

M I S S I O N A R Y

HERALD

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GOSPEL
CENTENARY
IN MIZORAM

.....
LANGUAGE AND
CULTURE

NEWS ...

A DAY TRIP

TECHNOLOGY

AND FOLLY

MAKING

WAVES



PLUS DOUBLE TAKE ACTION PULL OUT

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Cover photograph:
Tirana, Albania

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A Policeman's lot is not a happy one

by Jan Kendall

Three years ago, Baptists in Mizoram adopted a target: "to plant 100 churches, and to send out 100 new missionaries before January 1994." This sounds incredible to the ears of any outsiders because this state of North East India is already 75% - 95% Christian, but not unachievable to any Mizo Christian listening, because impregnated within each Mizo heart is a huge desire to live and witness for Jesus.

Vivian Lewis attending the Mizo Gospel Centenary celebrations in January 1994 recalled meeting the wife of the Chief of Police. All the policemen in Mizoram are drafted in from Delhi, and consequently, are Hindus. In conversation with her he asked whether she was enjoying living in Mizoram.

"Why, yes, I love it here" was the reply.

He probed further, "And your family? Do they not miss the bright lights of Delhi?"

"Oh no, Mr Lewis. They love it too. In fact my father-in-law was coming for a short visit, and ended up staying six months. And he wants to come back again!"

Mr Lewis felt he had not quite got to the bottom of this.

"And your husband?" he asked, "Does he like it here?"

The Chief of Police's wife chuckled a little,

"Oh, no, he hates it."

"Why is that?"

"Well, he is a trained detective. And here there is nothing to do, no crime, no robberies, no assaults or murders. In Delhi I would hardly ever see him; he was working all hours. Here he just sits around all day, waiting for the phone to ring. And when it does, it is something quite ➤



A consideration of culture is always important when communicating the gospel message. The good news of God's love in Jesus Christ is for ordinary people, belonging to real situations, speaking and thinking in a particular language, formed by a specific history and tradition, educated to a certain level and used to acting in precise ways.

To communicate the gospel effectively we need to take into account all these factors and more. And these cultural questions are not always for people working in another country. There are enough of them in the UK as any minister who has moved from one part of the country to another will quickly affirm.

An African pastor couldn't understand why his large congregation was not responding to his appeals to "make an offering to God." Then he realised the way they were thinking. In their traditional world view, God was the supreme being and they were used to making an offering to him. "But God doesn't need anything, does he? Our offering then need only be a token of our love and respect." This view had moved over into the thinking of the church. So the pastor began to appeal for an "offering for God's work." They understood and the difference in giving was remarkable.

In this edition, we look at some examples of the way culture helps, or gets in the way, of mission activity. We see how, in one instance, missionaries arrived in the "fulness of time" and of how those who were the "subjects" of missionary activity are now, after only 100 years, missionaries themselves. And we see how BMS workers are coping with language and culture changes, and perhaps "culture shock", but that's another story.

A POLICEMAN'S LOT IS NOT A HAPPY ONE



continued
from page 3

trivial. It's all very tame here, and very, very quiet."

"What, is there no crime at all?" asked Mr Lewis

"Not really," she replied, "And even when there has been something, someone drunk on too much rice beer, or some petty stealing, they come and confess!"

Why is it Christianity has taken off in Mizoram compared to other parts of India, and indeed, the world? It is a question that missiologists have long put their minds to, and here are some of the suggested answers:

Firstly, there is the time factor. The Gospel came to Mizoram at exactly the right time. In their pre-Christian days the Mizos were head-hunters, repeatedly causing trouble for the British with their head-hunting expeditions. It was as a result of one of these that Mr Winchester was killed, and his daughter Mary captured. A major campaign to rescue Mary launched by the Governor General of India in 1871 resulted not only in her rescue, but also in the subjugation of the Mizo people to the British. Mary Winchester was to write in a letter, : "My father's blood was the price paid for you Lushai Christians." Had Lorrain and Savidge come before the Mizos had suffered military defeat, they would not have had the same reception; indeed, they too might have suffered the same fate as Mr Winchester.

Again, important in the time factor, is that the first missionaries came before Bengali was introduced as the official language. At that time Duhlian was a dialect that was getting more popular, and absorbing lesser dialects, and was used in communicating the Gospel to most of the Mizo tribes. It was Duhlian that the first missionaries reduced to writing and used for Scripture translations. Bengali would not have been



Rev Herbert Anderson



Mr Lorrain

understood so easily by the Mizo people. In fact the Gospels and Acts were available in the vernacular before there were any converts, and the availability of Scripture and other Christian literature made literacy worthwhile.

Not many years before the missionaries came, Darphawka, a man from South Mizo had a dream: "And far from beyond the sea, the white men shall come: Obey their words." People who were interviewed in 1975 had no hesitation in saying they became Christians because of Darphawka's dream.

Prior to Christianity being introduced the Mizos were animists, and it is generally believed that animists are more receptive to the Gospel. Animists do not have to be convinced of the existence of the supernatural. In 1913 when BMS India Field Secretary Herbert Anderson visited the Mizo people, he asked many why they had become Christians. One of them, a village elder said, "I became a Christian, because I found that eight annas (half a rupee) worth of mission pills did more good to my sick relatives than 30 rupees spent on sacrifices to devils."

Lorrain and Savidge, too, showed what has been called "anthropological insight" in finding relevant frames of reference with which to speak to the Mizo people. To begin with

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MIZO

they spoke of a Saviour saving from sin, but the Mizos had no sense of sin, and as such, felt no need for a Saviour. Lorrain and Savidge chose a different framework, and then began to preach of "Jesus, Vanquisher of the devil - the One who has bound the 'strong man', and made it possible for his slaves to be free."

The Mizos had lived in constant fear of evil spirits, and spent a good part of their lives appeasing them with animal sacrifices. Prayer took the place of animal sacrifices.

The rapid growth of literacy, which we touched on earlier, was attained through the Mission Schools and Sunday Schools set

up by Lorrain and Savidge. The 1914 Annual Report of the BMS talks of 72 Sunday Schools at work, with an average attendance of 1766. It was recounted that in Mizo Sunday Schools practically all the students became Christians. Secondary education schools were also set up, and until Indian independence in 1947, the entire education of the Mizos was in the hands of the Missions.

By 1941 64% of the population was Christian, so for young people especially it was a disadvantage to be a non-Christian. Non-Christian men could not get wives unless they were prepared to become Christians; and the wives preferred to have Christian husbands - they did not drink beer or beat their wives.

Mizo people were different from the Hindus and Moslems who lived in the plains of India in that there was no class or caste barriers among them; the hold of the Islamic and Hindu religions of the hearts and minds of the people in the rest of India is one of great entrenchment, and consequently these people are not as open and responsive to the Gospel.

All has not gone smoothly for the church in Mizoram; it has had its share of persecution, and backsliding and felt the effects of famine and its 'lunatic fringe'. Today with its third and fourth generation Christians, it must face the task of nominalism and secularisation. But for all that it is looking ahead, to face the future with a great missionary zeal and a heart full of thanks to God for all he has done. ■

A fuller account from Vivian Lewis, and news of Mizo missionaries will be published in the BMS Annual Report, May 1994.

Outside the Baptist Church, Serkawn



Carrying water, Mizoram



RAM



We expect the latest in high technology to be available in British hospitals and ideally it seems right for African hospitals too. But the reality is different, as BMS Doctors Andrea and Mark Hotchkin have discovered in the West African country of Guinea where they are seconded to the Leprosy mission.

The Central Hospital was originally built by the French colonial power in the 1950s, re-equipped by the Chinese Communist aid in the 1970s and is now in the process of being redeveloped by Swiss missionaries in the 1990s. Let's hope we have learned the lessons of the past well.

The three large rusting autoclaves and the long-since broken wall-mounted air conditioning units stand like a silent warning of past follies with high technology without any means of repair. Now we use an old pressure cooker on a wood-fire and have recently managed to screen the perviously wide-open windows of the operating theatre with mosquito net. The operating lamp, made in Shanghai, still has half of its light bulbs. But usually operations are performed by daylight and often by torch because it is difficult to start the generator.

