

HERALD

J U N E 9 3

KAREN
CHRISTIANS
FROM
BURMA FACE
GENOCIDE

**JUSTICE
AND PEACE**

NEPAL, WHO
WAS TO
BLAME?

NEWS

**CRYING
WITH THE
POOR IN EL-
SALVADOR**



PLUS DOUBLE TAKE ACTION PULL OUT

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Cover illustration reflecting justice and peace by Sarah Prentice

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GENERAL SECRETARY Revd Reg Harvey **OVERSEAS SECRETARY** Revd Angus MacNeill
EDITOR Revd David Pountain **DESIGN** Anthony Viney

Enquiries about service overseas to: **PERSONNEL SECRETARY** Janet Claxton

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A question of truth and justice in Nepal.

WHO WAS TO BLAME?

“Was it them or was it me?” asks Ian Smith, BMS doctor in Nepal.

THE FIRST

A phone call to the District Public Health Office, where I'm working.

“Please will you go down and see a man who claims to be on TB treatment from Amp Pipal hospital but doesn't have his treatment card.”

Ten minutes walk later I'm ushered into the small doctors' room to find the two hospital doctors sitting on either side of the desk, with an obviously sick, old man sitting on a stool a few feet away, and a policeman standing behind him.

I'm a bit slow on the uptake and it is only after a series of confused questions and answers that I grasp the significance of the policeman. The sick man is in custody and has been brought from the police cells. He's breathless and blue and gives a rather inconsistent story of treatment for TB. He also claims to be mentally ill.

I examine him further and discover that he is in heart failure and urgently in need of treatment. I suggest that the hospital staff do a chest X-ray and start him on treatment and tell them that I don't think he has TB. He doesn't appear to be mentally ill either but may be confused due to lack of oxygen because of the heart failure. I return to my office.

THE SECOND

It is 5.30 pm and I'm walking down the old bazaar in Gorkha town. Work is over and it is a pleasant early

This edition of the *Herald* is devoted to issues of justice and peace. Now there's a topic to generate heated discussion and a host of letters complaining that this is not the 'gospel' a missionary society should be concerned with.

And yet what is the gospel about if not *liberation*? “Jesus was concerned with setting people free, giving them a chance to be more human, resisting whatever made men less than men,” writes a bishop of the Church of North India.

“In the long run, liberation from various kinds of oppression was to be an integral part of his

HERALD

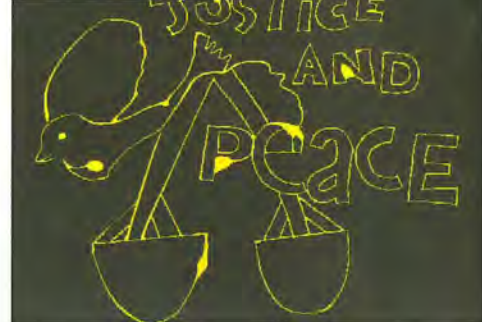
mission and the church which in many countries occupies so different a position from its founder has opportunities to contribute to the liberating process in society, from sufferings and privation of masses.

“If the Church, the assembly of God's people, turns a blind eye to injustices around it, the world will turn a deaf ear to everything else the Church may try to say or do.”

The BMS has a tradition of caring for justice and peace and a history of proclaiming liberation from sin which goes right back to Carey himself. He opposed the trade in sugar which relied so much on the labour of slaves, and when he campaigned for an end to the burning of widows in India.

Then there was Knibb campaigning for the end to slavery in Jamaica. In this century, in the early 1960s, BMS personnel were involved in lobbying Parliament at the height of the Angolan tragedy. And in later years, BMS workers have stood with El Salvadoran Christians in the struggle for peace and justice there.

Whenever Christians take seriously the call of Jesus to follow him they quickly learn that this means shouldering a cross.



winter evening. The shops will be open for another couple of hours yet and, as the light begins to fade, some are lit by kerosene pressure lamps because the electricity won't be on for another couple of hours yet.

Radio Nepal echoes out of rooms on either side of the narrow street. It's the only radio station in the country so it's possible to walk the length of the bazaar listening to the same song.

Down at the bottom of the street, where the road turns sharp left at the small group of temples and where the Tibetans from the north sit in small groups on the open land, eating tsampa (roasted wheat flour) and drinking salt tea, a crowd has gathered.

In the darkening gloom it is possible to make out a few, blue uniformed figures. I walk through the crowd and find the District Superintendent of Police talking to a local shopkeeper, while nearby our local councillor is signing an official looking piece of paper.

It is obviously not a serious matter. No one seems particularly

concerned. There's no tension, no sense of urgency or anger and people are chatting quietly. The crowd begins to drift away, as do the police, and as we walk away together I ask the councillor what the problem was. Apparently a man was found dead between two of the temples, from natural causes, it was thought. But the police had taken the body for a post mortem anyway.

THE THIRD

A day off, a week or so before Christmas and we're having a lazy day about the house. People drop in for a cup of tea and a chat and we sit round the table in the tiny kitchen. There's a weak, wintry sun and it is cool outside, but the kitchen's warm enough.

Krishna Maya from Thalajung has arrived. We haven't seen her for ages, not since we moved from Amp Pipal six months ago. She's an active member of her community, involved in supervising literacy groups, running a women's craft co-operative, and looking after a

family on her own. Her husband died of cancer a few years ago. She is also a Christian and part of a small fellowship of believers in her village.

Bhom Bahadur, another of the new Christians there, has had a tragedy; his father died and he and his family refused to do the Hindu funeral rites. As a result, the village is against them and they think they may have to leave the area - not easy for low caste people with little land.

So what's so remarkable about these three scenarios?

Individually, nothing, and it wasn't until our conversation with Krishna Maya that we realised the significance of them. The central character, the old man, is one and the same throughout. He was the man I examined. He died a destitute and he was the father of the Christian family in Thalajung.

As we talked with Krishna Maya, a sense of deep hurt and injustice began to grow. The full story is still only just beginning to come out, but it appears that the old man was arrested on a charge of theft. Only a few weeks earlier he had been admitted to Amp Pipal hospital and treated for mental illness and discharged a few days later, much improved. The charge was groundless, but because of an incident in the past and because he had been acting strangely, the police took him away.

In police custody he was allegedly beaten and tortured and implicated several other people from Thalajung as involved in theft. These too were arrested and beaten.

At some stage his health began to deteriorate and he was taken to hospital. However, because he was a prisoner and because they didn't believe his story of mental illness or TB treatment, they didn't bother to treat him as I suggested.

WHO WAS TO BLAME?



A few days later, as his condition worsened, the police released him from custody, probably to avoid the embarrassment of having a prisoner die in custody. Desperately ill, confused and helpless, he made his way up to the temples in the town. Someone gave him a mat to lie on. Three days later, he died.

Who was to blame? The person in Thalajung who made the intitial baseless accusation against him? The hospital staff for refusing to take him seriously and ignoring his condition? The police for beating him and then callously turning him onto the streets to die? The local people for leaving him for three days to die on the streets? Or us...?

I should have followed up more carefully to check on his condition. And Sally had seen him on the day he died, but had thought he was sleeping off a binge and didn't realise he was sick. We felt a sense of guilt, and a sense of outrage that nobody seemed to care, and a sense of frustration at our inability to do

anything about it. How can we, as outsiders and guests of a foreign country, confront such injustice? Who to turn to for advice?

I spoke to our landlord, an active opposition politician and social worker. We weren't the only ones to be concerned. Several human rights organisations in Kathmandu, including Amnesty International, had been informed, and a team of investigators had come out to look into the case. He had also approached the District Superintendent of Police and the Chief District Officer.

Whilst there was little forthcoming from the government officials, the report from the investigators was published in independent newspapers. It won't bring to life a man who died unnecessarily and unjustly, nor

will it make things any easier for a poor family which, on the top of their own grief, now face rejection and ostracism in their village. But it might prevent this sort of thing from happening again.

