

H

M I S S I O N A R Y

HERALD



NEPAL – SURVEYING THE NORTH

JUNE 1992

PRICE 25p

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Cover photo: Tibetan woman in North Nepal
(Heather Payne)

The BMS has mission links with:

Albania	France	Nicaragua
Angola	Hungary	Sri Lanka
Bangladesh	India	Thailand
Belgium	Indonesia	Trinidad
Brazil	Jamaica	Zaire
El Salvador	Nepal	

MISSIONARY HERALD The Magazine of The Baptist Missionary Society, PO Box 49, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8XA.
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ISSN 0264-1372

HERALD

EDITORIAL COMMENT

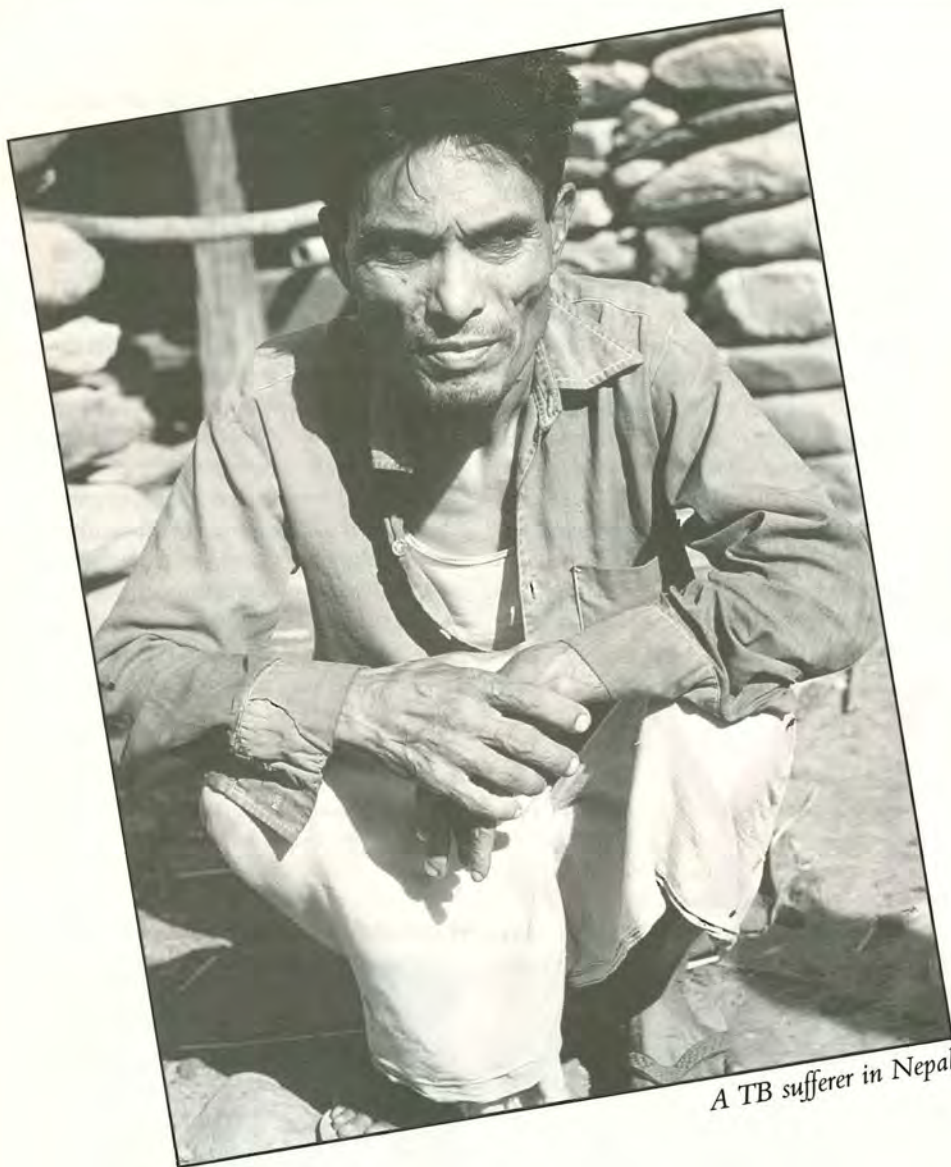
We've just completed our first series of staff-team No small change presentations. Before Baptist audiences, both large and small, team members have explored the implications of changes at home and abroad. We've looked at the needs of the growing cities of the developing world. We've interviewed national Christians from places like Brazil, El Salvador and Zaire and learned something of the pressing problems of these places. We have called on people to see God at work in all the changes taking place around them and appealed to them to respond by changing their attitudes to prayer, to giving, to life-style and to mission itself.

The lesson of flexibility is one the BMS itself has to understand. That is why we embarked on the World Mission Link programme in the first place. We said staff teams were not meant to be 'deputation by another name' and we meant it.

Further afield we have been able to respond very quickly to an immediate need in the impoverished country of Albania. This month Chris and Mairi Burnett begin their work in Tirana, the capital of that country. The changing scene in Eastern Europe has thrown open many doors we previously thought were locked and barred against us.

However, our ability to respond like this depends on the resources Baptists in Britain are prepared to release to the BMS. The BiCentenary Fund for the Future is meant to help us react quickly to changing situations like that in Albania. But already the money so far contributed, and more, has been committed to some of the exciting new ventures in mission before us.

If every Baptist church member in the UK gave £14 over two years to the Fund for the Future we would easily achieve our target of £2 million.



A TB sufferer in Nepal

FROM HERE in Amp Pipal it's 30 miles as the crow flies (which it doesn't because of the 26,000 foot Himalayan peak of Manaslu in the way!) but eight days walk to the furthest point, at the foot of the high pass in Tibet.

The inhabitants of the area are few, and live in difficult circumstances; thick snow covers the ground for much of the bitterly cold winter, crops take up to ten months to reach maturity in this hostile environment, and being a *durgam sthan* (remote region) there has been little in the way of development or government services coming their way.

Yet the people are rich in numerous ways. Many are traders, visiting Tibet, Kathmandu, India, even Thailand and Bangkok, to trade in wool, skins, salt and gold. For centuries they have lived in these inhospitable areas and are

well adapted, building large heavy walled houses that hold in the heat from the open fire in the centre of the upstairs room, around which the family eats, meets and sleeps. Thick woollen clothes keep them warm during the day, and beautifully woven blankets and coloured rugs at night.

Culturally they have a tradition that is closely tied to the tantric Buddhism of Tibet, and their spiritual leader is the Dalai Lama. Every village has its own *Gomba* or temple, sometimes two, and there are four or five particularly large ones in the region, each with its own Lama and attendant *Anis* (nuns).

Their knowledge and understanding of their environment is profound; wild mushrooms and berries supplement a rather monotonous diet of flour, Tibetan tea, and cheese; the bark and roots of many species of shrub and

WHY? NOT WHAT?

Ian Smith recently spent six weeks away from home, surveying a remote mountainous area in the north of Gorkha district in Nepal.

◀ Himalayan grasses are used locally as medicines and spices, and also traded.