However, it was not the lack of technology that shook us when we first entered the operating theatre back in May, but the lack of hygiene. The walls were dirty with bloodstains. The floor had obviously not been cleaned for a long time. The windows were open with flies coming and going at will and the staff walked in and out all of the time in their normal clothes and shoes. To prepare to operate the surgeons rolled up their trouser legs and shirtsleeves, washed their hands and put on a gown. Whether the instruments and towels were sterile will never be known but post-operative injections were frequent.

A second major problem was that the only anaesthetic was the sort of thing that you get in casualty for a small cut. It was being used for everything including bowel surgery and caesarian sections.

Thankfully, before our arrival,



Dr Mark Hotchkin and patient

PAST FOLLIES *and* HIGH TECHNOLOGY

change had already begun. The chief nurse had spent a period in another hospital to learn about sterilisation and another had gone to learn how to give simple anaesthetics. Since our arrival, amazingly enough at the expense of the staff themselves, the operating block has been thoroughly cleaned and repainted. The mosquito nets have been put in place and a plywood changing room built where the new operating theatre shoes and clothes are kept.

Be under no illusion, you would still be shocked by the conditions, but we now feel that it possible to do more good than harm.

Each time we go to do an emergency operation we seem to find a new reason for a delay. Christmas Eve we missed all the celebrations at Church because we had to search the town for nurses and then go to the mission hospital to borrow all the clothes, anaesthetic drugs and intravenous fluids in order to perform a caesarian section. All the central hospital supplies were locked away and we could not find the keys. This was not the first and is not likely to be the last incident of its kind. We often spend all day going back and forward to the hospital in order to do one operation.

In January, we broke all the rules and operated in the dirty dressing room with instruments that had only been washed in antiseptic solution for five minutes and windows wide-open.

Actually a bullet-proof vest would have been useful because an overspill of inter-tribal violence from Liberia meant that shooting was going on round the hospital all the time. This was mainly from soldiers firing in the air to restore order, but not exclusively so. Hence the need for the operation on a young man with a bullet wound that ruptured the spleen, tore his diaphragm and collapsed a lung.

The operating theatre was already in use with another casualty so we had no choice but to make-do. Andrea gave the anaesthetic and I operated. Much to our surprise he went home after ten days with no sign of post-operative injection. ■



Members of the church and medical team, Macenta, Guinea

SIXTEEN WAYS TO SAY

“Friend”



Ryder and Heather Rogers

New missionaries are often told, “Write down your first impressions because you will never see the country as clearly again. After a month or so, you will be so used to the situation you will no longer be noticing the differences from life in the UK.”

Here then are the first impressions of Ryder and Heather Rogers who have recently arrived in Albania.

What is home like? The electricity has gone off a few times, the water regularly each day (one time for three days when a van broke the pipe). We’ve had a visit from the Finance Police and a man in the market tried to pinch my pen. I wagged my finger at him. “Keq (bad),” I said as I recovered it. Oil for the fire costs 40p a litre or 3.5p for paraffin (but you have to queue for hours for it). We have bought from the market a small table-top Belling type cooker for \$82. It is great now I’ve earthed it to the tap! Before it was shocking!

The market is fun. It is full of stalls and people with sacks selling local fruit and vegetables, cheese and meat. Here in the capital there is a lot more in the shops than last May. There are more cars and even a few traffic lights, some with red and green pedestrian men - though no one takes much notice of them. The police are trying to get the traffic to go round the roundabout the

right way. However, at night, few cars have all their lights and some simply have none.

People love to talk, especially when we try our Albanian. We often end up laughing. We have our daily language study when things get confusing. Imagine saying the word “friend/s”, so far in 16 different ways. Our teacher says, “Don’t worry. We will learn it later, little by little.”

We have fallen in love with the gypsies out in a village near Tirana. The Italian evangelist, Saverio, simply explains a Bible story to them while we sit huddled round a wood stove.

Heather and I took our guitars and Walt his mandolin. We sang, in Albanian, “Hosanna, King of kings,” etc. Some even danced.

We have visited and been visited by many Albanian friends who hug us to death and kiss us both on each cheek. We have been out to meals and had some of them for meals. What language practice that means. We have many spontaneous opportunities to share our faith, like the market trader who asked if I was an ambassador.

“Yes,” I replied, “I am an ambassador for Jesus.”

Then there was the teacher who wanted to know the differences between Christianity and Islam. that took an hour or so. Afterwards she said, “I think Christianity is true.” I have an Albanian Bible for her so that she can read the story of Jesus for herself. ■



Albanian Gypsies





DAY TRIP *to*

"When you live and work in a town a day in the country is like a breath of fresh air," says Owen Clark.

Coming to Zaire for meetings with the CBFZ Executive Committee, Derek Rumbol had hoped to be free for one day to make a visit outside Kinshasa. There were good reasons to go to Bolobo. Bibaki, General Secretary of the George Grenfell Foundation, promoting development in the Bandundu region, wanted Derek to visit the oil-palm plantation. Habitat for Humanity representative, Peggy Itela, wanted to talk to people at Bolobo about a housing project. The Mission Aviation Fellowship office said that, in spite of the fuel crisis, a trip could be arranged. Bibaki alerted Bolobo by radio.

Dan Carlson, American MAF pilot based with a six-seater Cessna at Semendua in eastern Bandundu would meet us at Kinshasa's Ndolo airport. Take-off would be at nine, arriving at Bolobo about 10.30. This would allow three or four hours before leaving mid-afternoon and arriving in Kinshasa before darkness fell around six o'clock. Ndolo airport has no runway lights!

Bibaki said that from Bolobo it would only take 45 minutes to reach Mongama in an outboard-motor-driven canoe, and 30

minutes would suffice for the visit. The nursery is only 500 metres from the beach. There would be plenty of time to achieve our objectives and for Derek to talk to the church folk at Bolobo!

Dan Carlson was late getting away from Semendua and it was ten by the time we were winging our way over the broad Malebo Pool, with its sand-banks and large, inhabited island. Dan cut across the grassy plains of neighbouring Congo to shorten the journey, only picking up the river again well on the way to Bolobo.

As we descended to the grassy airstrip people were waiting with a Land Rover. Pastor Mompanda and Education Co-ordinator Iyeti had brought an immigration official to check our passports and save time. We were soon bumping over the road into Bolobo, a large village turning into a small town.

Drawing near to the mission it became evident that our Regional staff and church personnel were not going to pass up the opportunity of a reception for such "distinguished" visitors.

School children lined the road, a brass band blared and the personnel, as well as the staff, students and wives of the Theology School waited to shake our hands. We were led to the office verandah and seated behind



a table bearing a mug of flowers. There was a prayer, a hymn and a speech of welcome. Derek expressed our thanks and pleasure. They recognised our tight schedule, for it was all done expeditiously.

We were led to one of the old, red-brick houses for coffee, bread and local peanut butter while we chatted with various friends.

As soon as possible, and leaving Peggy to organise her meeting, we hurried to the river, already two hours behind schedule. The dug-out canoe was large enough to take Derek, Dan, Bibaki, Pastors Eboma and Mompanda and myself, as well as the canoeman. Soon the little outboard motor was pushing us up-river.

We waved to children bathing and women doing their washing at the river's edge, as we left Bolobo behind. The sun shone and the boat rode smoothly over the calm water. A fish eagle glided lazily over a bed of waterside rushes, some bee-eaters swooped aerobically from a large tree and a couple of hornbills flapped noisily across a clearing in the forest. Red clay cliffs, large, uneven boulders and little sandy bays passed silently by.

"This," I thought, "beats Kinshasa any day of the week."

Rounding the umpteenth bend Bibaki pointed out Mongama, on a hill, barely distinguishable in the hazy distance. We had taken over an hour and it was clear that we had to do the minimum necessary and get away quickly. Dan studied his watch thoughtfully, and felt a little uneasy. A group of people



Curious children who joined in the visit to their village (Mongama) by strangers

BOLOBO



A warm reception



awaited us but, instead of disembarking, we picked up the agriculturalist and continued upstream. "It'll be nearer from that beach," they said.