This is not a story with a happy ending. But through it we've perhaps come to see a little of the pain and anguish that the prophets of old must have felt as with God's heart and mind they looked on the injustice and faithlessness of his people.

So justice is driven back and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets. Isaiah 59.14

Without God, such an analysis of the human situation may simply lead to cynicism and bitterness, but with God there is still a great sense of hope, joy and expectancy.

Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. Isaiah 60.1

Ian and Sally Smith have worked in Nepal since 1984.



View of Amp Pipal hospital Nepal (left) and (below) a crowded Nepali market.





by Debbie Lovell

British newspapers have recently reported some of the findings of the Truth Commission which was set-up in El Salvador to investigate the human rights abuses which occurred during the civil war. Can anything good come out of the terrible atrocities which took place during the war, and the deaths of 75,000 people?

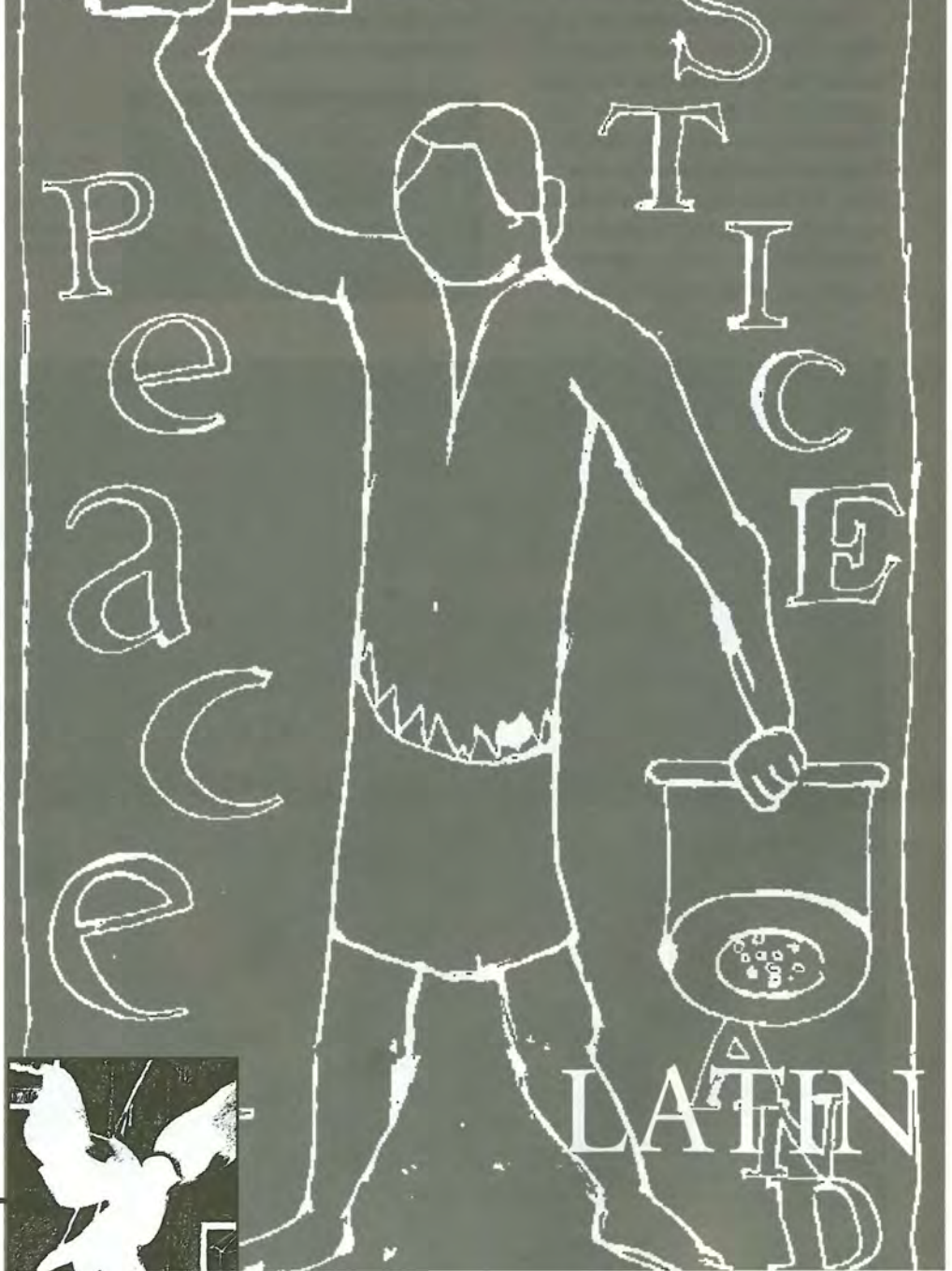
I visited El Salvador last summer, as a member of the 28:19 Action Team. On my first afternoon in the country I stood at the top of a hill looking down on the land and admired the breathtaking view. Then I discovered that, during the war, death-squads took men up this hill, tied their thumbs behind their backs with barbed wire, and made them walk over the edge to their graves. The only crime of those murdered was that they spoke up for the oppressed. The place is known as "Devil's Gate". People have made a haven of beauty into a place of murder.

The next day, in contrast, I met a man who had turned a place of murder into a haven of beauty. On the 16 November, 1989, six Jesuit priests were murdered at the Catholic university, along with their housekeeper and daughter.

I went to visit the place where they had been killed and I met the man whose wife and daughter were among the dead. This man is the gardener at the university and he has planted a circle of eight red rose-bushes, with two yellow bushes in the centre, in the spot where the eight corpses lay. He spoke to me about his faith in God, with no trace of bitterness about what had happened. He has made something beautiful out of

THERE IS

HOPE





something horrific. God can make something beautiful out of our lives, if we allow him to.

I wrote two poems on the day I met the gardener. They are a reminder that although people can destroy what is good, God is always there waiting to bring the light of day even into the darkest of nights. There is always hope. Here is one of them.

Devil's Gate

This is how they made the pleasant land desolate. *Zechariah 7:14*

*A wonderful Eden -
a breath-taking view.
Beauty unrivalled,
skies that are blue.
It seems such a safe place,
a haven of rest.
You'd think all who go there
would be truly blessed.*

*But as you go nearer
alarm bells start ringing.
This place is too quiet -
no laughing or singing.
This hill bears a cross.
All is not well.
It's the Place of the Skull
and death is the smell.*

*Man's ruined the splendour
of this Eden of old.
The sky has gone dark
and the sun has grown cold.
Men go over the cliff
when the death-squad
shouts, "Walk!"
Is death the end?*

On October 16, 1992, the impoverished majorities of Guatemala and all of Latin America received with jubilation the news that Rigoberta Menchu Tum, a young Guatemalan woman, had received the Nobel Peace Prize. Rigoberta, Maya Quiché peasant leader, has spent the last decade in exile because of her commitment to justice. She is the defender of the rights of indigenous peoples and incarnates the hope and courage of her people.

My Land

*Mother earth, Mother land, here
rest the bones and memories
of my ancestors -
on your back they buried
grandparents, grandchildren,
children.*

*Here are heaped bones upon
bones of those who are yours,
the bones of the pretty girls of
this land
fertilised the maize, the yuccas,
the malangas, the chilacyotes,
the ayotes, the guicoyes, and the
guisquiles.*

*Here my bones were formed.
Here they buried my umbilical
cord
and that is why I have stayed here
year after year
generation after generation.
My land, land of my
grandparents,*

*your handfuls of rain,
your transparent rivers,
your free and affectionate air,
your green mountains and
the ardent warmth of your Sun
Made the sacred maize grow and
multiply
and formed the bones of this
grandaughter.*

*My land, mother of my
grandparents,
I would caress your beauty,
contemplate your serenity and
accompany your silence,
I would calm your pain,
weep your tears as you see your
children
dispersed throughout the world-
haggling for a place to stay in
foreign lands
without joy, without peace,
without a mother, without
anything.*

January 1990



AMERICAN POEMS

Jacqui Wells works with the Karen people in Thailand but across the border, 30 miles away in Myanmar (Burma), Karen tribes-people are being massacred.

