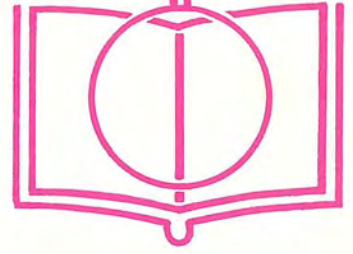


Missionary

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The magazine of the Baptist Missionary Society

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JUNE 1977

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Zaire

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COMMENT

In the divided world of his time, when the Greeks regarded all non-Greeks as barbarians and the Jews all people outside their race as Gentile dogs, Paul could proudly boast that in Christ 'there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:27). Every barrier is swept away. In Him there are no special claims and in Him no special disabilities exist. The Jew cannot claim any unique right above all others and the Scythian, though despised and denounced by all mankind, is not debarred from the grace of God. 'The conventional distinctions of religious castes or of social rank, even the natural distinction of sex, are banished. One heart beats in all: one mind guides all: one life is lived by all,' so wrote Bishop Lightfoot. All together in Christ are heirs of the inheritance promised to Abraham, the man of faith, and no law can set this aside.

But this oneness is a unity of privilege, of promise and of access to God through Jesus Christ. It does not obliterate identity. In Christ the slave took his rightful place at the Lord's table alongside his master and both were there by the redeeming love of God and one in their need for feeding on the living bread, but the slave remained a slave in society in the service of the man with whom he had received the bread and drunk the wine. The man born an Israelite and the one born a Greek were united in the service of Christ but the Jew brought to that service the insight of God gained by the children of Israel through all the years of their worship of Jehovah, while the Greek

brought to the work of the kingdom the accumulated wisdom and the great art culture of his particular nation.

Male and female stand as one in the sight and the service of God and this truth revealed in Christ has revolutionized the pattern of society wherever it has been heeded. In the time of our Lord and in so many societies since the woman has been degraded to the position of a chattel. She has been given an inferior status which has imposed a severe restriction on her participation in the ordering of society or in the proclamation of truth. But in Christ she shares with man the opportunity to be a fellow worker with the Lord and there are no distinctions between them. Both are saved by grace. Both are called to evangelize and both are guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

From all parts of the world there is abundant evidence of the effective emancipation which surrender to Christ has brought to women. In Bangladesh they have been able to gather for conferences and for literacy classes and Bible studies away from their homes, an unheard of thing in a Hindu or Muslim society. In Zaire they have shared in the work and witness of the church from the early days of Christianity in that country. But they have not lost their individuality. They have remained women and brought their own particular skills and abilities to the service of Christ the King. In this issue we look at the contribution which women are making and can make throughout the world to further the Kingdom of God on earth.

CHANNELS OF GOD'S LOVE

by Lesley Fuller



'What's that picture on your wall?' asks the neighbour as she calls in for a chat. 'Oh I embroidered that at our Women's Training Course,' comes the reply. 'I see. What does it mean? Why does it say in the middle, "Learn of me?" Those words, "Learn of me," are some that Jesus spoke and round the edge are pictures showing what He did. He visited the sick, He fed the hungry, gave clothes to those who hadn't any, He visited people in prison, and welcomed strangers, all the things He told us to do and He said one day to a group of people, "Inasmuch as you did these things to the least of my brothers you did them to me". 'And do you do these things today?' 'Well, we try to, especially through our Women's Group. We have our choir and we sing in the hospital. We visit the people who are in prison, and those who are ill.

Last Christmas we gave them each a bar of soap and we gave a packet of sugar to some poor elderly folk. Then quite often we hold our women's meeting in the house of someone who can't get out. Some of our members teach in Sunday School, too, and on occasions we take a weekend of services in a village church where the Christians are few, in order to help and encourage them. At the same time we are spreading the Gospel.'

The BWL in Zaire

So, a Christian woman in Zaire explains to one of her neighbours what the Church Women's Association does and how it tries to be a channel of God's love. Perhaps you hadn't realized that the Baptist Women's League had spread to our churches in Africa, but it has! If you came to Kinshasa, to the Middle or Upper River Region of Zaire where Lingala is spoken, it is known as *Lisanga na Basi* and in the Lower River Region where Kikongo is spoken it is called *Kimvuka kia Bamama*, but in either case it means 'Association of Women'. How is it organized and what does it do?

Lesley Fuller at a conference for women leaders



Brought Together

Women have always played their part in the Church of Zaire and Angola. Nearly one hundred years ago when the first Baptist churches were constituted at San Salvador and Ngombe Lutete in the 1880's, there were women among the first church members. Women deacons in the village churches today, who are outstanding for their faith and leadership, were trained in station boarding schools in the 1920's and 30's. The 'BWL' in Zaire is heir to many years of faithful service by women missionaries and missionary wives, but it was only recently, with the formation of the Baptist Community of the River Zaire (CBFZ) in 1973, that it has been possible to organize the 'BWL' in the whole field, because it was only then that all the areas in which we have worked were brought together into one organization. There is now a central office for women's work, part of the Church's Central Secretariat, and since November 1976, a Zairian woman secretary has been in charge of it.