We set off at a good pace in single file along a narrow path and curious children joined us. Through gardens of maize, manioc and banana, over humps and down dips, and jumping a little stream, we came to a small clearing where the young palm-trees were growing.

The agriculturalist explained the project giving facts and figures. Little palm-oil was produced in that area although it was an ingredient of the people's diet. It had to be procured expensively elsewhere. Of the first batch of 1,000 seedlings less than 700 had survived. Various difficulties had been encountered. Bibaki clarified where the plantations would be situated.

At this point we heard the first rumbles of thunder and noticed how dark the sky had become to the west. Questions, discussion and suggestions were cut short as the first large drops of rain began to fall. Dan was the first back on the path heading for the beach.

The agriculturalist led us through the large, hilly village in the direction of a plantation site. Children followed and villagers stared curiously. As the rain intensified a couple of coloured umbrellas appeared from somewhere. It was 3.30 and we decided to make for the nearest beach. Someone was sent to locate the canoe. The black rain-front moved slowly towards Bolobo where the plane was sitting on the grass air-strip. Dan found his way to where we were but it took a long time for the canoeman to do the same. We hurriedly said farewell and climbed aboard. It was almost four o'clock. Dan said, in a loud voice, "The latest we can take off is five o'clock."

Fortunately the rain eased off but we were damp and the air was cool and the water choppy. The mood of the river had changed testing the canoeman's skill and experience. Suddenly a yell from the river bank provoked a sharp change of direction. There was fish for sale and Bibaki thought of his family in Kinshasa. The fisherman hauled to the surface an enormous, thrashing catfish. The price was too high so we quickly

moved off.

We reached Bolobo beach at 5.50 and hastily climbed the path to the Land Rover. People wanted to talk and hand over letters and packages for Kinshasa. Peggy was trying to extricate herself from conversation. A meal had been prepared but we waved goodbyes and tore off to the airstrip.

Dan checked that we were strapped in, started his engine, taxied a little way, gathered speed and raced over the grass till we lifted into the air. It was gone five o'clock when we soared into a grey sky still dark with rain-cloud. The amount of daylight left would be even less than on a fine evening. Crossing the river we took the shortest line to Kinshasa over Congolese territory. It was a race against time, and the plane seemed to advance at a maddeningly slow pace. We could only trust the pilot's judgement and skill.

It was beginning to get gloomy when Bibaki yelled that he could see the river ahead. When we recrossed Malebo Pool the lights of Kinshasa were twinkling a welcome in the gathering dusk. It was exactly six o'clock. ■

Of MISSIONARIES and *bran*



Stuart and Joyce Filby

Language and culture go together and, for most of our missionaries, becoming competent enough in another language to be able to preach and to share the “good news” is essential. However, many an obstacle has to be overcome on the way as Stuart Filby, working in Belgium, discovered.

“The biggest step forward for me is that I am now preaching in Flemish. It literally takes days to prepare and I still find it difficult to get my tongue around some strange sounds. But the congregation kindly grins and bares it. In fact I sometimes think they are waiting for the next mistake.

“On one occasion I told them about two missionaries that were visiting us but I used the word *zemeling* in mistake for *zendeling*. Instead of “missionaries” I was talking about “bran” used by those that are constipated. As you see, the language does keep us on the run.

“On a trip back to England when I stopped for petrol the attendant told me that we were the second customers that day from Belgium.

“You disguise your accent very well,” he said, “and I can even understand your English.”

“I found that very reassuring!”

On a more serious note, Stuart has written about the difficulties Baptists in Belgium have in being recognised.

“The incident in November in the Ukraine with the Great White Brotherhood and the claim of their messiah that the world was about to end did not help us. There are many such groups in Europe and the outsider sees Baptists as part of these sects.

“Samuel Verhaeghe (President of the Union of Baptists in Belgium) continues to prepare the legal papers to present to the European Court seeking recognition of us as a denomination. This will allow us many benefits, such as evangelism, that we do not have at present.

“We had an unexpected breakthrough when a national paper asked to interview Samuel Verhaeghe, his brother Jean-Claude and myself, asking us to explain what the Baptists are and how we celebrate Christmas. Although not all was correctly reported it did give us national coverage and several other papers picked it up. I see this as answered prayer and the Lord laying the foundations for something more in the future.”

But sometimes it is just living amongst ordinary people that helps to break the ice.

“Joyce and I were standing outside the house when the door slammed behind us and we had no door key. It was time to contact the neighbours. One lent us a ladder, another allowed us through her garden so that we could get to the back of the house and yet another held the ladder whilst we broke in through the back door.

“The excitement of such an event kept the neighbours talking for days and was the means of inviting them for coffee the following week to thank them. The ladies were most impressed at the number of Christmas cards we had received, which gave us an opportunity to share with them what Christmas was about and why we were here. Since that time the lady that lent us the ladder has started coming to church.” ■

Belgium

Discussion Starter.....

1 List the factors you think could contribute to culture shock when a missionary first goes overseas?

Is there any way of avoiding this? What are the problems of reverse culture shock?

2 What are the pluses of Third World culture compared to western culture?

3 Imagine you were visiting a Third World country for a short while. What would be your reasons for wanting to go? Would the national people interpret your reasons in the same way? (See Still the worst war in the world, p.19)

4 Again, what present would you take when visiting this Third World country? And why? What would you like to be given in return?

5 What are the factors that brought the Gospel to your community? (See A Policeman's lot...p3)

6 Read an account of the life of William Carey, the founder of the Baptist Missionary Society. (We suggest 'The Answered Call' by Gwenda Bond price £4.99, or 'William Carey' by Kelsye Finnie price £3.50, both available from BMS, Didcot.) What were his motives for going overseas? How much of his own culture did he impose on the Bengali people? How much were his ideas about mission changed by living in India? Do you think William Carey would be accepted as a candidate by the BMS today?

7 Do you think that to live in Mizoram is the nearest we could get to heaven in this world? (See A Policeman's lot.p.3)

8 Missionaries often have to make many adjustments to their lifestyle once overseas? Should all Christians wherever they are situated be more sensitive to prevailing conditions and needs, particularly of the poorest around them?



Double Take Double Take

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

Bible Study

Philippians 2 : 1 - 18

Philippi was a Roman colony (that is, a little bit of Rome abroad, where, under Roman law, and using the Latin language, many aspects of public life went on as in Rome), which, Paul himself had visited (see Acts 16 : 12ff, Acts 20 : 6). Paul left there a devoted group of Christians. This letter is believed to have been written in approx 63 AD while Paul was in prison in Rome (see Acts 28). Amongst other things Paul wanted the Philippians to be aware of the dangers of divisions among them, and he wanted to encourage them to live their lives in the unity of the Spirit.

Paul makes his appeal for harmony

v1 What four grounds does Paul give for his appeal? Relate these to the problems of missionary adjustment in a new cultural setting.

v 3 What are the enemies of living in harmony with one's brothers and sisters?

What did the letter sent by the Italian Baptists to Mons. Daniele Ferrari, Bishop of Chiavari suggest about Italian Christians living and working together? (See In View, Italy, p.20)

v 3 - 5 How are these problems overcome?

Imitating Christ

v 6 - 11 Paul used here an Early Church hymn.

What are the three steps mentioned in v7 which speak of Jesus humbling himself?

What do you think of when you think of the word "humility"? Is it Jesus or Uriah Heep who first comes to mind?

Some translations put it this way : (Jesus) "made himself nothing" or "he emptied himself", or paraphrased as "gave up his rights"

Of what did Jesus need to empty himself?

Since Jesus 'emptied himself' so that even the poorest could experience God's love, how should missionaries identify themselves with those they serve?