After the Second World War, when Myanmar gained her independence from Britain, the Karen believed they would gain autonomy and have their own "free state" within her borders.

During the war, many Karen fought alongside British troops to withstand the Japanese advance. As a result they were confident they would gain the right to become self-governing. This would be their "reward" for all the help they had given.

However, this was not to be! But the Karen dream has never died and they have been fighting for a Karen Free State ever since. In fact they have set up their own free state within Myanmar which, of course, is not recognised by the Myanmar government.

I went to work with the BMS in Thailand in 1988 and every year since living there the Myanmar army makes an offensive against the Karen guerrillas. The offensive usually takes place during the dry season - March, April and May.

The Karens continue their fight

for autonomy. The Myanmar, on the other hand, are resolute in their intention to wipe out the Karen. The fighting has been going on for a long time but, because of an enforced news black-out, very little information of this ongoing conflict has reached the Western world.

Last year I was living in Mae Sariang, which is a small market town in the north west of Thailand and approximately 30 miles from the Myanmar border. As the dry season approached we heard reports that the Myanmar Army was going to make an all-out attack on the Karen. Their intention was to take Manerplaw, the headquarters of the Karen Free State and, in so doing, defeat the Karen army. The fighting was so fierce, that we in Mae Sariang could hear the sounds of gunfire and missiles exploding over 30 miles away. The BBC World Service, aware of these fierce attacks, reported news of the battles.

Then the refugees started to flood across the border into Thailand. Something new? No, this happens every year. Last year, however, I went to visit some of the refugees. I will never forget the experience nor will I forget the stories I heard from the Myanmar Karen who had fled their homeland in fear.

In order to save their lives they



had left everything behind. They spoke of villages being razed to the ground; fields, full of crops, being set on fire; valuables looted; cattle killed and young men and women press-ganged into working as coolies for the Myanmar Army.

The coolies, both men and women, were forced to carry mortars and heavy weapons through the mountainous countryside. Some of them were killed when they were unable to carry their heavy loads. The women worked as coolies by day and then they would be gang-raped by the soldiers at night. Some of the coolies were even forced to work as human mine-sweepers. The soldiers would send them on ahead into areas where land-mines had been laid and their task was to find a safe way through the mine-field. Some

WHEN WILL IT ALL END?

Karen mother and child in Thailand



managed to find a safe pathway but others were blown to pieces in the attempt.

I heard the same stories repeatedly so I knew I was hearing the truth. The Karen I met still shook with fear and wept as they told their stories. It was very hard to accept that so many atrocities were being committed in Myanmar which people in the West knew very little about.

If there is a happy ending to this story it is that the Myanmar Army failed in its attempt to capture Manerplaw. It would appear that the Myanmar Army planned to enter Thailand and fire their missiles on Manerplaw from there. The town is easily visible from Thai territory but it is shielded by mountains in Myanmar itself.

However the Thai Government would not allow this. In fact the Thai Government showed great compassion and, as in the past, gave practical help to the Karen refugees.

As I write (in April) the Myanmar Army and the Karen could well be engaged in fierce fighting once again. The question we all ask is: "When will all this injustice come to an end?"

Jacqui Wells worked in Bangladesh from 1975 - 1986, and has worked in Thailand since 1988.



JUSTICE AND PEACE

A report written last September indicated that up to 70,000 Karen hill-tribe Christians in Myanmar (Burma) had been forced by the government to flee their villages since the beginning of the year.

They were made to relocate on arid, barren wasteland in makeshift camps without adequate food or water. The pro-Buddhist military junta, known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) is believed to be responsible for the systematic purge of ethnic minorities and Christianity.

Since 1988, when SLORC seized control, all signs of Christianity have been removed from the countryside. Troops have confiscated mission property and destroyed Christian cemeteries.

Baptist missionary work in Burma began in the 19th century with the arrival of Adoniram Judson from America. He came via India where he had been baptised by William Carey.

Today, the Baptist community is numerically the largest of the Christian communities, divided into two churches.

The Myanmar Baptist Convention has nearly 500,000 members in 3,500 churches throughout the country including large numbers from the Kachin and Karen peoples. The Karen Displaced Persons Settlements along the border in Thailand include large numbers of Baptists whose families have been living in exile since 1948.

The Myanmar Seventh-day Baptist Convention, is a smaller church with 840 members.



An eye-witness report tells how government troops forced entry into a crowded Karen Protestant church in the village of Ey Ey, in the Tavoy district of the delta.

The whole congregation was arrested. They then raped several of the women, set fire to nearby homes and killed 24 villagers when they attempted to resist.

Another report describes the torture of several pastors.

The BMS has agreed to help fund a primary boarding school in Thailand catering for refugees from Myanmar. The school, in the small town of Kamma, north of Manerplaw, is run by the Karen Women's Organisation (KWO).

The KWO, which is part of the Khaw Thoolay Karen Baptist Convention, works with Karen refugees close to the Myanmar border focusing its activities mainly on orphans and widows. It started the boarding school in 1991.

The Thailand Karen Baptist Convention, has been helping the project by donating gifts in kind, like clothing. The BMS is helping by donating £8,000 for the work of the school over a twelve month period. The Society is also hoping to offer a scholarship to a Baptist theological student from Myanmar.

KAREN CHRISTIANS



Our Link-Up missionaries visited us last year. It was really good and we learnt a lot. But they are abroad now for three years. What happens this year and next? Will you send us missionary speakers?

Send you a missionary speaker? No! Being involved in world mission is about finding out what is happening in our world - discovering the needs; hearing what's being done; learning from other countries; sharing our money and skills. A missionary can help in this and that is why Link-Up is so important. But if world mission is as important, as we keep saying it is, we shouldn't just wait until a serving missionary arrives!

Give you help? Yes! Resources are available - fact sheets, maps, ideas for meetings, Bible studies, worship, drama, videos, slides - the list is almost endless. Look in the Resources Catalogue. Use the centre pages of the monthly Missionary Herald (that's what they're there for).

Remember - resources include people. All over the country there are speakers willing to come and speak

at Sunday and mid-week services, willing to help you plan an event as well as take part in it. Gone are the days when you couldn't choose the date of the BMS evening. Now you can have world mission evenings, and mornings and afternoons, when you want and as often as you want!

That all sounds wonderful but how do we get all this help?

If you want a speaker - contact your BMS Representative who will suggest the names of people who are available.

If you want other resources - contact BMS Didcot, or speak to your BMS Representative. If you can't see what you want in the catalogue, write in, or telephone, and see what can be done.

And - don't forget to use the information you get from your Link-Up missionaries. This month you could look through their letters and see the justice and peace issues the church in their country is coping with. Can you help? Do you need to write a letter? Do you need to do some homework? Should this be the theme of your next World Mission event?



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**DOUBLE TAKE
TAKING A SECOND
LOOK AT
THIS MONTH'S
ARTICLES**

JUSTICE AND PEACE

Look up these two words in a dictionary and a Bible concordance. You will find they interchange and overlap with several other words.

Read the articles in this month's **Herald** again, but, where, for example, the word "justice" appears, use one of the other words you have found, and so on. What effect does this have?

GUESTS IN A FOREIGN LAND

Put yourself in Ian Smith's shoes (p.3). Could anything have been done to save the life of the old man?

What problems does he face as a non-national in trying to eradicate and confront injustice?

Do you share his observation that "Without God, such an analysis of the human situation may simply lead to cynicism and bitterness, but with God there is still a great sense of hope, joy, and expectancy"?

POLITICS, WOMEN AND THE CHURCH

(See In View, p.20) The word "politics" comes from the Greek *polites* meaning citizen. What relationship do you think the general administration of the law / government policy has with a) men b) women c) the Church? What relationship should it have with each?

