The Society is currently looking for an Anaesthesiologist to serve for two years.

1-7 MARCH

Zaire: North Equator

The North Equator Region stretches some 200 miles east to west and lies either side of the River Zaire. Apart from Lisala, a large town of around 200,000 and the two plantation towns of Binga and Bosondjo, the Region is one of settled small villages. The President of the church region, Pastor Mondengo, is based at Upoto. Pastor Aguma is responsible for evangelism.

All BMS workers have been evacuated from the region because of the recent emergency and are in

the UK. But we continue to remember Pimu hospital where Adrian and Sylvia Hopkins, Brenda Earl and Edith Dawson are based. Zairian Dr Lobo had only just settled into the work and has been left to cope with the responsibility of running a medical service in a climate of economic depression and poverty.

Loving Lord you are with the people of Zaire in all the troubles they face in the political turmoil of their nation in the poverty and hunger which is none of their fault; we are confident that you are weeping with them suffering with them caring with a broken, loving heart for lives which are shattered offering your strength, that they may be able to face anything.

8-14 MARCH

Central America

'In the closing hours of 1991 a peace accord was signed between the El Salvador government and the opposition guerrilla force, FMNL. It has taken 20 months of negotiations, 12 years of war and over 75,000 deaths,' reports James Grote. 'Those who have suffered know that peace does not come overnight but what happened on New Year's eve is worth celebrating about, shouting, laughing and dancing about.'

We join James and Sue Grote, David and Rachel Quinney Mee — our workers in El Salvador, Carlos Sanchez, Secretary of the Baptist Association, all the Christians and all the people of El Salvador in the rejoicing. And we pray for a lasting peace that we will outlive the threats of those who wish to sabotage the agreement.

In Nicaragua, the 10-year civil war ended in 1990 but opposing factions still manoeuvre for advan-

tage. The Nicaragua Baptist Convention celebrates 75 years of cooperative work and witness. It plans to open its own radio station this year. We hope that the first BMS missionaries will settle and begin work in the country before the end of the year.

15-21 MARCH

Brazil: São Paulo and Campinas

BMS has several workers based in São Paulo one of the largest cities in the world. Poor live in favelas alongside the more prosperous. Urban violence and child prostitution are common. Paul and Debbie Holmes work with the favela church of Inamar. They see this as a base for wider work. David and Cath Meikle arrived in Brazil last month and are beginning to grapple with language learning and cultural adaptation to prepare themselves for a similar ministry.

Baptists set themselves a growth target of 2,000 new churches within 10 years but it looks now as though they will achieve only half this. Stuart and Georgie Christine have just returned to Brazil in order to coordinate church planting in the Pinheiros association, and to train others in church planting at the São Paulo Seminary.

22-28 MARCH

Church of North India

The Church of North India is now 20 years old. Most BMS linked work in Orissa is now part of CNI and the two dioceses of Sambalpur and Cuttack retain strong Baptist characteristics and links. Bishop L Tandy of Sambalpur was involved in a motoring accident last year and is still recovering from serious injuries. We pray for him as he takes up his duties once more.

Response to the gospel continues to be encouraging in the Kond Hills, but there is also opposition from militant Hindu groups.

29 MARCH-4 APRIL

Caribbean: Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica

The partnership between BMS and Brazilian Baptists which has led to the sending of a Brazilian family to work in Guyana has been reported in previous months. We are committed to the support of Joao and Celia Manga in their church planting work and leadership training work at Linden.

BMS has no personnel working with the Baptist Union of Trinidad and Tobago at the moment. There is a new confidence in the future as changes in leadership take place. We pray for Adrian Thompson the new General Secretary.

5-11 APRIL

Africa

Radical changes are taking place in Africa. An uneasy peace has settled on Angola after more than 30 years of strife. South Africa lurches towards an integrated society. Dictators are disappearing and democracies are being reborn. But still a large part of the continent is suffering oppression, war and famine.

**Thank you Lord
for your words of hope
Sometimes tyrant forces seem
to be in control,**

**— economic power
to enrich a thousand
and beggar millions
— political power
to free the few
and bind the many**

**— people power
manipulated and
misdirected by the cunning
and corrupt.**

**Lord
in a continent
where forces out of control
threaten to overwhelm the
people hasten the day when
every authority shall bow
down before the power of
your love.**

12-18 APRIL

People in mission

Christian mission is essentially about people, about Christian men and women sharing their faith with others. So BMS continues to challenge people in our Baptist churches to consider service in other parts of the world. In this process we are grateful to local fellowships, ministers, area representatives and others who are helping possible candidates to understand what God is saying to them.

The BMS personnel secretary and the members of the Candidate Board have an awesome responsibility as they interview missionary candidates. We pray for them and for people like David and Elidia Grainger who help to prepare candidates at St Andrew's Hall for missionary service.



The Baptist Convention in Nicaragua celebrates its 75th Anniversary this month. BMS Vice Chairman, Peter Clark, is representing the Society

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

ARRIVALS

Robert and Christine Draycott
on 10 December 1991
from Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Keith and Barbara Hodges
on 10 December 1991 from Curitiba, Brazil

DEPARTURES

Stuart and Georgie Christine
on 27 December 1991 to São Paulo, Brazil

Betty Marsh
on 3 January 1992 to Bethampur, India

John Clark
on 3 January 1992 to São Paulo, Brazil

Roger and Angela Collinson
on 5 January 1992 to Rio Grande, Brazil

Andrew Mason
on 5 January 1992 to Kathmandu, Nepal

Linda Mason
on 19 January 1992 to Kathmandu, Nepal

David and Catherine Meikle
on 16 January 1992 to São Paulo, Brazil

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LEGACIES

Florence Lord	31.06
Mr Gadd	500.00
Mr and Mrs Whitton	842.47
Miss Ivy Mason	9,000.00
Miss J C Isted	515.47
Mrs B N Cooper	10,000.00
Francis Mervyn Pritchard	28,000.00
Mrs B N Cooper	7,000.00
Miss E M Parker-Gray	2,571.43
Annie Mildenhall	4,878.34
Miss M K E Griffin	19,895.87
Mrs Bessie K Alexander	2,882.72

GENERAL WORK

Reigate: £25.00; Faul: £160.00; Swansea: £20.00; Manchester: £50.00; BMS Tin: £6.60; Anon: £74.15; Chelmsford: £125.00; Anon Charities Trust: £9.37.

SOUNDS AND RHYTHMS OF AFRICA



■ Don't miss this rare opportunity to experience the distinctive sound of Central Africa ■ A choir of young people, from all over Zaire, is coming to share our BiCentenary celebrations ■ Their songs, from the heart of Africa, will be beating a rhythm around Britain during May ■ They will be singing at the Baptist Assembly and at a venue somewhere near you ■

For full details of their programme, please contact your local Area Representative, or Jim Clarke, 82 Cannon Street, Little Downham, Ely CB6 2SS — and WATCH THIS SPACE