What things in life do we think we have a right to? If Jesus were here today, do you think he would think he had a right to those same things? Why/Why not? Do Drs Andrea and Mark Hotchkin have a right to work in a hygienic hospital? (See Past follies and high technology, p.6). Do the Baptists in Belgium have a right to be recognised as part of the true church instead of as a sect? (See Of Missionaries and Bran, p.10)

What is the nature of a servant?

How do these verses relate to obeying God and going to work in a different culture?

Practicalities

This was written to the church rather than to individuals.

v 12 - 18 How are the Philippian Christians to live their daily lives?

v17 What does this analogy mean?

In what way is Jim Grenfell's presence in Angola a 'sacrificial offering'? (See Still the worst war in the world, p.19) ■

Action Points

1 Learning a new language

Interested in learning a new language? Les Cèdres Christian French Language School holds short courses for three weeks in July, or nine weeks April - June for all levels apart from absolute beginners. Les Cèdres also has a Summer School 12 - 29 July, and places for all levels including beginners in September 1994. For details write, fax, or phone Les Cèdres, Christian French language School, 17 voie de Wissous, 91300 Massy, France. Tel. +33 1 69 30 00 67. Fax +33 1 64 47 12 26.

Or the Summer Institute of Linguistics offers a six week basic course in language learning, starting July each year. For details write to : SIL, Horsleys Green, Stokenchurch, Bucks HP14 3XL.

2 Keep missionaries informed

If you are linked to a missionary in any way (through WML, housegroups etc) remember they will experience loneliness and other problems of being away from home. Resolve to keep in touch with them, and to keep them informed of life back home as much as possible. Here's some ideas of things to send:

- your church magazine
 - a Christian magazine
- (See Centenary of a quiet ministry article - about MLA)
- a secular/professional magazine)
 - Christian and secular music cassettes
 - Bible reading cassettes
 - Christian and secular paperbacks
 - occasional food parcels, but find out what is appropriate first
 - photos of friends, family and fellowship activities
 - technical information relating to their profession

In return, make sure you receive

- their prayer letters
- any other material that serves as background information, maybe issued by their sponsoring body.
- why not ask for worship material from your Link missionary? (One church we know of has been using Bible study notes from their Link church, and have found them very enlightening.)

3 Learning about a different culture

Consider calling a pastor or full-time church worker from a different culture. (If you don't feel happy about this, analyse why this is.) Also, find out where the BMS scholarship holders are living and studying, and invite them to your church and homes. Then you'll be able to learn first-hand about life in a different culture. ■



Language study at Les Cèdres

Language laboratory at Les Cèdres



DOUBLE TAKE
DOUBLE TAKE



FROM THE WML POSTBAG

I've accepted the job of Link-Up contact person. Are there any leaflets to tell me what the job involves?

Welcome to an important job. There is a leaflet explaining the role of Link-Up Contact person, you should receive it this month. There are different ways of being a Link-Up Contact person but all have to be an efficient post-box! Everything comes to you and it is your responsibility to pass it on to the churches in the group.

We have a BMS speaker coming next month. What do we do about expenses?

In the green leaflet called "Guidelines" we suggested that you should treat any BMS speaker in the same way that you treat other visiting speakers. In this way we hope that no church will feel they are too small to have a speaker. If you have lost your copy of "Guidelines" don't worry, a new one will be sent soon to all churches.

I've just read the new World Mission Link booklet and would like our minister to have one, please will you send a copy.

We'll willingly send you another copy but your minister should have received one in his monthly mailing!

I've found Power Pack quite useful already. How often is it sent out?

If you have returned the order form, you will be mailed four times a year. We are glad you are finding it useful. Let us know if you have any good, shareable ideas for world mission meetings.

Our church is having a missionary Sunday and would like a speaker.

Thank you for your letter. Please ask your BMS Representative for a speaker for your Missionary Sunday. The representative has a list of many people able to visit churches and take part in events like this.

Worship

We may speak the language of sacrifice and of service, but if we have no love in our hearts for those whom we seek to help, our efforts will have no more effect than a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal whose influence fades away with its clamour.

We may emphasise the urgency of development, comprehend all the urgent problems and needs of the world, and have such absolute faith and determination that we can imagine the masses living in prosperous communities at a respectable standard of living, but if we have no love for the people, it is all in vain.

We may distribute all the aid we possess. We may give our lives to save the needy masses, but if love is not our motive, the world will be none the better for our effort.

With love we will be very patient as we confront a foreign culture with change.

With love we will not feel boastfully righteous as though we have all the solutions to the world's needs.

With love we will never assert our superiority, never selfishly seek praise for sharing with others that which we have been so abundantly blessed.

With love we will never inflate our ego at the expense of those we have come to serve.

With love we will always be slow to expose the failures and weaknesses of others.

With love we will not be resentful when our service is taken for granted.

With love our efforts will hit the mark.

Love never gives up. As for teaching, it will be superseded; as for agencies of development, they will cease. For technology and our planning and our institutions are incomplete but when

our actions are guided by love and justice, then they will be complete.

We are limited in our understanding, we see in a mirror dimly. We are baffled by problems and lasting solutions elude us. But we are learning bit by bit and we long for the day when love shall rule the world.

Thus faith that God has a plan for the world, hope that seeks the full life for all, and love that knows no boundaries - these three endure - but the greatest of these is love. Make love your goal.

Edgar Stoesz in *'Beyond Good Intentions'*, quoted in **'The Christian at work overseas'**, published by *Tear Fund*, and used with permission.

Remember **'Sing Good News, The Musical'** commissioned by the **Bible Society** with songs written from the Good News Bible? One of these songs, *The Name of Jesus*, is based on Philippians 2:7-11, part of our Doubletake Bible Study. *He became like a man; he appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience to death His death on the cross. For this reason God raised him to the highest place above, And gave him the name that is greater than any other name; So that in honour of the name of Jesus, All those in heav'n and on the earth, And in the world below will fall on their knees And all will openly proclaim That Jesus Christ is the Lord That Jesus Christ is the Lord.* **By K. Jones.** Used with permission.

For more details of the beginnings of the church in Mizoram, BMS has published a book **"...And there was light"** by **Carol MacNeill**. Price £1.50. **Available from BMS, Didcot.** ■

Quiet *again*

Once that banging in the boatyard down below stopped it went quiet again - an answer to prayer. Or maybe they simply ran out of metal sheets. Let's hope supplies are held up. I'm leaving soon. Don't get me wrong! When I say that it's quiet it's not that there's no-one around. Far from it. Talking to the daughter-in-law of one of my neighbours outside his house I counted 14 people - an old fellow reclining in a canoe-chair, women and girls preparing plantains, children playing. I knew of others inside. I asked whether they had visitors. Looking surprised, she said, "Not at the moment."

Other households average seven or eight people. Also the office staff and workers come in five days a week, so, although quiet, it's not lonely.

There's quite a bit of wildlife too - pale geckoes mopping up insects on the walls, rough-skinned tree lizards scampering around or doing press-ups, smooth lizards sunning themselves and occasionally a large monitor lizard, which the workers chase for its meat. We have a resident Senegal kingfisher, and flocks of African grey parrots screech and whirl around the tree-tops. Sparrows, bulbuls and scrub robins are commonplace, as well as flocks of tiny bronze mannikins and cordon-bleus. Squadrons of white cattle egrets fly over from Brazzaville every evening and drop in when it's worthwhile, like when the termites are swarming. We have migrant swallows, and ground thrushes, doves and the occasional woodpecker or hoopoe. The hibiscus bushes attract brilliant olive and copper sunbirds, and seasonally there are warblers that might have come from Mitcham Common. Long-tailed titmouses feed in the pai-

Our special correspondent in Zaire, Owen Clark, writes from his base on the Baptist Community of the River Zaire (CBFZ) compound in Kinshasa.



Knocking down guava fruit on the CBFZ compound, Zaire

pai, mango, avocado, oil-palm or citrus trees. These, and the coarse grass, host a variety of creepy-crawlies - ants, flies, mosquitoes, spiders, grasshoppers and butterflies. Tiny ants and cockroaches also like to share your kitchen. So, there's plenty of life around.