Why do some governments allow the Church to get involved in politics?

NEW FREEDOM, NEW LAWS

For what reasons have "different faiths existed peacefully" in Albania? (p.22)

What does religious freedom mean to you? How do you use this freedom? Do you think your religious freedom differs from that experienced by an Albanian? If so, in what ways?

What laws govern religion in this country?

Do you have any comments on the new Albanian religious laws that have been drawn up?

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

El Salvador, a country where BMS personnel are working, has suffered from the effects of war and human rights abuses in recent times. See "There is hope" (p.6).

Read the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Which



character in the parable do you relate to most?

In this country we nearly always relate to the priest or the Levite. El Salvador's *campesinos* (peasants) relate to the victim. Why do you think this is?

Develop this. If they are the victim, who is the robber?

Double Take

NEARER HOME

Give some examples of injustice in this country? Do you feel strongly about these issues? If you do feel strongly what would you be prepared to do about them?

Transport yourself to one of the countries featured in this month's **Herald**. How do the injustices in your life compare with those of the people there?

D OUBLE TAKE? Double Take is a way of using the **Herald** to consider, more deeply, the theme which is highlighted each month. Whether used privately, within a missionary or house group, or as part of Sunday worship, the hope is that a better understanding of the issues will lead to a change in attitudes, to a commitment to prayer, to involvement in mission and to action

Bible Study

Psalm 13

The Psalms give us a deep insight into a whole spectrum of human emotion. There is nothing we can feel that is outside their scope. All that we feel is reflected there.

Psalm 13 is an example of a cry from the heart; when faced with an enemy the Psalmist cries "How long O Lord? Will you forget me forever?"

DESPONDENCY - VV 1-2

There are four aspects to the Psalmist's despair here:

- a sense of being forgotten by God
- a sense of not being able to 'get through' to God
- inner hurt and grief
- weariness because of the triumph of his enemy.

Can you relate to these feelings? If you are studying this in a group, would you be able to share some time in your life when you felt like this too?

What sort of incidents and circumstances cause us to have these feelings?

What did the Psalmist do when he felt like this? Do you have the same reaction?

For a lot of us reading this magazine the "enemy" won't be a physical presence like an invading army. Instead it may be the harrassment of an individual, a weakness, an illness, a persistent temptation, habit, or part of one's life that is oppressing us. Imagine it really is an invading army though, as the Psalmist's "enemy" might have been.

Imagine you are a Karen at the mercy of the Myanma Army (see p.9) Do you think your feelings, emotions and reactions are any different for having a "real enemy"? Why?

AN APPEAL TO GOD - VV 3-4

The Psalmist's despair is channelled into prayer.

In what ways can prayer make a difference to a desperate situation?

Are there other examples in the Bible, or in your personal experience where the antidote to a very hopeless situation is prayer?

What happened? Did the situation change, or did you change?

What lessons can we draw from this,

- a) about hopeless situations?
- b) about ourselves?
- c) about prayer?

How does the Psalmist address God in verse 3? (You may like to look at different translations). What do the words he uses show about his faith?

What would you say to the Zairian woman Wilma Aitchison has befriended who says "God is not answering my prayers" (see p.15)

A different place, another language, but wherever the Bible is studied God sheds his light on our human situation.

ASSURANCE - VV 5-6

To what characteristics of God does the Psalmist cling on to which enable him to change from despondency to confidence and hope?

Can you find other examples in Scripture or elsewhere where this total hopelessness and restlessness is rendered powerless by prayer and trust? What physical changes happen to the person concerned?

This issue of **The Herald** carries a number of poems. Perhaps there is something in the human spirit that needs to resort to poetry, prose, or prayer at times of great crises and upheaval.

Take time now to write a poem or a prayer, basing your thoughts on something that has been triggered off by some story or comment in this edition. Take thought as to how you end your work - can you relate to the Psalmist's trust and confidence in God, or do you feel differently?




**ACTION
POINTS**

Getting involved in justice and peace in the world is not just a monopoly for vociferous individuals, or those who are a bit politically-inclined. It's a very real and tangible thing for all of us, no matter what our circumstances are. Going shopping is something we all do to a greater or lesser extent. The shops we choose, and the items we buy may just be a matter of convenience for us. But every pound we spend is sending a signal through the market of the world, that we are supporting one company or product in favour of another. Consumer power is very great!

This year's Christian Aid week campaign was part of a two year focus on the theme of fairer trade, encouraging us to use our purchasing power in favour of Third World producers.



So, for example, think twice before you buy the following :

TEA AND COFFEE

There's a new brand of coffee on sale in Waitrose, Safeway, and some Co-ops called *café direct*. But it's not just "another brand" because it carries the "FAIRTRADE MARK" guaranteeing it has been produced under acceptable ethical conditions, and that more of the selling price will be returned to the producers.

Typhoo have repackaged their tea to say that it is caring both for the tea and the tea producers. More products bearing the "FAIRTRADE MARK" will be appearing on the shelves by the end of the year.

The problem is persuading other shops to stock these products.

Tesco's and Sainsbury's have said they are prepared to consider the matter if it is "worth it", or, that enough people will buy the products. If you shop at Tesco's or Sainsbury's tell them what you think!

BEEF

Because of EC Common Agricultural Policy frozen beef from Europe has been arriving in West Africa, and selling at one-quarter the price that it sells in Britain. This has made it impossible for West African herders to send their cattle down to the ports; there is no market left; it is impossible for them to compete, and so they are out of work, out of a livelihood, and their families suffer.

People in the Cameroon where Andy and Jenny Wilson have just started to work for the BMS are one of the groups affected. Do write to your MP and ask for this unfair trading to stop!

Christian Aid produced a postcard, which you, the customer, can fill in and hand to your local supermarket or store. On it you state that you support fair trade and would like to see Third World farmers having decent wages and working conditions.

They are available from **Christian Aid**, P.O. Box 100, London SE1 7RT.

Get onto the mailing list of an agency or organisation like Traidcraft or Amnesty International.

Traidcraft was set up in 1979 to help people in developing countries to work their own way out of poverty.

They now sell a wide range of goods from clothing, jewellery, paper, cards and gifts.
Address: **Traidcraft**, Kingsway, Gateshead, NE11 0NE.

Amnesty International deals with the plight of oppressed people and prisoners of conscience all over the world. There are now 100,000 paid-up members in the U.K., with about 300 local groups. As an individual or part of your local group you can take part in a range of activities and campaigns. You will find your local branch in your telephone directory, but in case of difficulty contact **Amnesty International** British Section, 99 - 119 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RE 071-814-6200



Worship



If you missed out on the booklet 'GOD OF THE FAIR MEASURE Ideas for your Sunday worship' in Christian Aid week (May 16-22) copies can still be obtained free from

Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE1 7R



STAND FIRM

All Stand, O stand firm; stand, O stand firm; stand, O stand firm and see what the Lord can do.

Cantor O my sisters, stand very firm!

All Stand, O stand firm; stand, O stand firm; stand, O stand firm and see what the Lord can do.

Cantor (Other verses ad lib.)