Yet this adaptation is far from complete, and disease is common. Most people have a goitre; evidence of iodine deficiency. Tuberculosis is common, and we saw several people with advanced leprosy. Measles and diarrhoea kill many children each year, and smoke filled houses provoke bronchitis and pneumonia. Death and disease are all too common, and over the centuries the people have established traditional methods of dealing with them. One of the purposes of our survey was to investi-

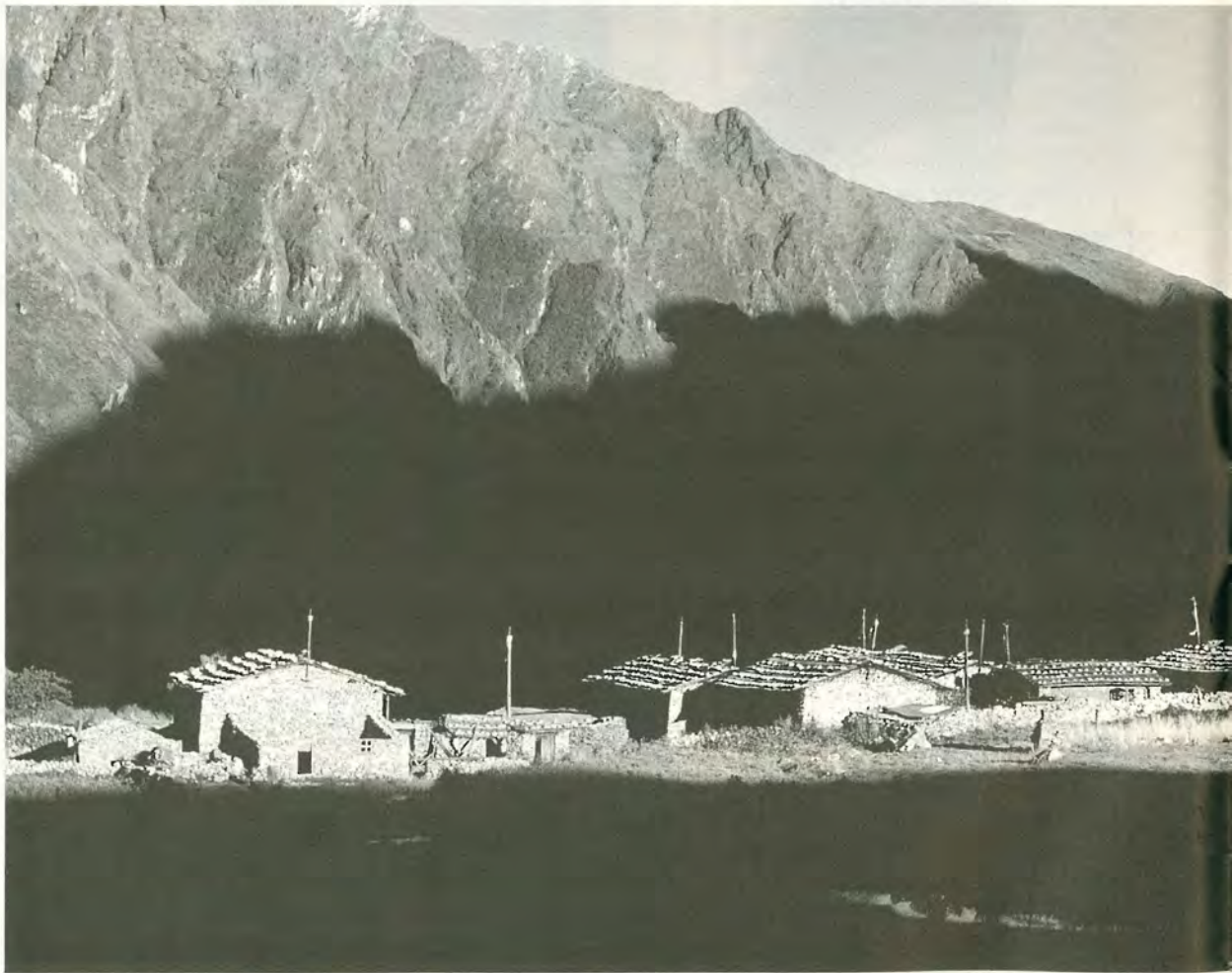


gate these methods, and see how they could possibly be incorporated into a primary health care system.

Several different types of practitioners are actively involved, each having a different area of expertise; the Lama (Buddhist priest) has a vast array of writings and scriptures, many of which give detailed instructions on the management of disease. The *Amji* is the village doctor, well versed in the use of medicinal herbs and plants in the treatment of illness. He also uses other physical cures, such as heat; we saw many people with burn scars round joints, on backs, and on

WHY? NOT WHAT?

A community in northern Nepal



abdomens, to relieve chronic pain.

And finally there is the witch doctor, or *jhankri*, who acts as a medium to determine the cause of the disease, to divine which spirit has been offended, and to ascertain what sacrifice is needed to placate them.

The *jhankri* is an important person in most of the cultures of

NOT WHAT?

Nepal, particularly amongst the tribal groups. Even in the more developed urban societies where many people have adopted more Western like lifestyles, the *jhankri* is still active.

Shortly after we arrived in Nepal, when we were living in one of the suburbs of Kathmandu, our next door neighbour's young daughter fell from the upstairs window and fractured her skull. We rushed her unconscious to the UMN hospital in Patan, where she made a remark-

able rapid recovery. The parents were most impressed with the care she received there, and very grateful. Nevertheless, soon after they brought her home from hospital, the *jhankri* was called.

For the family, the issue was not 'what' caused the illness (in this case the fall), but 'why?' should it happen to them. In a world where there is only a fine divide between the material and the spiritual, and the day to day activity of gods, spirits and witches is recognised and expected, much time, effort and expense is spent in appeasing malevolent spiritual forces.

Western medicine has little to offer in this field. Western science, medicine and culture may have made great strides in understanding the 'what' of disease and other phenomena. But in denying the spiritual world, it has lost the ability to answer the question 'why?' and therefore for many people its credibility. As a result, we medical workers from the West are assumed to be impotent in dealing with disease inflicted by evil spirits. Consequently, we have the sad situation of people coming to a Christian hospital with their physical and material problems, but presuming we are impotent in dealing with their spiritual ones.

One possible reason for our lack of credibility in some people's eyes is our tendency to use an 'other world' rationalisation for the 'why?' of disease and suffering. Explaining suffering as the result of original sin may be right theology but it has little meaning for those who battle daily with the evil powers of a

NOT

spiritual world which is immediate rather than distant. The statistical argument of 'chance' is no answer either. It creates a sense of fatalism and powerlessness. How can you fight against something that



A hard life and a harsh climate have disguised the true age of this Nepali woman

Western science, medicine and culture may have made great strides in understanding the 'what' of disease and other phenomena. But in denying the spiritual world, it has lost the ability to answer the question 'why?' and therefore for many people its credibility.

called 'backward' cultures of the developing world but also for appears to be so arbitrary?