With Jean (as in French), the odd-job man, the news has been mixed. One morning he came in saying he'd been attacked again by bandits in a different part of town. They'd thrown him down, and only the intervention of a passer-by had saved him. He began to wonder whether this was personal or something more sinister, like organised anarchy. Neither theory seemed to me entirely watertight, but in any case I had good news for him.

Pastor Mokili, the CBFZ Superintendent for the Upper River, was in town for the ECZ National Executive Committee meetings. You can't go much higher than that on the Protestant ladder without falling off the top.

"I told him," I said to Jean, "that the population was asking itself why the church did nothing about widespread harassment by both the banditry and the so-called forces of law and order, and he replied that the question was timely. That day one of the issues on the agenda was that of the church's stance regarding the present state of the country, and an appropriate declaration would be going to the Authorities."

Jean was pleased. That was as it should be. "Bandits and authorities alike belong to their respective religious communities," he said. "That proves that the pastors have the last word."

Unfamiliar with the jargon, Jean had been pleading, for the church to take its prophetic role seriously. To keep too quiet can be a bad thing. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings! ■

A Footnote in HISTORY

by Kathrine Tubbs



"It's unfashionable to be looking back at a time of new structures, a new 'object', new titles and 'new' overseas areas. But I'm old-fashioned!" writes Kathrine Tubbs.

Coming to the end of nearly ten years as BMS Minutes Secretary, it seems the right thing to do. During those years I attended about 1,000 BMS meetings, including almost 100 Officers' meetings - a record that the General Secretary (oops! Director) can't match for the same period. I learnt a lot about the Society and a lot more about the people involved in its day to day workings. I also learned how to use language so that minutes would always be accurate although what lay behind them would not be immediately obvious. However I never attained the level of skill of some of my predecessors in this! Researching past minutes was one of the fascinating by-products of my job description!

From my experience I'd like to make two suggestions to Herald readers who are involved as members of home churches, missionaries or members of home staff. First, for whatever Committee you elect people to represent you, please appoint people you trust, and continue to trust them afterwards.

It's heartbreaking to watch a committee working away on a topic for hours and over a period of months, only to have its recommendations rejected, with the implication (sometimes accusation) that it has made its recommendations from ulterior motives. I say "heartbreaking" - that's how it feels as I sit and take notes. If they were my recommendations, I think I would have told the rejecting committee what I thought! Most committee members in the past ten years have accepted rejection, suspicion and accusation with long-suffering.

The second point is to ask you to elect people who are suitable for the task. Don't vote for Mr X because he's always done it or for Miss Y because "we must have a woman". Don't choose Mrs Z because you must have someone from Wales or Scotland, unless the work is about Wales and Scotland. The best committees were always the smallest ones - The Officers, and the smaller Working Groups, like the 1984 Area Representatives' Working Groups and the History Reference Group - where the people involved were those who were enthusiastic and competent.

I've enjoyed being BMS Minute Secretary. The reason I can write like this is because the job will never be the same again. The Board of Management will have new ways and need a different style of secretary.

A major reason I've enjoyed the task is because of working with the Officers of the Society. For them too things will never be the same again. In 1984 there were six, in 1988 their number was increased to seven, and 1994 sees them reduced to four with no official procedure for meeting together. From 1984-1993 the Group, with its membership changing by one each year, has always sought the best for individual missionaries and staff members. Sadly this has not always been appreciated but it was the case. They have too always sought the best for the Society throughout such upheavals as the 1988 Restructuring, the move to Joint Headquarters, the BiCentenary and the Management Review and I've tried to record all this for future historians.

As one of the BMS support staff my role has been an interesting one and I have the satisfaction that although I may not make my mark in history, I am at least a footnote in a history - see Dr Brian Stanley's *"The History of the Baptist Missionary Society"*, p 514. ■

CALL TO PRAYER

Apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5b

Loving Lord we pray for Christians in Bangladesh such a small group of disciples amongst many who follow another way; encourage them by your presence and show them that apart from you they can do nothing.

Lord we thank you for signs of growth for new congregations for people being changed as they hear and believe your good news.

WEEK

18

MAY 1 - 7

BANGLADESH
CHURCH WORK

The Christians of Bangladesh remain a small minority group in a country where approximately 87 per cent of the population is Muslim. In spite of this, however, the light of the good news is transforming lives. New Christian congregations are evidence that the church is growing rapidly. Often new converts are from non-Christian backgrounds - mostly Hindu or Muslim. There is, a need to disciple enquirers, and offer firm Biblical teaching. However, some churches are not so vibrant.

We remember Christine Preston who is BMS Secretary for Missionary Affairs, with an important link with the office of the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha. We also pray for the planned Consultation between BMS, Liebenzeller Mission and the Sangha later this year.

WEEK

19

MAY 8 - 14

NEPAL
INTERNATIONAL NEPAL FELLOWSHIP

BMS now has workers with INF which last year celebrated its 40th Anniversary..The INF and UMN work closely with each other - sharing some of the services available in Kathmandu and jointly sharing resources where appropriate. Each Mission is represented on the other's Board.

Alison and Chris Rudall are based in Takum. Chris, a Water Engineer, is involved in building water schemes. When they arrived they found an area devastated by the heavy rains. "The Takum valley was badly hit by a flood wave caused by river water backing-up behind a landslide at the top of the valley. People had warning, so few died, but a lot of good land and buildings were lost or damaged. Sue Frame works in the Burtibang Community Health programme. She speaks of the benefits of an agriculture project. "In 1987 when the programme began very few vegetables could be seen in the area at all. Now in the bazaar in Burtibang vegetables are on sale. This has been achieved by giving summer and winter vegetable production training.

WEEK

20

MAY 15 - 21

ZAIRE
EDUCATION

It's been a difficult time for education in Zaire. Teachers have not been

paid and in order to get their children through exams, like those in the top classes of CECO (Evangelical Centre for Co-operation) Kimpese where Pat Woolhouse teaches, parents have had to pay teachers themselves.

At the Teaching Training Institute, Mbanza Ngungu where Margot Bafende lectures, the teaching staff decided to work even though they were not being paid.

We remember Janet Claxton, who has returned to Zaire and is now teaching in the Secondary School at Pimu. Janet will be the first BMS teacher to teach in the Secondary School.

WEEK

21

MAY 22 - 28

INDIA: CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA

The Church of North India is still relatively young, but during its 20 years or so history, there have been times of testing and blessing. The past twelve months have been a year of recovery after an unexpected change in leadership positions. Representatives of partner churches which previously served through missions in India continue to reflect upon, and work out what ongoing partnership should mean.

We remember Desmond Samuels who is a Presbyterian of St James Church in Delhi and his wife Sheila Samuels who is a Chaplain at St Stephen's Hospital.

Dr Betty Marsh, has returned home early for medical treatment. When she returns to India it will only be a short time prior to retirement. Pray for her successor, yet to be identified, and for the future of Berhampur Hospital.

WEEK

22

MAY 29- JUNE 4

BRAZIL: RIO GRANDE DO SUL
AND SANTA CATARINA

These two southern-most states in Brazil are relatively new areas for BMS. They are more European than other Brazilian states. The establishment of new work is difficult and there are many large cities still without any Baptist churches. The shortage of trained pastors in Santa Catarina has given rise to a training programme for lay leaders and the establishment of a new department to encourage this training. The BMS contribution to the work of the Rio Grande do Sul Baptist Convention has been principally to the Seminary, which under new leadership is planning to start building new premises. Church planting is a priority in both states and our help in this area continues to be a priority.

BMS workers are: Martin and Kathy Hewitt, teaching in the Seminary and doing church work in Porto Alegre; Roger and Angela Collinson, church planting in Rio Grande with John and Maria Dyer, heading up the Theological Department and Training Programme of the Convention; Chris and Marion Collett; Chris is working with the Young People's Department and Marion with the Women's Department of the Convention; Vince and Sadie MacDougall, church planting in Joinville.