© Iona community
Arrangement:
Wild Goose
Songs

JUSTICE AND PEACE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

organised by the National Liaison Committee of Diocesan Justice and Peace, is to be held at Coventry University July 10 - 11 1993. Called "Partnership with People - the Roots of Peace" the weekend will consist of: (Sat) faith sharing and reflection in groups, a short liturgy, lively social; (Sun) introduction to the issues of poverty and debt, home and abroad, led by Hilary Russell of Church Action on Poverty, and Dr Ian Linden of the Catholic Institute for International Relations. Issue workshops (twelve to choose from) and final closing liturgy. Further details from *Conference Secretary, NLC, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PD.*

BOOKS TO READ

Trade and the Poor
the impact of international trade on developing countries
by John Madeley
(Intermediate Technology Publications, £10.95)

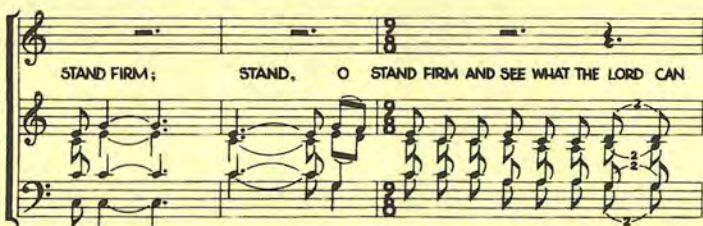
Shopping for a Better World
a Quick and Easy Guide to Socially Responsible Shopping.
(Kogan Page £4.99)

The Global Consumer
Best Buys to help the Third World
by Phil Wells and Mandy Jetter
(Gollancz £5.95)

A Raw Deal
Trade and the World's Poor
by Peter Madden
(Christian Aid £3.99)

STAND FIRM

CAMEROONS





Refugee family in London

God is not answering my prayers

The writer of the next article is a 31 year old woman who came to London just over a year ago from Kinshasa, Zaire, after soldiers looted her house and killed her husband. She escaped with her two youngest children but her three other children are living with relatives in Kinshasa. It is very difficult for her to come to terms with this.

"I have kept contact with her and given her support and encouragement throughout the year," says Wilma Aitchison, "She is now settled at Cricklewood Baptist Church. She is obviously still traumatised by her horrific experience in Zaire."

I think that the trouble in Zaire will only be resolved if the United Nations comes to our aid. This is because of the degree of suffering that has gone on - all we have left is the desire to kill everyone. Zaire is a country of Christians but the government has no mercy for its people or for the Christians. I fled from Zaire because of the unrest there, because of the way those who follow the president, Mobutu, are beating up and killing anyone who is opposing the government. They arrested my husband. They are looting houses, destroying homes of those who do not support Mobutu.

My country can progress if the United Nations help. They should get rid of Mobutu, and take away all the money and wealth which

he has stolen from Zaire. With that money they could settle the debts which Zaire has internationally.

President Mobutu is one of the the richest people in the world. His wealth belongs to Zaire. Zaire is a wealthy nation - full of gold, diamonds, copper, zinc, uranium, and oil. The forests are full of animals of every kind. But the President wants to spoil Zaire and ruin it as a nation.

White people (foreigners) are preventing progress in Zaire as they are strong and they are helping Mobutu. They are also stealing Zaire's wealth. So the wealth of country is going to Mobutu and also a handful of strong foreigners who have made deals with the president.

When I came to London, God helped me. He gave me peace in my heart - but the sorrow and heartache are still there. My relatives in Zaire are still suffering. We see this on the TV and read it in the newspapers.

What is preventing progress? One big obstacle is that God is not listening to the prayers about the suffering in Zaire. Up till now, I see only suffering and illness - and no medication available. God is not helping me. He is not answering my prayers.

The church here in London welcomed me, and they helped me. I see that they are my sisters and brothers in Christ.

I attend English classes, and we often talk about the difficulties in being refugees. We often discuss the problems of the countries where we have come from.

In Zaire I attended a Presbyterian church. Now I attend the Baptist Church at Anson Road in Cricklewood - we are all brothers and sisters in our Saviour Jesus.

Since the rioting and looting in Zaire in September 1991 many Zairians have left to seek refuge in Belgium, France, the UK and elsewhere. In London, former BMS Zaire missionaries, like Wilma Aitchison, have been on hand to interpret at airports and to help the refugees through immigration.

Driven by the Wind

BMS ANNUAL REPORT 1993

DRIVEN BY THE WIND
BMS Annual Report 1993 video presentation.
VHS 12 minutes.

To buy, £6.50 including p&cp.
To hire, £3.00 including p&cp.

CELEBRATION, JOY, THANKSGIVING.
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CHURCH.....

*Please make cheques payable to Baptist Missionary Society

In September 1991, BMS Zaire missionaries had to make a quick decision over whether or not to leave. People in Kinshasa encouraged us to go because the British Embassy categorised missionaries as “non-essential personnel”.

In the bush at Mushie, we needed to know what our Zairian leaders wanted us to do. Hearing Pastor Koli, President of the Baptist Community of the River Zaire (CBFZ), tell us we should leave, affirmed to our spirits by God’s Spirit, we did so. Events in the UK since seem to confirm the rightness of it. Neither did we wish to be a burden on the church at Mushie, staying there without our usual means of support.

After being back in Zaire for just five weeks (December 1992) there were already signs of Zairian impatience with white-skinned people. Half of the occasions when we went to the local market to buy food there were reproaches that we had left. Some asked, quite plainly, “Why don’t you go home?”

We went to a local church and heard a sermon.

“One day, Queen Victoria of England asked a clergyman if one could be sure of going to heaven. He replied that one could not be sure, one could only hope. There was a journalist present who reported it and the story spread throughout the country that a clergyman had said this to the Queen.

“The pastor of another church read it and, horrified, called his church to prayer and fasting and then wrote to the Queen saying it is possible to be sure of going to heaven. He asked her to read John 3,16; Romans 10,9; 1 John 1,9 so that she could have this certainty. The Queen replied and thanked him saying she had read the verses and was now sure that she would go to heaven.

“Our country is ruined and at this moment we are in great danger. What are you doing? You are putting your hope in white people.”

We were sitting by him on the platform and he waved his arm in our direction.

“They’re afraid to die, too,” he said. “What did they all flee? Guns wasn’t it? You want the Belgians to send soldiers, but they fled the bullets, didn’t they? Who brought all these denominations here?”

He gestured again in our direction.

“It was them, wasn’t it?”

“I am so glad that we have a prayer group of young folk in this church who visit the sick, the needy and those troubled by spirits and minister to them healing and deliverance in the name of Jesus.

“But what about you others? Did (President) Mobutu give birth to you?” They laughed. “Did (Prime Minister) Tshisekedi?” There was even more laughter.

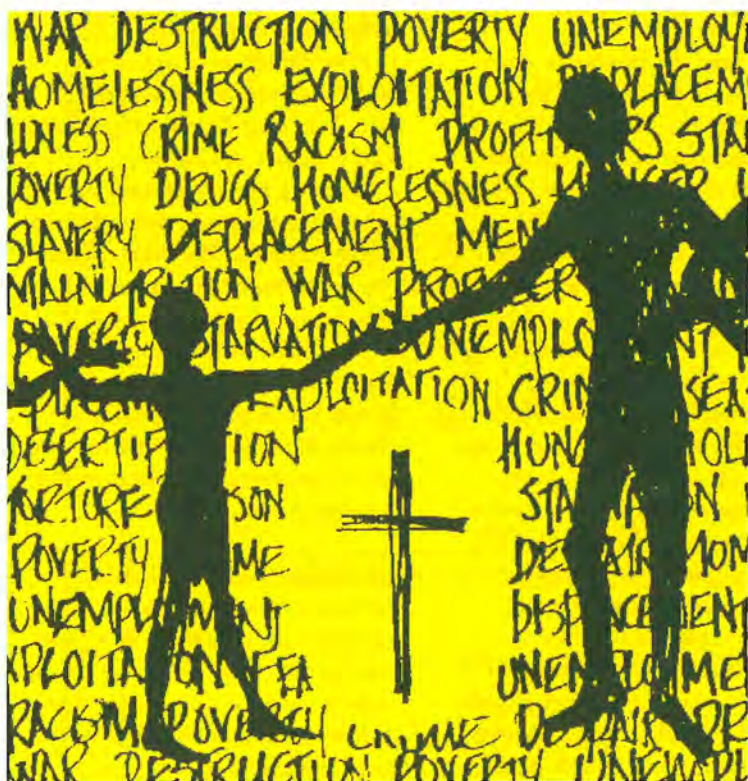
“You’re Christians only in name. You’re still lying, stealing, committing adultery and slander-mongering. When are you going to commit your lives to God? All of you, stand! Now, every one of you, each on his own, all together. Confess your sins to God and ask him to forgive you.”