So for many people the question 'why?' remains. Not just for the so

WHAT?

people of the technologically advanced West. As a junior doctor I remember well the frequent occasions when, on trying to comfort the bereaved, the question was rarely 'what?' 'Why them?' 'Why did they have to die?'

The challenge for us here in Nepal is not just to have a theology of travail that enables us to identify with people in their suffering but also to be able to manifest that we are not powerless in the face of the spiritual forces that surround us. We need to demonstrate that we know the 'why?' not just the 'what'; our integrity rests upon it. ■



Struggling for the bread ration in Tirana. Baptist World Aid has donated \$100,000 worth of flour to Albania (see below)

BEHIND T

*Chris Burnett writes
about his new
work in Albania.*

IT WAS WITH some expectancy that I looked out of the hotel bedroom window on that first morning in Tirana, Albania. I have to admit that all my pictures of this country were in black and white, a collage of dull greys.

However the sight that I saw was far from monochrome. Hills seemed to ring the capital with evergreen trees and the colours of an early spring competed to impress me. The city centre is full of marble modern buildings that all stand witness to the passing communist regime. The mosque at one corner shows the cosmopolitan culture of this country.

The central square had only days before been filled to the



brim with excited and jubilant Albanians, celebrating the birth of their democracy. The realities of that step are still to be realised, as indeed are its price. The future does seem uncertain with unemployment perhaps higher than 60 per cent. The dollar is used as a currency and the black-market supplies the worst that the West can give.

In some ways the change to democracy is easier to say but the actions that this change demands will be painful and difficult. The West is seen as the holder of all that is good and the communist East as all that was bad. They may be shocked to know of our homeless, our economy, our 'caring' society.

It is not an exaggerated claim to say that a lot of the future of Albania depends on us in the West, and that includes what we as Baptists can do to help. We have used an image of a sick man who has spent the last 30 years in hospital but is now convalescing

from this illness. We see our task as helping this adult to regain his feet and live an independent life. This is different from a more usual image of paternalism. These people are proud and independent, and they find it hard to be in the position of being so dependent on the aid hand-outs of the West, some of which are only cast-offs.

The opportunities for work in this country are overwhelming, as was our welcome, whether from Government Ministers or just workers and people we bumped into. At no time did we hide the fact that the first priority we see is the establishment of Baptist communities and churches. This is to be achieved through evangelisation.

There are some churches starting in Albania but we are not aware of a Baptist presence and see no conflict in working within a denomination. This will be hard work but against this is the evident spiritual hunger in this

DRS CHRIS and Mairi Burnett, who until last year served at Yakusu in Zaire, go to Albania this month to represent the European Baptist Federation working from an office in Tirana.

At the Baptist Assembly Chris said: 'We feel a little like Barnabas and Saul, set apart by you for service in Albania. We feel as if we are venturing out into the unknown and have many apprehensions, if we are truthful, for our safety, for our family, for finding food, for having fellowship and about our own inadequacies for this work.'

'But we have already experienced some of God's provision for us. We are excited by the potential in this field, to see people know Christ, to see lives changed. We are also excited to see the unity in the Baptist family behind this work. We are very conscious that this is not our work but God's task for us. And you are an important part of that task both in prayer and support.'

'The exit of communism has left a huge vacuum in people's minds and there are many people rushing to fill it. There is an ungodly scalp-hunt going on in Eastern Europe. We want to be part of a long-term commitment to Christian discipleship and to seeing God's Kingdom come even in Albania.'

'It's a worrying trend to see the west sending its cast-offs to Eastern Europe. Let's hope that it's not a cast-off religion we are bringing but God's transforming and renewing spirit so needed by these people.'

Later there was applause as the flag of Albania was brought to the platform. ■

THE LAST CURTAIN

Drs Chris and Mairi Burnett visiting a hospital in Albania





Modern buildings, wide streets, people but very little traffic in modern Tirana

population. The departure of communism has left a vacuum in many lives, a vacuum that we believe can only be fully filled by Christ Jesus.

The other wing of this work will be along the development side, in consultation with Government Agencies and others. As an important procedural point we have said that we do not want to go into these ministries with preplanned programmes but want to respond to requests from the Albanian people. We will be the facilitators of their own requests and pass them back to the wider Baptist family.

It is an important point of this work that we unite the work of many European Baptist Unions, in Albania. The result will be a more coherent help and an image of a Baptist family that transcends National boundaries. This will be achieved through the European Baptist Federation, to whom we have been seconded by the BMS.

While we were there we were able to start this work, even in a small way. The bread queues form a part of daily life. They have just suffered a winter when food was very hard to find. Shops now do have some food in stock but there was little choice. Flour, meat, some cooking oil, some fresh vegetables, but little else. One friend told us that her monthly shopping came to \$50, just the essential food items, but

her salary was only \$15. One daughter working brought in \$15, and her husband managed to take home another \$20. There was nothing left over for clothes, monthly bills or any extra food.

Little is being planted again this year so the winter looks like being a repeat of last year. We hope to be able to help in this and have already arranged for a small shipment of flour, only 200 tonnes, the daily consumption for Tirana alone. We hope to repeat this on a larger scale as we try and help these people through a short term crisis, and at the same time we are looking to a long term agricultural project in the north, a place where we can show modern techniques and use this as a resource centre. This shows the balance we will try and seek between the short term aid and the long term cooperation.

The open doors that we have received for this can only have come about through the working of the Holy Spirit in this country and indeed we see His preparation going back over many years, long before this country finally opened its borders. Even the finding of a flat with a telephone seemed impossible before arriving.

We are very excited by the whole range of work that we are being called into, but are very aware of our own failings and weaknesses. There is the hope

that this will become a team work, very soon, as other Baptists from the European family come to join us in Albania. There will be a lot of scope for short term volunteers but the process for this still has to be worked out.

We have many apprehensions about our role in Albania, many fears as to how we will do, how we will be perceived by its people. Yet we feel that we have a unique opportunity to practise what we have felt for some time, that is evangelism can and should co-exist with a social concern.

I am sure you will be reading about Albania again, and soon and like this time I hope you will be praising God for His goodness and His provision. He is at work in Albania and He is inviting us all to be a part of that work so please join with us in prayer so that we may see His kingdom come, yes even in Albania. The last Curtain has fallen. ■

CHINA

AND THE CHANGES OF HISTORY



GOD IS a free agent. We must not limit His work to the work of the Church. To paraphrase Dr T C Chao (1951): 'We must study to see the actions of God in the development and changes of history, not expecting to find this only in the Church but also in politics, economics, military affairs, education and culture.'