CALL TO PRAYER

1994 Prayer Guide Update

(Week numbers correspond with those in Prayer Guide)

CENTENARY OF A QUIET MINISTRY

The Missionaries' Literature Association began 100 years ago and ever since has maintained a quiet ministry to missionaries and pastors overseas. We do not know how the Association was founded nor when. The evidence suggests either 1893 or 1894.

Amongst the founders was at least one Baptist, Ernest A Rouse. It was largely his suggestion that the Baptist Laymen's Missionary Movement (BLMM) take over MLA work.



We do not possess a complete list of the Secretaries of MLA before 1926, but the Minute Book reveals the names of some holding office from then onwards; they include J B Watson, S W Gentle-Cackett, J C Dalrymple, W R Dover, Miss McLeod and Philip W Payne.

In 1926 a conference took place between representatives of MLA and Mr Byford; one of the former was Philip Payne and the other was Ernest Rouse!

Charles Thomas Byford was born in America of British parents and brought to England as a small boy, he was baptised at Woolwich Tabernacle. Employed as an engineer at Woolwich Arsenal, he spent two years with the China Inland Mission, terminated by illness, 15 years in the Baptist ministry, five years as first BWA Commissioner in Europe, and then as a BU General Superintendent from 1915 to 1920, when illness dictated his retirement. He had undertaken service similar to MLA on behalf of European ministers, which he combined with his new work.

This quiet, dedicated and courageous man exercised a tremendous ministry from the confines of his room. He reported regularly in the quarterly journal of the Men's Movement from October 1926 until January 1948, including the turbulent years of the Second World War.

The aim of the Association was "keeping missionaries supplied with literature." The method was to discover what periodicals were needed and to seek donors who would send them out. This linking of home and overseas brought joy and encouragement to men and women abroad and an opportunity of service to friends at home.

Byford's 83 reports are stimulating. His first report in The Baptist Layman in 1926 quotes a missionary: "The loneliness of my life is sometimes like the blast of a bitter east wind and then the mail day comes, and at once I am again in the circle of my friends, my soul is refreshed, and I go on my lonely way rejoicing."

The geographical spread was worldwide, the variety of periodicals extensive, and the number of recipients incalculable, for most items were shared. There were 786 items from approximately 700 donors in 1927; after three years more than 1,600 missionaries and European pastors receiving; by 1938 more than 3,000 donors.

C T Byford's last report appeared in January 1948: "That this service is much appreciated, a steady stream of letters testifies to the meeting of a felt need." After his death in 1948 Oliver H B Starte took over pending the appointment of a successor. Later in 1948 Edwin H Butcher became Secretary. Seriously ill, he resigned in 1953 and died on 17 April.

The next three Secretaries were former BMS India missionaries. First, however, there was an interval covered by the Secretary of BMM, Kenneth W Bennett until William E French took over towards the end of 1953. He was with the Society in India from 1911 until 1950, including three years as Secretary of the Bengal Baptist Union. He resigned in 1964.

Francis J Raper sailed for India in 1929 and served there for 32 years, mainly in the Lushai Hills. In 1964 he accepted the post of Secretary, although already pastor of a church, but the double responsibility proved too heavy. He resigned in 1965.

BMM Secretary, Cyril Petch, ensured there was no break in distribution. Then Edgar T W Brown, after twelve years in India and 16 in the home ministry, accepted appointment, serving until 1970.

The fourth BMS missionary was W David Grenfell. For all but six of his 34 years service he was in Angola and then with Angolan refugees in the Congo Republic. Appointed MLA Secretary in 1970, he continued until his death in 1980. For the last three years he was helped by Malcolm G Priddy, of Ruislip.

Since 1981 the work has been in the hands of George A Roberts, of Henley-on-Thames. Initially a small team was recruited from Rickmansworth Baptist Church, where David Grenfell had been in membership, but in less than a year George found himself in sole charge. He is still rendering magnificent service and it is fitting that he should still be at the helm, with the title now of Chairman of MLA, as the centenary is celebrated. ■

From an article in World Outlook by Kenneth W Bennett.

If you would like to support the work of MLA write to: Mr G A Roberts, 63 Elizabeth Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon, RG9 1RA



STILL THE WORST WAR IN THE WORLD

Children, thousands of them, are the innocent victims of the tragic and vicious war still taking place in Angola.

"Large numbers of orphan children, or children separated from their families, are thronging the capital," said Derek Rumbol, BMS Regional Representative for Africa, when he recently returned from a visit to Angola.

"You see them hawking things around the streets and at night they congregate on what is called the Ilha - a sort of island or isthmus, which goes out around the bay in Luanda. Huge numbers of children and young people are sleeping on the beach in makeshift shacks and shelters."



The Kimbanguist church has opened an orphanage for 50 children.

"They are giving accommodation, food and schooling - a very big undertaking.

I took a gift for the Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola (IEBA) for use among children. They are looking for ways to use it constructively."

Angola is still the scene of the worst war in the world and the situation is deteriorating rapidly.

"The war continues around the major towns. People describe Angola as an island situation because contact between the towns can only be infrequently by air," Mr Rumbol said.

"In Huambo, in the centre of the country, the scene is a grim one of destroyed property, no electricity, no water and no soap so that most people are suffering from scabies. There is very little food. Even when it is grown on the outskirts of the town, people are injured by landmines when they go to harvest it.

It is the same in other towns where there is fighting. The government and the opposition UNITA forces appear to be trying to get into bargaining positions. The peace talks in Lusaka are making slow progress. They have agreed to the proportion of those to be represented in a future police force - 28 per cent to UNITA, who lost the election, and the rest to the government. The talks continue, but the fighting continues as well."

Derek Rumbol said that the churches are not silent. Last month the Joint Committee of Protestant Churches in Angola issued a declaration and the Council of Christian Churches put out a press release. Both documents pointed out that "the military way is not the answer, because it does not bring harmony, unity and peaceful co-existence, rather it leaves more violence."

Appealing for dialogue as the "way to arrive at that good sense which leads to lasting peace and national reconciliation," they state "only repentance, pardon, love for one's neighbour and tolerance can offer true sociability in homes, businesses and in the whole of our society."

Jim Grenfell, former BMS missionary in Angola and Zaire, arrived in Luanda on 3 February. He is there to help the three Baptist groups in Angola - IEBA, the Baptist Convention and a Free Baptist Church - organise ways to distribute food. "Food is available through the United Nations World Food Programme," said Derek Rumbol. "But they are reluctant to release it until they know that people are organised to use it. Baptist World Aid are also willing to send food aid, but they too need an organisation on the ground to help in distribution. This will be the major part of Jim's contribution during his three months in Angola. But his presence in the country is also a sign that Baptists in Britain are standing with them."

Speaking about the Baptist Community Derek Rumbol spoke of a visit to the Petroangola church "when 1,300 were in the congregation. A small political party sent a delegation to the service. They were greeted but not allowed to say anything because the church wants to maintain an independent stance.

"There was a deacons' election that day, so the sermon was about service. They held a church meeting in the afternoon with 500 members and a seminar was held on how to elect deacons. Then there was the election.

"There are big congregations in many churches and the leadership is concerned to offer good teaching. It is easy for people in time of crisis to flock to church but the leaders feel they must communicate the faith in a way that gets into people's hearts and minds."

Baptist churches are involved in a caring ministry and the medical centre at Petroangola continues its work.

"Antonio Nkwanzambi is training laboratory technicians who come from several of the church communities. However, they remove special equipment at night because of armed robbers."

Derek Rumbol said that sleeping sickness, once thought eradicated, is a continuing problem.

"The church is hoping to send two nurses on a special course in the Ivory Coast, possibly with the help of BMS. IEBA are encouraged to know that there is the hope of a BMS doctor for community health work in Angola."

Derek Rumbol appealed to Baptists in the UK not to forget Africa and particularly Angola.