They all stood and it was wonderful to hear much whispered prayer among them.

The preacher announced the final hymn and asked me to close the service in prayer. I recalled the burden of the sermon in asking the Lord to bring every one of us to new birth in Christ.

Then followed communion. The pastor caused much bemusement as he told us we should forgive one another before coming to the communion table and ask for forgiveness for whatever wrongs we had done to one another. He turned to the deacon on his left, took his hand and asked him to forgive him if he had said anything in his sermon to hurt him. The deacon’s embarrassed smile showed that this had not happened before. Then the pastor turned to his wife and asked her to forgive him anything wrong he had done to her in their home. She too had a self-conscious smile. Then he told us to do likewise.

Afterwards we stayed for fellowship with the pastor over cold drinks, bananas and peanuts. He hedged when I asked him about his reference to our fleeing



the guns. I told him we had left when told to do so by the CBFZ President.

On the way back to the car, another young man asked, "Why don't you go home?"

It had been a strange mixture of a morning's events. The folk had welcomed us very warmly in church, the gospel had been clearly proclaimed and we had the blessing of briefly sharing in ministry and an invitation to preach in a fortnight's time.

It is good to be back in Zaire, albeit in the unaccustomed surroundings at a large International Centre of Evangelism and involved in a ministry of evangelism promotion. Later we should be able to return to the bush to do the same amongst very needy people with a shortage of capable ministers. Only God can tell whether we are "non essential personnel".

On a visit to a nearby market, chatting as I chose mpondu (a green vegetable made from manioc leaf) one of the lady vendors asked, "Were you born in Zaire? This is thanks to you for supporting us here for so long! God bless you!"



NON-ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL?

by John Mellor

John and Rena Mellor have worked in Zaire since 1969.



*top Students at Mbanza Ngungu
middle African leaders of the Baptist
Community of the River Zaire.
bottom John and Rena Mellor*

You will recognise them by their fruits. Matthew 7.20

*Lord,
that's both the challenge
and the fear
for any of your disciples;
we like to think
that our Christian lives
are bearing fruit,
but deep down
we know how inadequate
is our witness;
yet we can rejoice in the fruit
we see in others,
where the work of the church*

CALL TO PRAYER

WEEK 25

June 20 - 26
SRI LANKA Last month, following the assassination of the

President of Sri Lanka, BMS issued a Prayer Call for that country to all Baptist churches in the UK. At the same time, Angus MacNeill wrote to the Baptist Sangamaya "expressing our oneness in Christ which means that when one member of the family suffers, the whole family suffers.... We are specially praying for the churches of the Sangamaya that they will be continuing agents of reconciliation within Sri Lanka," he said.

We remember also our BMS workers in Sri Lanka - George and Betsy Lee, based near to Colombo where George is moderator of several Baptist churches and involved in overseeing the work of some of the pastors.

WEEK 26

June 27 - July 3
ZAIRE: SOUTH EQUATOR

Although news from this part of Zaire is rather scarce - we have no BMS personnel in the region at the moment - we need to uphold the Christians of the region in prayer. Towards the end of last year, the army looted the town of Mbandaka and certain Mennonite missionaries had to be hidden by locals for a week before they could be got out.

There was some good news from Ntondo at about the same time. At a regional church gathering there was a move towards reconciliation in the church. "All those attending the meeting came forward to sign their names to a document attesting to unity."

WEEK 27

July 4 - 10
BRAZIL: CEARA AND RIO GRANDE DO NORTE

This part of Brazil is in the grip of a year long drought. At the end of April, BMS sent a grant of £5000 from the Relief Fund to help the isolated community of Trapia where families are at the point of desperation through hunger. John and Norma Clark, now working in Fortaleza in theological education, and Margaret Swires, doing church work in Natal, are administering the money together with the local community association. Mike and Daveen Wilson, who work in Trapia are on Home Assignment.

We pray for John and Norma as they settle into their new work in the north-east and for Margaret Swires who, at the time of writing, is looking for accommodation in Natal.

WEEK 28

July 11 - 17
BANGLADESH: MEDICAL WORK

In a recent letter, Phil Commons, BMS physiotherapist at both the Leprosy Hospital and Chandraghona General Hospital pointed out the continuing enormous need in the area. "Seventy new leprosy cases indicates the enormous case finding that is still needed. Four

new cases were young boys. We hope that they will not develop severe deformities and will be spared the painful social ostracism - the experience of so many before them."

We remember also Ken Hatano, the Japanese doctor Superintendent of the Leprosy hospital, Dr Mong, the Medical Officer; in the General Hospital, Dr Rheba MacField and the Matron, Mrs Madhabi Baker; and the Nurses' School directed by Mrs Gain.

WEEK 29

July 18 - 24
ZAIRE: BANDUNDU REGION BMS has no personnel in this

region at the moment. This, however, should not lessen our prayer concern. As with the rest of Zaire, there is a great deal of need both physical and spiritual.

John and Rena Mellor, who write elsewhere in this magazine about the difficulties being faced in Zaire at the moment, are hoping to move back to their work at Mushie in the south-east of the region before too long. As we pray for them, so we remember Pastor Eboma, the Regional President based at Bolobo, all the pastors and the ordinary church members as they continue to maintain the work and the witness of the churches.

WEEK 30

July 25-31
THAILAND All of our BMS

workers in Thailand - Jacqui Wells and Chris and Geoff Bland - are on Home Assignment in the UK at the moment. We pray that this may be a time of refreshment and encouragement as they visit the home churches.

Earlier this year a grant of £10,000 was made from the BMS Relief Fund for a health project among tribal people launched by Miss Kimberley Brown. This is providing health education concerning AIDS amongst tribal groups from which many young women are enticed into a life of prostitution in the large cities. BMS has agreed to continue to support the health project.

1993 PRAYER GUIDE UPDATE



THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY
GENERAL COMMITTEE
1993-1994

List of elected members of General Committee by Association Area.

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BERKSHIRE: Mr R J Kingston, Reading; *Revd D V Lewis, MA, BSc, Didcot; Revd C D Russell, Camberley; *Revd J Taylor, Didcot
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NORTHERN: Mrs M Barnett, Consett; Mrs R Hulse, Owton Manor, Hartlepool; **OXFORDSHIRE AND EAST GLOUCESTERSHIRE:** Revd L R Caldecourt, Faringdon; *Mr J Spiller, Abingdon; Revd N J Wood, MA, Oxford
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SUFFOLK: Mr G H Askew, Ipswich; *Mr J Norwood, Sudbury; Mrs I Riches, Bury St Edmunds
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WORCESTERSHIRE: Revd G N Hagen, Evesham
YORKSHIRE: *Mrs H Coulter, York; Mrs B C Charley, BA, Leeds; *Miss B Ford, MA, Bradford; Miss J Parker, Bradford; *Revd A P Taylor, Salterforth; Dr A J Whitley, Wakefield; Mr D H Wilson, FRCS, Leeds

WALES

EAST GLAMORGANSHIRE, E: Revd Dr R H Allaway, Caerphilly; Dr V Morgan, Aberdare; Mrs P Holmwood, Pentrebach
EAST GLAMORGANSHIRE, W: Mrs M Marsh, Bargoed
ANGLESEY: Mrs R Thomas, Holyhead
ARFON: Revd T I Bowen, Llanfairfechan
BRECON: Revd T J Matthews, Brecon
CARMARTHENSHIRE AND CARDIGANSHIRE: Mrs G Davies, Llanelli; Mrs N G Harries, Lampeter; Mr H G Williams, Cardigan
DENBIGH, FLINT AND MERIONETHSHIRE: Revd O L Evans, Wrexham
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GWENT, W: Revd B K Ford, Rogerstone; Miss S Hamer, Blackwood
PEMBROKESHIRE: Revd G T G Rogers, BA, BEd, Trelletert; Vacancy
RADNORSHIRE AND MONTGOMERYSHIRE: Revd S Wood, Knighton
WEST GLAMORGANSHIRE: Miss M S Jones, Swansea; Vacancy
WEST WALES, E: Revd G Fewkes, BA, Swansea, Mr V Richards, Bridgend

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IRELAND

Vacancy

*Indicates election by cooptation



Martin Hewitt (bearded) with seminary students preparing for the evangelistic campaign and (below) out and about in Parque

Fund for the Future



Remember

Parque Marinha, the new estate in Rio Grande in the south of Brazil? Roger Collinson reported, in February's Herald, on the donation of land for a church building. He also asked us to pray for an evangelistic campaign led by students from the seminary in Porto Alegre.