When the Communist avalanche swept over China in 1949, many Christians there could see only the work of the Devil. Rather rashly they perceived the reactionary Nationalist regime which protected the missionaries as being on the side of God. But we as people of faith must take a long term view and believe that even the enemies of God have their place, and that God, the Supreme

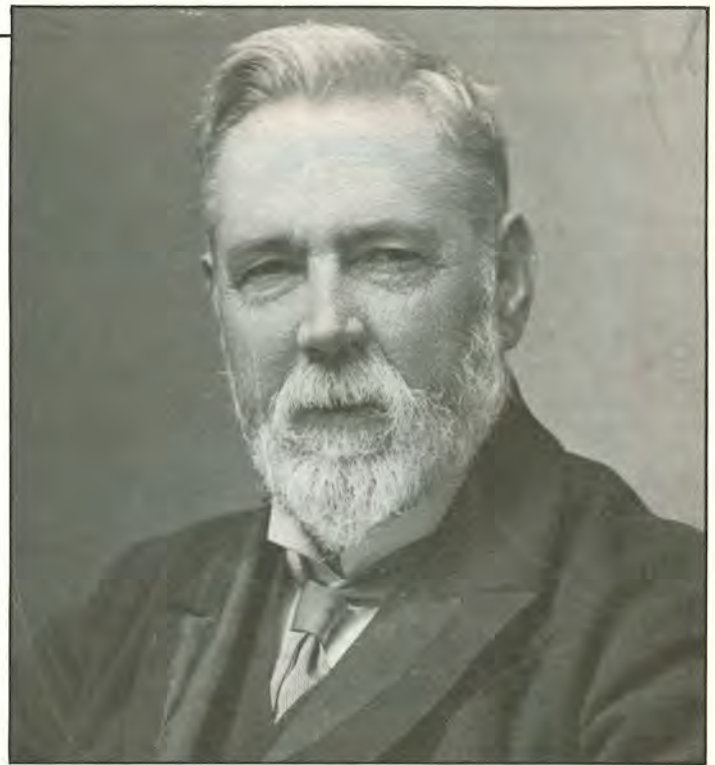
The last of the BMS missionaries left China in 1952, among them Hubert Spillett. Here is a summary of his thoughts, many of them prophetic, which he read as a paper at a Missionary Conference in February 1953.

Communist procession, complete with Mao's picture, taken in China in 1950

CHINA

◀ Ruler of all has placed His limitations upon them. The changes in China cannot be seen in isolation. Both the changes here, and also in Asia are part of something that is happening worldwide — that is the rise of new nations and the re-birth of older ones. It is part of the throwing off of colonial status, the retreat of the white races and the rise of self-government.

This movement is many sided; it is not only a war, cold or hot, against colonialism, it is a war against hunger, poverty, ignorance and disease, that is a war against medieval conditions which are out of place in the 20th century. Conditions of life in



Asiatic countries are still deplorable; they have been accepted with resignation in the past, and still are by some; they will not be accepted much longer.

Early Christian Missionaries

When the Protestant missionaries first arrived in China, they came with the foreign traders, following the guns of the opium war — an association which probably seemed reasonable enough at the time. They were probably aware of the alien culture they were entering, but, nonetheless believed in what they would call 'the blessings of civilisation' and thus they imparted the Christian gospel as being the inspiration of that civilisation.

The ordinary people in China probably believed the missionary was a servant of the Government because he stood for wealth and successful force.

Critics of missionaries maintain that their work throughout was limited and conditioned by the embodiment of an alien culture; by their higher standard of living; and by their possession of foreign funds. It is said that as foreigners they were never able to penetrate deeply and fully into Chinese life because inevitably they looked at China from the standpoint of their own countries. Furthermore, they monopolised the places of leadership, in the sure knowledge that they were indispensable.

(left) A group of missionaries at the last BMS conference to be held in China, 1950

(top) BMS China pioneer Timothy Richard
(above) House church in modern day China

Achievements

So, has anything been achieved by missionaries working in China? In reply, it can be said that much has been done. Christianity brought to China both modern learning and modern medicine.

In 1949 there were 13 Christian universities and colleges in China and 50 per cent of hospital beds were in Christian hospitals. Christianity brought about benevolent institutions of all kinds: caring for the weak and unfortunate in a way that was completely new to the Chinese people. Some of these such as orphanages and schools for the blind have been taken and run by the new regime.

Christianity has started a tradition which will continue: China now has a nationwide educational

system and a national health service.

It is also probably true, though difficult to prove, that there is still some Christian influence behind some of the ideals of the new regime, for example, the Oberlin Ming Hsien School in Taiku, Shansi was never pillaged by Red guerillas, owing, it is said, to old boys in their ranks.

The Chinese Church

And so the Protestant Church has been established in China. Rightly or wrongly, through historical necessity, the main western denominations have been introduced. Through the circulation of the Bible small 'Pentecostal-type' groups have sprung up, calling themselves such names as the Little Flock, the Jesus Family etc. Altogether we reckon there are about 700,000 Protestant communicants, which represents a much larger community.

Christianity and Politics

Historians have said that the missionaries lost a great opportunity to establish a Christian civilisation in China when they refused to support the Taiping Rebellion. Possibly the Reform Movement of 1898, which owed much to CLS and the work of Timothy Richard and friends, might have succeeded.

The 1911 revolution never looked like becoming a Christian movement, although Dr Sun was himself a Christian. And so Christianity's main hope since then has been Chiang Kai Shek. And it is true to say that our over-evaluation of him and his lamentable failure, are bitter memories.

Could the Church have prevented the coming of Communism? Only by inducing the Kuomintang to undertake an agrarian and social reform programme. This proved impossible. And the reason came from the Communists themselves – that Chiang himself came from the big landlord class.

The Church in New China

The Church in the New China is of necessity a People's Organisation – allowed to conduct its own affairs, train its leaders, own property and has freedom of religious belief – all this as long as it supports the government. Not to comply with this would have placed the Church alongside the United States, British Imperialism and Chiang Kai Shek in Communist eyes. To gain these freedoms the Church sacrificed worldwide fellowship and its missionaries.

Doubtless Communism is an interlude in Chinese history. Through the interlude the Church will become proletarian, democratic, indigenous. I think it will look forward to reunion with the world family of churches; and it may have more to give than before. ■

MISSION IN TIME

TAKE FIVE TALENTED young people, take a story worth telling and take a God given vision of a travelling show and what have you got? A multi-media road show called 'Mission in Time' that has been prepared to help celebrate the BiCentenary of the Baptist Missionary Society.

This must surely be a unique happening worthy of attention. Michelle, Roly, Martin, Matt and Peter have all given up ten months of 1992 to prepare and perform this original production which not only communicates something of the story of the BMS but the very essence of Christianity itself.

The show does not glorify the BMS but seeks to present the claims of Christ and His gospel and how the BMS has tried to proclaim that message through its missionaries working abroad for the past 200 years and continues to do so now. The show is family entertainment but has as its conclusion a challenge to the audience to consider their own Christian commitment and calling to overseas work.