"They are always encouraged when I tell them Baptists in Britain are praying for them," said Derek Rumbol. But most of all, keep Angola before people's attention. Get in touch with your MPs and try to get the government to take seriously what is happening. The UK still has an influence at the United Nations which is hoping to increase its troops in Angola to 8,000. It is isn't very many in such a large country, but a neutral force is needed there to keep the warring factions apart long enough to create an opportunity for dialogue." ■



Children at Kimbanguist Orphanage, February 1994

BOOK REVIEW

AWAKENING TO A WORLD OF NEED

by **Timothy Chester**

This book was commissioned by Tear Fund to celebrate its twenty fifth anniversary, and to quote from the preface it encourages "reflection upon the growth of evangelical social concern over (this) period."

True, this book does do that. Chester (the Public Affairs Officer of Tear Fund) himself says, "Not many evangelicals (including church leaders) in Britain are great readers, and even fewer will have read much on the theology of social action and holistic mission." (p. 143) And as such I think it will be appreciated more by those who are used to studying, whose minds naturally turn to absorbing facts and figures, dates and places, key personalities and turning points of history, than by those who are looking to see how their faith can be expressed in some kind of social action. It is not a light read for when the eyelids are already heavy.

But, as Chester points out, the path that evangelicals have trod in the last 25 years has not been an easy or a straight one. And it is easy to forget that it was not so long ago that evangelical Christians were asking questions about the place of preaching in social responsibility and were apathetic towards social issues. Today the tension of the relationship between social action and the gospel is still there, and the questions that are being asked are different ones.

This book is important as a source document, and has been incredibly well researched. For those who have an interest as to how evangelical thought in this area has evolved in the last 25 years, it is without rivals.

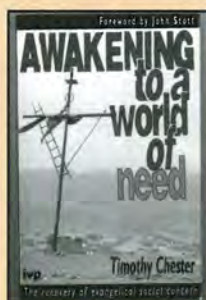
On another level, it does seek to raise the question to the reader, "How is this relevant for me?". Chapter 9 made interesting and challenging reading with its personal examples of Christians "Living more simply and trading more fairly." I also found the chapter on Spiritual Warfare gave a lot of food for thought, and the quotations given as chapter introductions very apposite.

Awakening to a world of need

by **Timothy Chester**,

published by IVP, price £9.99

Jan Kendall



NUTS FOR CHRIST

Now on the market in Belgium is a newly produced chocolate wafer rejoicing in the name of "Baptiste-super nuts."

"It's surprising how the news gets around," said Baptist missionary, Stuart Filby, when he saw the new product. "We need encouragement to be 'fools for Christ'."

plague in Eastern Zaire but it is confined to Bunia on the border with Uganda.

BMS Regional Representative for Africa, Derek Rumbol, said that food distribution in Zaire is not good and "therefore it is unlikely that the plague would be spread to Kinshasa by food."

A CMS representative was due to return from Bunia on 8 March and we were hoping for more news then.

ITALY

At the beginning of January, the recently elected mayor of Chiavari (Genoa), a member of the Federalist "Northern League", evicted 40 or so immigrants who were sleeping in unlicensed cars parked on the sand near the sea.

Policemen carried out the blitz, confiscating the cars, thus depriving the immigrants, some mere teenagers, of their nightly refuge. Some of them have found alternative accommodation, others make do with makeshift hospitality, but 15 were left with nowhere to stay.

Trade unions, the leftwing PDS part and some organisations - a Catholic parish, the Baptist Church of Chiavari and a scout group - have taken it in turns to give them a bed.

The Baptist Church of Chiavari, meeting after the Sunday service on January 16, decided to open its doors to the homeless young people and also to send a telegram to the Mayor and the Prefect asking them to take adequate measure to solve the problem. The Baptists also sent a letter to Mons. Daniele Ferrari, Bishop of Chiavari.

"In the name of the faith we share, we beg you and the Catholic Church of Chiavari to join us to solve the problem of these

RUHEA CLINIC

Timothy Soren has recently passed his medical assistants course gaining a first class certificate. His wife, Shefali, is registration clerk. Their daughter Joya attends the local primary school and son Solomon enjoys life.



ZAIRE

After reports in the Independent newspaper and on the BBC about an outbreak of bubonic plague in Zaire, several people telephoned BMS concerned about BMS missionaries in the country.

The Foreign office in London has confirmed that there is an outbreak of

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immigrants, helping us to find them temporary lodging and at the same time bring pressure to bear on the local authorities. We are at the eve of the Week of Prayer for the Unity of Christians (18-25 January) which for a variety of reasons we have never managed to celebrate together: what better way can there be than witnessing, that despite everything, we are united in that name which is above every other name.' In that name we beg you not to let this appeal go unheeded, but let us try to meet the needs of our fellow men who need the help of all the Christian community."

CHINA

The Chinese government is imposing a new crackdown on religion, putting into



place new laws forbidding churches to engage in "destructive" and unauthorised activities.

Some observers suggest that the new laws are aimed at unofficial and "illegal" religious groups operating in China. The edict forbidding all public religious activity by foreigners has received widespread publicity in the international media. Some newspapers described the new laws as a move by Beijing to suppress religion because of the part played by churches in the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.

It has also been reported that Su Zhi Ming, a Roman Catholic bishop of China's underground church, has been arrested and detained, possibly because he met US congressman Christopher Smith who recently visited China.

LONDON

In a report given to the Evangelical Missionary Alliance Latin America and Caribbean committee last year, Pastor Edmundo Ravelo of the Hispanic Church in London spoke of work amongst the 200,000 hispanics in the capital.

He believes that there is a real need for returned missionaries to help give stability to some of the new Christian groups whose members are often in crisis situations over visas, lodgings, family separations and drug addiction. He believes that returned missionaries could have open house and counsel and teach and advise Latins returning to Latin America about churches and Bible training facilities. There is also a need for people to visit Latins being held in the Heathrow detention centre.

Pastor Ravelo's own congregation is urgently seeking a new place to meet near the centre of London.

He sees a great need for hispanic churches and missions working in the hispanic world to work in mutual support. Latin missionaries are arriving in London on their way to Asia, for example. He is exercised over questions of visas and legality and the adequate training of such people in English and mission. London is a springboard to the rest of the world and the traditional missionary societies could play a key role in helping.

In the other direction, the hispanic churches are helping train mission teams going from Kensington Temple to Cuba and from YWAM in Brixton to Lima. Philanthropic groups in London are seeking advice from the hispanic pastors on how to use their funds in Latin America.

Pastor Ravelo reported

the existence of a European Association of Hispanic Pastors in Europe. In 1994 they meet in Seville.

EL SALVADOR

Nidia Dias, a candidate in the forthcoming elections in El Salvador, appears to have been the target of an assassination attempt. On 24 February her car was machine gunned and her bodyguard badly injured. She was not in the car at the time, but the rear, where she had been seated a short time before, was sprayed with bullets.

Some observers suggest that it was only a "warning." The opposition FMLN recently received a "warning" from the government that there was to be an attempt on the lives of their leadership. But they did not give any more details. It is being suggested that this is also an attempt at intimidation.



CHECK OUT

ARRIVALS

Action Teams
arrive back in UK
Millie Hallett
from India
Joy Knapman
from Sri Lanka
Gerry and Johan Myhill
from Brazil
Sue Frame
from Nepal
John and Sue Wilson
from France
Sheila Samuels
from India

DEPARTURES

Janet Claxton
to Zaire
Chris and Christine Spencer
to France
Stephen and Elizabeth Allford
to Zaire

VISITS

David Wilson
to Albania
David Martin
to El Salvador and Nicaragua
John Passmore
to Albania
Hugh Kennedy
to Zaire
Reg Harvey
to Switzerland
Derek Rumbol,
David Martin and
John Corbett

Legacies

Miss W M Hemmens	3,500.00
Miss Olive May Gale	15.34
Mr Gibbens	2,000.00
Joyce Green	1,741.00
Mr B E Hasler's mother	100.00
Angus A McNaughton	200.00
Mrs Winifred Eustace	343.30
Louisa Emily Watson	3,807.60
Eileen Motley	2,000.00
Mrs V I Rogers	500.00
Mrs Gwendoline Ford	300.00
S J R Down	2,000.00
Harold Watson	2,002.02
W S Lardner	4,981.15
Miss Annie F Norgate	89.78
Mary Turnbull	50.59
Reginald J Bloxham	500.00

General Work

Anon: £30.00; Bristol: £200.00; Bedfordshire: £4.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £10.00; Brackley: £5.00; Anon: £5.00; CAF Voucher: £25.00; CAF Voucher: £100.00; Anon: £38.04; Anon: £5.00; Swansea: £10.00; Bristol: £5.00; Anon: £10.00; Anon: £25.00; Bath: £10.00; Anon: £25.00; South Devon: £25.00; Milton: £10.00; Ibstock: £100.00; via BU Corporation: £47.05; Bath: £30.00; Colchester: £5.00; Give as you earn: £51.17.