Roger says that 330 homes were visited and eleven Bible studies were initiated in different homes and several people came to faith. "We have also cultivated a very healthy relationship with the local community on which we can build in the future."

Talking about the construc-

tion programme he said that "events have speeded up significantly." He was hoping that the foundations would be laid by the end of April. "This is about three months earlier than expected. Now it is only a question of time and money."

The project, building a chapel, two meeting rooms, a kitchen, creche and toilets, is expected to cost \$40,000. Fund for the Future is providing £10,000 towards this.

"With your help there is a real sense in which we are building both living temples for the Spirit of God and physical temples for the people of God," says Roger.

Your gift to the BMS Fund for the Future can help lay the foundations for a new life for someone in Parque Marinha, Rio Grande.



TAKE PART IN POLITICS

Christian women in Africa have been told to rise above cultural inhibitions to take up the challenge of politics and power in order to make a viable contribution to the governing of their nations.

At a meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya and organised by the World Evangelical Fellowship, the participants, who came from 15 African nations, were told that politics are not "dirty" but are made to appear that way because of the manipulations of those in power.

Christian women "can restore the decency of the game by taking part in the process and bringing in their set of values on God's word," WEF reported.

AFRICA FOCUS

President of the Baptist World Alliance, Knud

Wumpelmann, has named 1993 "the year of Africa."

According to Wendy Ryan, BWA Communications Director, "It was Africa, with her great joys, the rapid growth of the church, and her great sorrow, war famine, disease and exploitation, that was the main focus of concern and prayer of the BWA Executive Committee meeting which met in March."

Knud Wumpelmann said that urgent needs demand this focus. "The hunger crisis in Africa is alarming. Political interest in Africa has diminished after the collapse of Communism as a world power."

He described Africa as "a most needy and forgotten continent until the recent attention on Somalia."

Baptist young people from around the world will be assembling at Harare, Zimbabwe, in August this year to take part in the 12th Baptist Youth Conference.

FIGHTING FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Thirty theological students, of different denominations and from eight theological colleges in north India, have promised to "stand against the inferior position allotted to women within churches."

During a three-day consultation held at Serampore College in February the students pledged to work to restore women in the church to "a position of equality, leadership and decision-making."

The students call the church "a male-dominated organisation" in which women are "totally cut off from the mainstream activities and have been pushed into a position which makes them inferior to man ontologically, existentially, which is less than the normative biblical mandate."

Describing the ordination of women as "theologically tenable", they said "reformation, revival and constructive revolution" are needed in the church and that awareness of this must be created locally.

LONDON MISSION TRAIL

London Baptists were on the move, on Saturday 27 March, as part of the BiCentenary of the Baptist Missionary Society.

Seven churches, which had sent out missionaries, were

open for the day. They featured the work of their own and other "London" missionaries in displays, quizzes and appropriate cuisine!

With sponsorship for the Fund for the Future, energetic Baptists were criss-crossing London in the attempt to visit as many of the churches as possible.

No one reached more than six centres by public transport, but among the predominant travellers by car there were those who got to all seven. An intrepid group of cyclists tackled the South London part, and a lone motorcyclist showed the way to beat the capital's traffic.

With churches as far apart as Southall, Plaistow and Beckenham to be visited, along with Shoreditch, Tooting, Streatham and Crofton Park, the day was also an opportunity to learn of the mission of London Baptists in their own multicultural localities.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK Project 93

Women making a difference in world mission

Take a tour around Brazil with this year's Women's Project. **Off the Beaten Track** visits five missionaries in location. The project helps you to explore their work and how it affects you in your local church. The aim of the project is to raise £30,000 for five vehicles for missionaries in Brazil.



The study booklet includes notes on the tour, discussion starters, action points, Bible Studies, a drama and order of worship.

A full colour poster/map, bookmarks and study booklets are available free of charge from BMS, PO Box 49, Baptist House, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8XA, or phone in your order to Christine Neilson on 0235 - 512077.

A Woman's Touch Project '92

We are most grateful to all those who took part in raising money for 'A Woman's Touch' - the project for 1992. At the time of going to press, a total of £28,302.30 was raised to support mission among women in the world. Thank you all very much! We hope that you enjoy Off the Beaten Track and learn more about the work in Brazil!

NEW PARTNER-SHIP



During the Assembly of the Portuguese Baptist Convention (PBC), held in April, a document of co-operation was signed by the PBC and the BMS. The Rev Daniel Machado (left), PBC President signed on behalf of the Convention and Mr Peter Clark (right), BMS Chairman, signed for the BMS.

VIEWPOINT

LAY TRAINING IN BRAZIL

David Meikle's reply (MH April) to my article "Cloud of Witnesses" (MH December 1992) deserves a counter-reply,

Far from misrepresenting the Brazilian students and seminaries I myself have been misrepresented. Theological students in Brazil work and study hard in order to make their way through seminary. I have had the privilege of "sending" three young people from churches that I have pastored into "full-time" ministerial training or preparation for other church work. I recently took part in the ordination and induction of the first of these and am aware of the real and costly sacrifice made by such students.

There are other points where David has confused the issue, but perhaps this is understandable in view of the short time he has been in Brazil. I will address but three.

His remarks about "structured courses" which he dismisses as inappropriate to the "challenge being faced" are Brazilian programmes of theological education and the result of a great deal of research into the dynamics and methodology of teaching in the Brazilian/South American context. We may see ways of improving them or even changing them, but they reflect a Brazilian approach to education. However, I believe that lay-training should be centred on the local situation of the students and that the structured nature of the course serves to facilitate and not interfere with a "learning through experience" emphasis. The opportunity given for reflection and discussion based on personal experience in the light of God's Word is vital to the success of any lay-training programme. There is much to discover and I propose to build into my MTh dissertation the fruits of further research as I take up the post of Director of Theological Education in the state of Santa Catarina. This work will build on four years

of lay-training experience in Paraná

The course on the Litoral was validated by the Baptist Seminary of Paraná and it was evident that a period of sustained and structured study, three years in all, laid a solid foundation for the good and beneficial habits of reading and reflection which it is hoped will continue well beyond the duration of the course itself. This, under God, will lead to a more adequate presentation of the gospel through the ministry to which our students are called.

The point about the administration of the sacraments is a contentious one. It is true that "caution and wisdom" need to be exercised and we tell our students that their training is not for the ordained ministry but to auxiliar the pastors and those churches without a pastor. The New Testament does not preclude the possibility of lay involvement in cases where no regular pastoral oversight is available, although my own preference is to invite the local evangelist to assist at baptismal as well as communion services.

I conclude where David began with his reference to "generalisations". I have lived in Brazil for 15 years in places as far apart as Porto Velho in the Amazon, Rio Negro in the European south and the teeming city of São Paulo, near to which David lives. It is impossible to generalise about anything concerning Brazil. Brazil's major characteristics are her diversity - geographical, cultural, climatic - and her contrasts and contradictions - socio-economic and political. Each individual's experience can only be compared with another's at the risk of making generalisations. The situation of which one person speaks is unlikely to be representative of every situation. Hence the approach we have encouraged among our students which allows the colours of life's varied experiences to be seen in all their myriad shades and hues.