Venues for Mission in Time:

JUNE

- Tue 2 Falmouth, Emmanuel
 Thu 4 Plymouth Mutley
 Sat 6 Barnstaple, Pilton School
 Tue 9 Paignton Community College
 Thu 11 Taunton, Richard Huish College
 Sat 13 Bristol, Broadmead
 Tue 16 Harrow
 Wed 17 Teddington
 Fri 19 Walthamstow
 Sat 20 North Kent Performing Arts Centre, Eltham College
 Mon 22 Aylesbury
 Sat 27 Kettering Boys' School, Windmill Avenue

JULY

- Thu 2 Oxford, Regents Park College
 Sat 4 Maidstone, Knightrider
 Mon 6 Weybridge, New Haw
 Tue 7 Reading, Abbey
 Thu 9 Southampton, Central
 Sat 11 Bournemouth
 Sat 18 Cardiff
 Wed 22 Haverfordwest
 Sat 25 Rhyl
 Thu 30 Exeter

AUGUST

- Sat 1 Bath, Manvers Street
 Tue 4 Melksham, George Ward School
 Thu 6 Swindon, Central
 Sat 22 Ayr
 Tue 25 Glasgow
 Thu 27 Edinburgh, Morningside
 Sat 29 Borders Assembly

SEPTEMBER

- Wed 2 Aberdeen, Bridge of Don
 Sat 5 Perth
 Mon 7 Gateshead Emmanuel College
 Wed 9 Middlesbrough, Thornaby on Tees
 Sat 12 Leeds, Playhouse
 Tue 14 Burnley, Zion
 Thu 16 Lytham St Annes, Lowther Gardens Pavilion
 Mon 21 Warrington

OCTOBER

- Sat 3 Llanelwedd, Welsh Family Day
 Mon 5 Portsmouth
 Wed 7 Camberley, High Cross URC & Methodist
 Sat 10 Worthing, Christchurch Road

LIFT UP YOUR EYES UNTO THE HILLS

*The story of Serkawn hospital,
Mizoram, as told by a national
Christian.*



LOCATED on a picturesque hillside at Serkawn, Mizoram in North East India this hospital was founded by the Baptist Missionary Society in 1919.

To start with it was a small dispensary, the first missionary nurse was Olive Dicks – she is known amongst the Mizos as Pi Dawki – was followed by other missionary nurses: Miss M Clark (1922-55), Miss E M Oliver (1922-54); Miss I M Good (1928-45), Miss Mary W Shearer (1945-50), Miss Baker (1947), Miss Davies (1950), Miss E M Maltby (1952-68), Miss Kathleen A Cox (1945-65) and last of all Miss Joan T Smith (1965-68, 1972-77).

We list them because we loved them for their untiring efforts to uphold the institution even in the darkest hours. Besides them a number of other BMS missionaries were indirectly involved in the growth and development of the hospital.

The first building was completed in 1923 constructed of sawn timbers, bamboo wallings and tin-roofings. The ravages of times and rigours of monsoon have taken their toll of this building.

A new building with reinforced cement structure was started in 1972 and completed in 1978 with funds raised from the BMS, from the local govern-

ment and from the local public at a cost of around Rs 2,500,000.

In the earlier days much of the medical care was given by doctors serving in our sister Chandraghona Christian Hospital, East Bengal (now Bangladesh). The first resident doctor was Dr Hanley G Stockley (1957-62) who with his wife Mrs Jean Stockley ably nurtured the hospital and raised the bed strength to 50. A national doctor was appointed in 1964.

The present strength of the hospital is 100 beds and six doctors, 43 staff nurses and other paramedics. We are running a Nursing School with 50 students, an Orphanage with 25 inmates, and also four community health projects in the outlying villages.

The institution is run on a non-profit, charitable basis and it is God's miracle that we are still able to be self-supporting and look after the maintenance when the maximum charge for major surgery is Rs 600.00 (less than £20!).

The out-patient building required urgent repair and reconstruction for which we did not have any capital savings. We made a frantic appeal to the EZE (Evangelische Zentral stelle Entwicklungshilfe EV) Germany and to the Baptist Missionary Society to finance this new construction in 1986.

We are indeed grateful to the Lord and to the donors for the positive response to our call for help whence the foundation stone for the building was laid by Revd Neil McVicar, BMS Overseas Representative for Asia with his wife Mrs Marjorie during their visit to this area in 1987.

The building is now completed and commissioned for helpful service to the public. We are very, very grateful to those of our friends who have lifted their eyes to the hills of Mizoram through their prayers and giving, words fail to express our appreciation. The Lord will recompense all of them. ■

Raising money for the work at Serkawn was part of a previous BMS Women's Project.



(top left) New hospital buildings
(above) Old building before demolition

The Baptist Movement in Belgium celebrates its Centenary this year. 'One could be forgiven for thinking that after 100 years of witness that the movement must be strong and large in number. This is not so,' writes Stuart Filby. 'In fact the miracle is that the movement has survived at all.'



believers met in Denain and later in Peruwelz.

One hundred years later the movement is still small, numbering just over 400 national believers and another 350 expatriates that meet in several international churches.

Why has progress been so slow? Perhaps there are many reasons that can be given not least of which is the time being to make this possible.

Samuel Verhaeghe has a vision for things having set up a national youth board, a pastor's training programme, etc. but is continually frustrated by the lack of trained nationals to take on the responsibility of coordinating these.

Of course there are those who help and pastor in some of these churches but they must first do a secular days work, then spend time with their families before they can

THE BAPTIST COMMUNITY OF BELGIUM

TO UNDERSTAND the situation in Belgium one must understand the influence of history upon this small nation. Belgium has always been torn between the influence of its stronger neighbours both politically and religiously. The strongholds of Catholicism were established and maintained through French, Spanish and Austrian influence and only later did Protestant Holland exert pressure from the north.

Many in Belgium experienced executions, punishment and loss of property as they were caught up by

the warring factions both of state and church.

After the French revolution of 1789, Belgium finally gained independence in 1830 but continued to be subjected to powers outside its borders. In 1830 there were only eight Protestant churches in the entire country.

The Baptist movement also began as a result of outside upheavals. English soldiers brought their Baptist faith to the borders of France and Belgium where several local men were converted and crossed the border to live in Belgium. A small house group of

minister to the needs of local believers.

As in the business world with small successful concerns so too in the world of religious denominations. Larger groups have sought to take over or encourage amalgamation and these pressures are often difficult to resist. The miracle is that not only have they resisted, but they believe that God has a future and purpose for them.

The union has no building of its own nor paid officers and none of the other facilities that one would consider basic and yet they remain buoyant and confident. They



believe that as a result of much prayer and interest from abroad as well as the financial support they receive, things can only improve, but they also know that there will be much heartache and hard work too. Of this they are not afraid.

The challenge of Belgium is that it is one of the least evangelised lands in the world. Somehow in all the worldwide missionary efforts and great revivals, Belgium has missed out. Only some 0.2 per cent of the population claim to be practising evangelical Christians. Belgium holds the highest suicide rate in the whole of the European Community and the widespread practice of the occult goes back over centuries and is a breeding ground for the cults and the New Age Movement. It's a land that needs to hear the gospel clearly proclaimed as many of its towns and villages have no evangelical witness at all.

Eighty-nine per cent of the population are Catholic but few of them would claim to be ardent and the church is quickly losing its influence in a materialistic society. Its borders are short and its population relatively small yet Belgium, the heart of Europe, is without God.