BRAZIL

A Roman Catholic Church group, the Pastoral Commission for Land, says that almost 15,000 people work in conditions of near-slavery in rural Brazil.

They say that the number of people working in slave-like situations has increased dramatically over the last five years, from about 600 in 1989 to almost 15,000 in 1994. Most of these workers cut sugar cane or burn wood to make charcoal. The increase in virtual slavery is attributed to Brazil's economic crisis.

STREET KIDS

The inauguration service has taken place for the two houses which have been built for the street childrens' project in Curitiba. (see January Herald) Derek Punchard was there in his official capacity as representative of the BMS, because one of the houses was built with funds from the BMS BiCentenary Fund for the Future.

"It poured with rain halfway through the service, so we quickly moved into one of the houses, where we continued. They now have to furnish the houses, and then can move in and begin the work," said Derek.

AIR MILES

Have you been collecting Air Miles? Are they cluttering up your desk, cupboard or somewhere? Are you looking for something to do with them? Then look no further. BMS can use them to help cut down travel costs. Please send them to the: Department of Operations, BMS, PO Box 49, Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot,

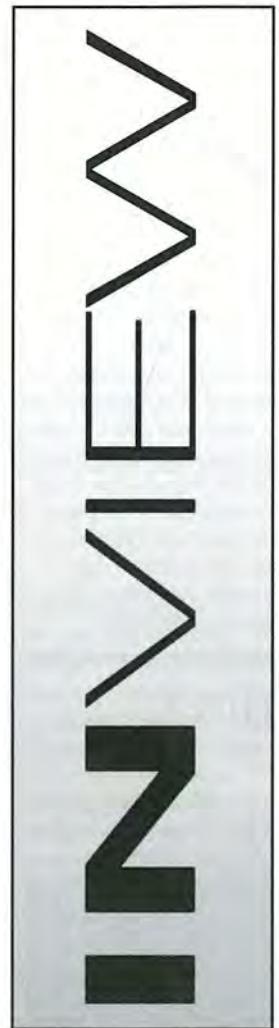


them to be involved because the weaving Centre was started with funds from BMS, Operation Agri and David and Joyce have such close links with Operation Agri since its inception.

It was a very happy occasion. Joyce presented Mrs Pushima Marma with a wrist watch because she was best weaver. David presented Mrs Robindro Chakma with a food carrier for being our best spinner. She has been working with us since the project started in 1987. Afterwards refreshments were served as we watched a tribal dancing show with various members of the weaving and tailoring staff taking part.

It was an encouragement to us all to see once destitute girls and women now having a skill and showing such pride in their work. We all thank God for the way He is changing lives.

Sue Headlam



NEWS FROM CHAN-DRAGHONA, BANGLADESH

Every year we have a 'Weaver of the Year' award when we give the best weaver and the best spinner a prize as an incentive to others and as a thank you to them for their excellent work. The recipients are chosen not only for their good production, but also for their pleasing manner and regular attendance. Each year we choose someone special to be Chief Guest and present the prizes.

This year we had two chief guests since David and Joyce Stockley were visiting Chandraghona for a few days in February. It was very appropriate for

Mrs Robindro Chakma, best spinner



Mrs Pushima Marma, best weaver



RELIEF FUND
RESPONSE



Dry area in Trapiá, Brazil: one of the places helped by the BMS Relief Fund



Nepali families were helped after severe flooding

Thank you - but don't stop giving to the Relief Fund.

That was the message from Jim Neilson, BMS Finance Manager regarding the overwhelming response to BMS' Appeal for money to revive the flagging Relief Fund.

All Church Treasurers were written to, asking them to use the January Communion offering, traditionally given over to Widows and Orphans to the Relief Fund, and a special leaflet was printed, and mailed to all churches around Christmas time.

At the beginning of November 1993 the Fund was actually overspent, but £65,000 has come in from 1 Nov 93 - 28 Feb 94.

This means that when the next disaster strikes, as, unfortunately, it surely will, BMS will be able to respond immediately. And so on. As the money comes in, it will be used to top up the Fund, and that then can be used for a subsequent emergency.

Again, we can only say thank you.

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

LIBERATION THEOLOGY IN BRITAIN

I've been surprised by the degree of poverty in Britain. A large number of people are excluded economically, politically and socially people from the working class are under-represented in Church life.



The [capitalist] system in this country is based on individualism, competition, selfishness, and imposition. They are not Christian values at all.

As a Salvadoran walking on the streets of poverty in Great Britain I could not avoid comparing our realities. Who is poorest? Is it those who have material need, but who are learning to share and to live in community? Or is it those who have Income Support but who lack solidarity and who are without hope for any real positive change in society?

The best Good News from God to the poor is that He has taken a solidarity option for all suffering people. Is the Church in Britain on the side of God?

I have seen many church projects. All these projects help the Government to reduce the impact of poverty without any real commitment on its part. At the same time these services to the poor are a strong prophetic message against the economic policies of the Government which creates poverty.

The first step to work on any project is the Conversion of the Church because all members must be involved in it. I would like to see projects not just run by Churches but a way for the Church to be the Church. We need to see poverty as a challenge to our Christian life.

The first radical change in this Society must be the preeminence of people over Capital. Community instead of individualism, simplicity instead of opulence, solidarity instead of selfishness, creativity instead of enforced mimicry.

I would encourage poor people and all who have taken a solidarity option for them not to lose hope in a new Society. This hope expresses itself in working and struggling for liberation.

Let's build this community of life together.

IS GOD CALLING YOU TO WORK OVERSEAS?

CHRISTIAN WORKERS NEEDED NOW FOR

- Engineering and Industrial Development in Nepal
- Community Development Work
- Doctors and Nurses
- Teachers (especially TEFL)

There are many other openings around the world for you to use your qualifications and gifts.

MINISTERS NEEDED FOR WORK OVERSEAS

Is God asking you to consider ministry beyond the British Isles?

BRAZIL There are opportunities in Brazil, especially in inner cities where church planting, evangelism and community work with a bias to the poor go hand in hand. Ministers need to be theologically qualified and experienced. Opportunities in theological education are sometimes available for those who are highly qualified after they have spent a couple of years in a church situation. Ministers need to have a conservative, evangelical outlook.

BULGARIA Experienced pastor for pastoral and evangelistic work and training of leaders, with experience of church strategy and administration. We are looking for someone who can offer a five year commitment.

NICARAGUA Experienced minister to care for, probably, three churches developing the ministry of preaching and pastoral care and also to train local leaders to take over responsibility. This is likely to be in a rural area and for a limited number of years.

PORTUGAL A minister for a church planting/evangelistic situation which could be either an existing small church or a new work.

SRI LANKA A minister and wife are needed for the Baptist Union of Sri Lanka. Because of the cultural situation the minister needs to be a man. His wife would have a low profile but an important supportive role. Acquiring a good working knowledge of the language is important in order to get alongside and work happily with local people and to build up good relationships, hence a long-term commitment is necessary. The job is one of co-operating with and encouraging local Christians, not organising them. There are many opportunities for a varied ministry given sensitivity, adaptability and patience.

ZIMBABWE A minister or ministerial couple for the training of lay-leaders and for church planting.

If you would like more information about these opportunities of service or if you would like to talk to someone about working overseas then write to:

Andrew North, Baptist Missionary Society, PO Box 49, Baptist House,
129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8XA. Tel: 0235 512077

Opportunities