John Dyer

CHECK OUT

ARRIVALS

George and Betsy Lee
John and Sue Wilson from France
Derek Punchard from Brazil
Joy Knapman from Sri Lanka
Valerie Hamilton from Bangladesh
Rena Mellor from Zaire

DEPARTURES

John and Sue Wilson to France
Steve and Elizabeth Allford to Albania
Owen Clark to Zaire
Mark and Andrea Hotchkin to Guinea Conakry (from Belgium)

VISITS

Derek Rumbol to Angola
John Passmore to the Netherlands and Norway
Peter and Audrey Clark to Portugal
David Martin to Portugal

CONGRATULATIONS!

To Steve and Pam Seymour on the safe arrival of Anna Christine on 14 March 1993, a sister for John Mark.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Legacies

Miss Gladys Mary Shephard	2,335.33
Miss Ellen Collins	3,000.00
M E Turnbull	40.63
Frances Mary Ingram	13,524.53
Mrs M V Sharpe	50.00
Nora Mary Beaven	328.43
Rev Stuart Terrell	1,908.25
Irene Alice Sennitt	3,637.00
M E Turnbull	50.59
George Cox	1,000.00
Joyce Mary Venning & Marjory Joan Laughlin	500.00
J S Findlay's Trust	1,851.30
Miss M Underhill	1,557.73
A E Hill	12,624.56
Miss H F Jewers	8,503.47
Edith C Young	32.50
Miss Hilda Crutchett	2,567.43
Mrs Winifred Lilian Ford	14,724.65
C M Garner	1,000.00
Mrs W Reynolds	50.00
Mrs Margaret K Smith Fleming	758.62
Mrs Alice Lees	2,040.82
Daphne Ann Munson	13,500.00
Miss M Turnbull	50.59
Alfred Rix	25.42
Miss Dorothy Hancock	3,000.00
Miss E M Parker-Gray	1,409.68
Miss M Underhill	1,382.42

General Work

Via BUC: £5.35; via BUC: £25.00; Anon: £10.00; Newport: £3.50; Give as you earn: £58.45; Anon: £40.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £2.00; Nottingham: £25.00; Derby: £75.00; Hull: £5.00; Anon: £25.00; Oxford: £5.00; Give as you earn: £58.45; Stratford-on-Avon: £8.00; Anon 'Fund for the Future': £5.00; Anon 'Fund for the Future': £2.80; Anon 'Fund for the Future': £5.00; Anon 'Fund for the Future': £25.00; Schofield: £5.00; Fund for the Future: £6.00; Anon: £14.22; Gift Aid: £500.00; via bank: £10.00; Postal Orders, Darlington: £74.25; Give as you earn: £58.45; CAF vouchers: £44.50; Anon: £5.00.

A proposed new law now before the Albanian Parliament guarantees religious freedom to all its citizens.

"We have fully reproduced the relevant article of the European Convention on human rights, but this is only true in part, because we have held to our excellent Albanian tradition, which is centuries, even millennia older than the European convention," said Sali Berisha, President of Albania.

"Albania has been, is, and must be a country of religious tolerance par excellence. For centuries different faiths have existed peacefully in the Albanian spirit in complete harmony and respect and this because it is a generous, peaceable, noble and tolerant spirit. So let us, too, always respect one another's religion and convictions, as we have respected them through the centuries, because in this way we respect not only man, but also God, who has always been present in the history of our nation, because only in this way will we deserve his help and blessing. He has defended and will always defend Albania."

The new law has just seven articles, compared with 28 which had originally been proposed by a parliamentary commission. The seven are:

NEW LAW ON RELIGION



1. Albania is declared to be a secular state and all religions are seen as "separate but equal" before the law.

2. "Freedom of thought, conscience and religion" are guaranteed. This freedom includes the right to change one's religion and to practice it freely in public and in private.

3. This freedom is only limited by certain restrictions "which are described by law and are essential in a democratic society." Public security, preservation of public order, health and morality and respect for others' rights are specifically mentioned.

4. A "religious community" is defined as "associations of individuals who belong to the same religion."

5. This names the "three principal religious communities - Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic" stating that their leaders must be Albanian citizens by birth.

6. The religions are required to be "in complete harmony with each other." Anyone violating this harmony will be "answerable before the law."

7. "The law comes into effect immediately" after passage.

NEW LAW ON R



above: The hustle and bustle of Tirana, Albania.

The new proposals have been widely welcomed for their brevity and for guaranteeing freedom and equality for all religions. There is, however, some concern about article five which names the "three principal" religions.

In principle, other religious communities can practice freely and openly but article five could favour the "three" and lead, eventually, to discrimination against others.

It is hoped that the Albanian government will provide assurances that there will not be any discrimination.

M A K I N G W A V E S M A K I N G W A V E S M A K I N G W A V E S

M A K I N G W A V E S

WHEN WE SAY 'OUR FATHER'.....

Anne Wilkinson Hayes, Executive for Social Action of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, reflects on the implications.

Probably most of us say the Lord's Prayer every Sunday, and appreciate the familiar rhythm of phrases and thoughts, without particularly dwelling on them. Recently, however, I have been brought up short on two occasions by people reflecting on what it means to say 'Our Father'.

Bruce Kent at the Assembly this year said 'When we talk about 'Our Father', we're either indulging in rhetorical platitudes or actually talking about the family of the Father, and the family of the Father ... is ... all that exists between us and international chaos'.



Muriel Lester, an amazing Baptist woman who has been almost lost from our history, similarly wrote, 'We should stop praying the Lord's Prayer until we can see that 'Our Father' means we are tied to the same living tether not only with fellow countrymen, but with everybody on this planet ... God is not a nationalist, and war is not an excuse to call a moratorium on the Sermon on the Mount.'

Both these people have staked their lives on a belief that the Christian faith makes radical demands on us, on the simple basis that we are part of God's family. We do not shoot or kill members of our family. We do not let some members starve whilst others feast. We do not stand by and watch while members of our family are beaten up, wrongfully imprisoned or abused.

Yet all around the world this is happening to members of God's family and although we say the words 'Our Father' each Sunday, we ignore the cries of our brothers and sisters in need, and we do not live out our beliefs.

The 'Our Father' led Bruce Kent and Muriel Lester to be pacifists, but one does not need to be an absolute pacifist to recognise the dangers of militarism and the arms trade. All those concerned about world mission should be appalled by the huge diversion of resources from the basics such as food, health and education to fuelling the stockpiling of weapons of destruction, and all should be active in campaigning against this massive distortion of the values of the Kingdom.

If saying the Lord's Prayer means anything to us, we should hesitate before saying 'Our Father' and think again, 'Am I be prepared to fulfil the implications of this phrase?'

RELIGION

Help put us on the map for Rudolf's sake.

The one thing Rudolf has wanted to do all his life is read the Psalms. But the only time he actually held a borrowed Bible in his hands he was so overcome he could barely see them through his tears.

At the moment there are no Baptist churches in his country, Albania. Which is why we're asking for your support to help us establish a European Baptist centre in Tirana through *Fund for the Future* and bring encouragement to those like Rudolf.

Fund for the Future is a scheme which exists to fund exciting new projects and partnerships, providing for mission work globally.

Already it's changing lives. For example, in France we're helping to provide education and retreat facilities for young people. Whilst in Nicaragua we plan to buy motorcycles for regional pastors.

We need to raise £2m by October and with your help we can do it. If you'd like more details about the *Fund for the*

Future ask your Minister, or look out for the leaflets in your church.

It's easy to make a contribution. You can simply fill in the coupon now and send it to the Baptist Missionary Society along with your cheque. Your donation could mean that Rudolf can at last have his own Bible.

It doesn't take much to make a world of difference.



Fund for the Future

Baptist Missionary Society

Yes, I do want to make a world of difference. Please accept my gift payable to the BMS Fund for the Future.

£5 £10 £20 £50 £100
 £250 GiftAid £ _____ Other

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Please detach and send to: BMS Fund for the Future, PO Box 49, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8XA.

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