Baptists are working together with other groups to change this situation. They took part in the recent Project Brussels in which every household received a Bible. They are also involved at grass roots in the March for Jesus across Europe from London to Berlin in April and May of this year.

1992 marks the Centenary of the Baptist movement in Belgium but it also marks the beginning of a new hope, a new vision and a new endeavour that the Lord may be glorified here in the heart of Europe.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS PART TWO – HUNGARY

It is not so long ago since Karen Poole was writing about her first impressions of Zaire. After only a few weeks in Africa she was evacuated with many others when the rioting began. She now offers her second 'first impressions', this time from Hungary where she is teaching English.



A FEW MONTHS ago I would not have imagined myself arriving at yet another strange airport. But this time the scene was not so foreign. Terminal 2, Budapest had a lot more similarities to Heathrow than Ndjili (Kinshasa). Within a short time I was through passport control and customs to be met by Dave Champion and a host of others.

Introductions revealed them to be Revd Zoltan Nomeshegy, who

had initiated the scheme for native English speakers to teach in Hungarian schools. Errol and Mary Simmons, the American Southern Baptists who had liaised with BMS. Lewellyne, who worked in the school I would be in, her husband Jeff and Gideon, my host for the immediate future. With the addition of a folder of information and Hungarian *forints* changed at the Bureau de Change, we left the airport.

The drive from the airport to Gideon's house revealed only the outskirts of Budapest. Low houses, partially hidden behind iron railings, Ladas, Skodas and dogs were much in evidence. I was a little apprehensive about staying with a Hungarian family, after all Hungarian did not list amongst languages I had learnt recently.

On arrival at the house I was greeted first by their dog – breed unknown but around the size of a small bear, and then Katti, Gideon's wife. Ushered inside (shoes left by the door) I was soon sitting down to my first Hungarian meal. As I had been joking for weeks previously, it was a version of goulash – in this instance chicken and very tasty it was too. Katti is now listed amongst my own private good cooks guide. Any invites to a meal there will be taken seriously.

By trade Gideon is a wood turner and the evidence of his work could be seen around the house from the bannisters to the lamp stands. Plants were much in evidence. Hungarians, aware of some of the drabness outside their homes (pollution is a major problem in Budapest) take great pride in their interiors. For some reason I was surprised to see a colour TV and even more so when we flicked on to watch Sky and Superchannel.

My first trip into Budapest proper was the following day with Lewellyne and Jeff. We travelled

IONS NGARY

first through the Pestensebet district where I would be living and working. Budapest had been badly damaged during the war, and as with the majority of the districts in the city, flats soared up into the sky. For the two million people of Budapest (around a fifth of the total population) to live in a house is not the norm.

We travelled by bus and then tram into the centre. Along with the trolleybus and metro they make up a frequent service which crisscrosses the city. A monthly pass costs the equivalent of £7.00 and the longest I have ever waited is ten minutes (that was on a Sunday). They are never empty.

The tramline follows a route parallel to the River Danube (Duna), it gives a spectacular sight of Buda across the water with its monuments, castle and churches. At night it is even more so. Whoever is responsible for illuminations has done an impressive job.

But alongside the immediate grandeur and trappings of a European city can be seen less comforting sights. A man digging amongst the rubbish, beggars at the metro station, street traders offering you everything from a posy of flowers to chair covers. The majority of Hungarians cannot possibly afford the luxury goods in the shops. The demise of the socialist state may have brought new freedoms but it also brought unemployment, a previously unknown concept.

In a population of ten million, nearly one million are now unemployed. Many others live below the poverty line. School salaries barely cover the rent. How people are then meant to eat and pay bills I don't know. With unemployment on the increase one teacher expressed a real concern for her teenage children. A college education would help, but without a scholar-

ship it will not now be possible.

Hungary does not have the obvious glaring poverty of Zaire, but the transition from socialist to capitalist is not going to be easy and along the way there will be many casualties. ■

RFP 100.7

Fréquence Protestante is a radio station which shares the frequency of 100.7 in Paris with Radio Notre-Dame.

NO, THEY DON'T broadcast simultaneously in a wild attempt to drown one another out! reported Robert Atkins, who is based at Versailles.

'Fréquence Protestante is on between 12 midday and 2.30 in the afternoon every day as well as between 9 in the evening and 5 in the morning from Monday to Saturday. There are reputed to be 100,000 daily listeners.'

One of the English pastors in Paris invited Robert to go along and watch the recording of a Bible based programme in the studios just off the Champs-Élysées, saying it was a good game.

'I ended up taking part in the programme. It was a good game, but hopefully more than that.'

Several months later, Robert reflected on his fourth appearance on the programme.

'All went well except that I managed to prepare the wrong chapters; somebody was playing an electric drill next door; my colleagues changed the date of the programme without telling me and I received an urgent call at nine in the morning asking me to get to the studios sooner than possible!

'All three participants were English speaking. It was a strange experience preparing and doing the programme in French. I just wonder what the French listeners of Fréquence Protestante make of all these English people pontificating.

'I was encouraged to receive a letter of appreciation from a listener. She spoke of how suitable our one o'clock in the morning repeat is for insomniacs and was so pleased with our evocation of exotic English Christmas customs that she almost had me racing for the pile of signed photographs which I am now obliged to keep by me. Closer examination of the letter reveals that this lady, too, is English. All very strange.' ■



QUICK QUIZ

- 1 Who is your Link-Up missionary?
- 2 Give three facts about each of the following:
 - your Link-Up missionary;
 - the country where they work;
 - the church they work with.
- 3 What difficulties do the people in that country face?
- 4 What matters do they celebrate?
- 5 What has your church learnt so far from Link-Up?

Can you answer them all? Could your church answer them? If not it may be time to look at this question: 'When did your church or Link-Up group last have a World Mission Event?'

You can have a World Mission event as often as you like. You do not have to wait for BMS at Didcot to give the go ahead. World Mission Events can be large or small but they are always about exploring mission. If the above gives your church problems why not give a mid-week meeting over to world mission.

You could try using the above quiz. Take along BMS materials — *Missionary Heralds, Look*, fact files. Have copies of missionary prayer/news-letters. Let everyone work together to find answers. Share what has been learnt. At the end of the meeting note the further questions. Plan another meeting to tackle them — *this is Mission Education*.

And, finally, do you know who your Link-Up Group contact person is? Do you know what their responsibilities are? Do you know that they send you copies of Missionary Link-Up prayer letters? They have a responsible job. They need support and encouragement.

Have you thought of talking to them about having a Link-Up group mission event? This is Mission Education also. ■

Upoto Baptist Church



Greetings – from Upoto

May we in Zaire (Upoto) be permitted, as members of one family, to send our love and Christian greetings to you our brothers and sisters in the Baptist churches of Great Britain, with whom we are one in Jesus Christ.

This second centenary is the blessing of Christ, through whom we hope our descendents will celebrate a third event of the same kind, with even joyful celebration.

Our love and Christian greetings are in our song, *Two Hundred Years Now*,* and we ask that our message in it might not be limited in this letter or to those who read this letter, but that you might pass on our song throughout the missions saying, 'We are one in Christ.'

At this second centenary may Jesus Christ, the great chief of BMS, be praised because of His doing.

With love from
Maurice Mondengo
'English Club,
Upoto Institute.'

PS. Do not forget to pray for us and for our country.

*Two Hundred Years Now

*Glory to the Lord for ever,
Glory to the Lord for His
doing*

*Two hundred years now for
the BMS*

*Making known Jesus
everywhere in the world
Alleluia.*

*For Jesus and with Jesus
BMS's work is everywhere
today.*

*Afric'America, Europe,
Asia, Oceania –
everywhere,
We are one in Jesus.*

*For the Gospel,
many missionaries
have lost their lives making
known Jesus
Afric' etc.*

*In Jesus' name,
We wish that
BMS may be given Holy
Spirit.
Afric' etc.*

Ireland Celebrates

The village Baptist Church at Brannockstown, Kildare, Co Kildare in the Irish Republic broadcast its morning service on 17 May on RTE Radio 1.

The BiCentenary featured prominently in the service by way of readings, hymns and prayers along with a short dramatic snapshot of William Carey's faithful service.

The minister of the church, Robert Dunlop, preached on Carey's famous saying: 'Expect great things from God, Attempt great things for God.' The church's young musicians, 'Hla Pe,' named after a Karen Baptist worker in Burma, led the praise.

Baptists in the Republic of Ireland are a tiny minority with only twelve churches

and less than 500 members. It is unusual for them to have an opportunity to broadcast nationwide.



Brannockstown Baptist Church

Inspired by Courage

In February, 75 women from the Northern Association met for their annual conference in Saltburn, Cleveland. Featuring the BMS BiCentenary, the conference heard from Freda Kennedy (Zaire) and Suzanne Roberts (Bangladesh) speaking on the theme, 'Expect great things from God; Attempt great things for God.'

Conference Secretary, Margaret Barnett, said, 'As the weekend unfolded we were all very much aware of the situation both in Zaire and Bangladesh. It is so easy for us to get to our places of worship but Christians in other parts of the world have to walk and cycle for miles, but they are never deterred.'

'We have a wonderful freedom in Christ Jesus; we are able to preach without hindrance. In many countries, when men and women dedicate their lives to Christ, they are disowned by their families and friends. They know what it's like to stand alone. By knowing that brothers and sisters in this country are praying for them, they are helped to stand firm in the Lord.'

'William Carey was courageous and, along with his wife, he went forth in the power of the Lord. When God speaks, do we go forth in His name? We were truly blest by the ministry of Freda and Suzanne and for this we thank God.'

BiCentenary Display Material

To help churches celebrate the BiCentenary, we are able to offer material for a table-top display.

This consists of five panels – which will need display stands, not supplied – requiring table-top space of twelve feet by three feet.

These are available now and can be borrowed either from your local BMS Area Representatives or directly from the BMS at Didcot.



BMS Display Panels



Selah group from Brazil

Greetings — from Brazil

Many will remember the SELAH group who came to Britain in 1990. They write:

A long time has passed since we were with you. However even if several years pass it will be difficult for us to forget that brief period when we were together. We praise God for the privilege of having known you fellow believers, pastors, deacons and even if we had very little time to be together the love which we have for you continues to be very real.

We recall with nostalgia the very pleasant stay that we had in Histon, Luton, London and many other places in England, Wales and Scotland whose sights and sounds it will be difficult to remove from our memory.

Here, although we have passed through a time of great struggles and testing from the Lord, we are now able to rejoice in the victories achieved in the name of Jesus. The SELAH group is going well and we feel that the work we are doing has God's approval. It is difficult and tiring work. But it is also gratifying to see the results and to feel God's hand upon us, comforting and strengthening us.

The heart of the work of SELAH group here in Campo Grande is what we call the 'school's work'. Our Lord God has opened doors for us in such a way in this work that the very organisation which controls municipal schools — the Secretariat of Education — has invited us to continue with this work. What beforehand was done in a clandestine way is now done with the authorisation of the government itself! May the name of the Lord be praised! *Carte blanche* was given to us to carry out in the schools the work which we wish to do.

This work is done during the evening shift of the schools because that is the one which has the greatest levels of prostitution, homosexuality and drug addiction.

After leaving our normal work we go to the store where we keep our equipment, load up our pick-up and we head for the school.

We begin with a type of show where the main star is Jesus. And glory to God it is well received and it is a pleasure to see people, still adolescents, some who are drug addicts, constrained by the presence of God.

It is something fantastic, marvellous, to see and hear such people singing, 'I belong to Jesus . . .'. The Gospel is being preached to this generation that so needs Jesus in their lives.

By means of a different method, through Rock Gospel, young people of this city have heard of Jesus.

We have also done shows and revival work in some churches but the priority is to speak about Jesus to the students. We praise God for the victories that have been achieved!

Local Radio

Mark Rudall has been writing about George Grenfell and his script has been accepted by Radio Oxford. It is to be serialised over a period of five weeks starting in July.

A series of four programmes is also being prepared by Radio Oxford on the life and work of William Carey. This will be broadcast in October to coincide with the BiCentenary. These programmes are being made available for use on other radio stations.

More Material

This time from the Hull Group who have prepared a church magazine supplement to commemorate the BMS BiCentenary. They will produce and despatch to any church material for six issues. Their charge is £10 to cover costs. Any balance will go to the Fund for the Future. It is an eight-page insert about missionary matters past, present and future.

As previously publicised in the *Herald* Roland Gibbins will be walking from the Humber Bridge to Didcot from 20 June to 5 July. He

is proposing to dress as William Ward, one of the Serampore Trio, for each evening stop.

Linked with this he has written a script on the lines of 'This is your life'. It features Ward who left Hull to join William Carey in 1799. It is an exciting story of how the editor of the *Hull Advertiser* went to India as a printer. The first performance was given in Cottingham Road Baptist Church, Hull, in March.

The script is available for churches to perform. All that is asked for is a donation of £5 to cover costs and that offerings taken at performances be given to the BMS Fund for the Future.

For copies of the script and to order the magazine insert please write to Roland E F Gibbins, 132 Well Lane, Willerby, North Humberside HU10 6HS.

Great Things

Great Things is a musical produced by Eastleigh Baptist Church especially for the BMS BiCentenary.

The script, written by Joy Simmons, traces Carey's story from boyhood to the end of his life. George Bexon's music is well within the reach of most churches and very singable.

Scripts are available from the BMS Promotion Department price £3. Eastleigh Baptist is also producing a cassette recording of the musical.

Alun Smith who played Carey in the Eastleigh production



CALL TO PRAYER

14-20 JUNE

India: CBCNI Ministries

The Baptist Church of Mizoram has a variety of Church ministries – through its printing press, Sunday School work, youth programme, schools and the General Hospital with Community Health Outreach. The Zoram Baptist Mission is also sending out well over 200 missionaries to other parts of India and Asia.

In Bengal, long-standing disputes are slowly being settled, and the BBU is gradually regaining confidence through the witness of its churches. In west Dinajpur there are many virile churches and congregations – in the local Bengali and Santal villages of the area.

The Baptist Union of North India sustains a number of schools at a very good level – their reputation is significant particularly in Delhi.

21-27 JUNE

Home Assignment

A holiday, relaxation and recreation are an essential part of a missionary's Home Assignment. However, it is also an opportunity to renew contact with the sending home and link churches. These contacts are meant to be for mutual strengthening, learning and support. Depending on their time in this country, there are also opportunities for extra training or the updating of professional qualifications.

Let's remember those missionaries at present in the UK praying as they visit their link churches, share in worship and speak of their work overseas.

28 JUNE-4 JULY

Thailand

Only one per cent of Thailand's 16 million population are Christians, however the opportunities for witness among the Thais and also among numerous tribal groups are unlimited. In some of the Hill areas of the north, there is evidence that the Church is growing in an exciting way. There is an urgent need to train leaders in most areas of the Church's work.

Udon Thani in the north-east of Thailand is the Headquarters of the 13th Pakh leadership. This is where Geoff and Chris Bland are involved in pastoral care and leadership training.

Jacqui Wells while continuing to study Karen is now fully involved in a ministry among Karen women and coordinating women's work in the north west of Thailand.

5-11 JULY

Angola

The Church has a vital part to play in the reconstruction of Angola now that the long dark days of the civil war have come to an end. Its caring work for those affected by the war and the poverty which accompanied it will continue.

The Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola (IEBA) is engaged in medical work and health education. Over the past few years IEBA has rightly gained a reputation for competence and care through the work of its clinics. Government hospitals often refer patients to IEBA clinics because they are able to do laboratory tests more quickly and efficiently.

At the moment there are no BMS workers in Angola, but IEBA has asked us to look for a doctor to work in community health in the north of the country.

12-28 JULY

Bangladesh: Church Work

Last year Bangladesh went through much trauma. The elections following the fall of President Ershad's government were accompanied by much tension across the country. A cyclone also hit the country in May 1991 when several hundred thousand lives were lost.

In December a two-day discussion took place between representatives of the BMS and of the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha to determine something of our challenge together in partnership for the future.

We pray for the leaders of the BBS – Mr M S. Adhikari (President), Rev James Roy (General Secretary) and Mr David H Baroi (Finance Secretary), and for BMS missionary, Christine Preston who has links with the Christian Medical Association of Bangladesh. She is the Secretary for Missionary Affairs and continues to act as hostess for those who turn to the BMS for accommodation in Dhaka.

19-25 JULY

Brazil: Ceara and Rio Grande do Norte

The coastal sections are green and the lovely beaches make them popular tourist areas. The interior of the states are arid and represent some of the poorest areas in Brazil.

Infant mortality rates are high. Peasant agriculture is subsistence and dependent on the fickle rain. This stands in stark contrast to the irrigated and highly productive farms belonging to large land owners. Although there was some rain in Trapiá during March and early April this year, Mike and Daveen Wilson who are involved in a rural development project there, report that they have now

stopped and crops planted at that time are beginning to shrivel and die.

Many of the poor make their way to Fortaleza or Natal to swell the ever growing shanty towns. There is a Baptist hospital in Fortaleza. One of its projects is a pre/post natal care programme in which Mary Parsons is involved. Mary also makes the four hour trip to Trapiá each month to help in a programme of health education.

In Natal, Margaret Swires, based at the Cidade Satélite Baptist Church situated on a large government housing estate, is doing a mixture of evangelistic, pastoral and social work.

26 JULY- 1 AUGUST

Sri Lanka

The country continues to bear the stress of civil war although the government seeks to contain the remaining disturbing factions. Mostly the troubles are confined to the north and the east – although sometimes the unexpected and often devastating stray incident brings a salutary reminder to other parts of the country – as in Colombo last year. Christians are often the bridge to better understanding across cultural barriers as each community has within it a witnessing group of Christians.

George and Betsy Lee are looking after a group of churches based at Hendala. They write about the showing of the *Jesus* film. 'Most of the crowd of several hundred watched in hushed silence, to the amazement of our church members. Over 50 asked for correspondence courses and a good number are continuing with them.'

2-8 AUGUST

Zaire: Lower River

The Lower River Region of the CBFZ lies in a land of rolling, grassy hills.

Here, scattered through many small villages and a few towns, are some 20,000 church members, in 63 parishes grouped into six districts. The membership has grown in recent years and several new parishes have been established. At Songololo a new parish has grown from less than 100 members to over 800 in only three years. There are encouraging signs of spiritual growth, with an increasing desire to learn more about the faith and a greater number of young people becoming involved in church life.

All but one of our missionaries, Gwen Hunter, were evacuated from this region last September. Dr Stephen Green has now returned to IME hospital to complete his AIDS research and Hugh Kennedy returned for one month to finalise his work. Pat Woolhouse has just gone back to CECO to resume her work as Assistant Head and teacher at the Secondary School. They and all the church leaders continue to need our prayer support.

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

ARRIVALS (June)

Sheila Loader from Nepal
Jane Andrews from Nepal
Margaret Swires from Brazil
David and Jean Perry from Brazil
Andrew Tullis (volunteer) from Nicaragua

DEPARTURES (June)

Joy Knapman to Sri Lanka via India
Steve Seymour to Zaire
Dannie and Margaret Calder to Zaire
Allison Trim (volunteer) to Nepal
David and Sue Jackson to Brazil
Richard Smith to Zaire

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LEGACIES

Eva A Willis	500.00
Mrs Muriel C Kirby	500.00
Revd S E H Terrell	2,000.00
Miss E M Mills	500.00
Annie Rawlinson	73.74
H Rhodes	1,906.94
Mrs Joyce Mary Burt	500.00
Elsie Lily Perkins	469.32
F E Mills	18.00
Annie Florence Norgate	30.87
Mr S N Bond	54,000.00
Miss Elsie Ward	1,725.00
Florence Amy Annie Gallop	1,030.29
Mr J J Evans	2,000.00
Mrs Frances Ellen Mills	2,000.00
Elizabeth Horne	7,217.76
Miss Nellie F B Leitch	100.00

GENERAL WORK

Carmarthen: £20.00; Charities Aid: £54.15; Aberdeen: £20.00; Stanmore: £21.00; Cardiff: £50.00; York: £1,000.00; Bristol: £6.50; Charities Trust: £9.37; Wales: £5.00; Durham: £40.00; via Nationwide Anglia: £200.00; Fife: £63.00; Fleetwood: £10.00; Staffs: £10.00; Old Aberdeen: £45.00.

THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY GENERAL COMMITTEE 1992-1993

List of elected members of General Committee by Association Area

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SCOTLAND

Dr P Lawrie, Dunfermline; Mr S Little, Ellon; Revd N B McVicar, Sanquhar, Revd G Mitchell, BA, BD, Edinburgh; Miss A Purves, Edinburgh; Mrs J Robinson, Hamilton; Mrs R McLachlan, Currie.

*Indicates election by co-optation.

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