She is Citoyenne Ditina Diakubama, who trained as a pastor for four years along with the men and has been a *parish pastor in Kinshasa. Not only is she the organizing secretary for the women's work of the whole CBFZ but she looks after the women's work in the Kinshasa region as well. Last December she made her first trip outside Zaire as a delegate to the African follow-up to the Lausanne Evangelistic Congress of 1974. It is now hoped that she may be able to go to South Africa in August to the Women's Baptist World Alliance Congress.

another. Mama Ditina, too, is to visit the Upper River Region in the spring, and all this the women pay for themselves! A further link is that each year, the women throughout the CBFZ study the same theme; and for the last few years we have used the themes of the Women's World Day of Prayer. Do you remember them? 1974 – 'Peace', 1975 – 'That we all may be one'. 1976 – 'Learning for all of life', 1977 – 'Love in Action'. A booklet of Bible studies is prepared and circulated to all the regions and the women embroider a sampler which is designed each

year to illustrate the theme. The order of service used for the Women's World Day of Prayer is translated, duplicated and sent out together with suggestions for the service on Women's Sunday. Both are enlivened by a short playlet written by Mama Ditina for the women to act during the service.

There are other booklets besides: a song-book, a book for branch presidents and secretaries with chapters on 'How to run your committee', 'How to take a women's meeting', and 'The treasurer's job'. There are study notes on hygiene and nutrition, and there are Sunday School lesson notes. Literature has been a special concern of Miss Phyllis Gilbert during her time at the Women's central office.

But how do all these materials get to the women in the villages, in a way that they can understand? The 'BWL' used the same organization as the CBFZ, which is divided into five regions. Each region is divided into several districts and each district into between four and twenty parishes.

Sharing with others

In each region there is a Women's Organizer, who works with a committee composed of the Presidents from the district. Together they study the theme and the Bible study booklet, so that all learn the stories and the Bible passages to draw out the meaning for the women in their own situation. The district President then passes on what she has learnt to her committee, which is composed of the 'Branch Presidents' from each parish. The theme and the studies are used in our weekly women's meetings, in training courses and in Bible courses which are held in the parishes and the districts. At these *Seminaires*, as we call them, the women are taught hygiene and nutrition, baby care and cookery, Christian home and family life, and the role of women in the church.



Learning to lead

The many women's groups in the CBFZ are linked through the Kinshasa office. Twice in the past three years it has been possible, in spite of formidable travel costs, to organize a conference for delegates from all the regions. This enables the women from different backgrounds to get to know one

* (A parish is a congregation or a group of village congregations which come together for their Church meeting and communion service.)

The conference cook and assistant





Remember, too, the women of Angola who joined with the women of Zaire in their 'BWL' while they were refugees. Now back in their own country they are seeking to organize their own women's work under far more difficult circumstances. Praise God for our fellowship in prayer which unites us with each other and with Jesus Christ our Lord. Returning recently to Britain from Zaire I was loaded with 'stacks of good wishes' and 'tons of Christian greetings' from the Church in Zaire to you, the Church in Britain. Joyfully I pass them on to you now.

Women's choir at Mbanza Ngungu

Village wash day

Now that Religious Education is no longer taught in Zairian schools there are discussions on how parents should teach their children about Christ and how they can help in Sunday Schools. They all take back with them the embroidered sampler and hang it on the wall in their home where it is a witness and a challenge to all who visit them. Last year in the Lower River Area we were able to hold such a *Seminaire* in each of our four districts, lasting five to ten days with 200 women attending. Now they will be telling other women in their villages what they have learned. Other *Seminaires* are held for teenage girls, pastors' wives, and married couples.

Prayer and praise

As you go to your weekly BWL meeting, will you remember the Christian women of Zaire and their 'BWL'? Remember Mama Ditina with her many responsibilities. Remember the regional and district organizers as they visit the village groups to explain how to plan the meeting, rekindle enthusiasm, and suggest ways by which money can be raised for Mama Ditina's salary. Remember the women in the villages and towns as they seek to share the message of salvation and the love of Jesus Christ with their neighbours.



CARING AND SHARING

by Joan Smith



In the hills of Mizoram at Serkawn there is a motherless baby home. Over the years it has given love and shelter to over 200 babies. But this work of caring and loving has not been done by an institution it has been achieved through the sacrificial service of one woman, Pi Chhumi, now about eighty years old. Through the years before and after the government took over this home she has nurtured these young helpless babies, and not a few of them would have died but for her devoted attention.

Now she has retired and it seemed wise to appoint two younger women to take her place. So Neihi and Veli are seeking to carry on this responsible task, and just as their predecessor relied on the prayers and support of the church so these two young ladies will need that unflinching source of strength.

In the hospital at Serkawn there has been a change of jobs too. Miss Zirhanggi, the nursing graduate, has taken over from Sister Joan Smith as Nursing Superintendent. It will mean that she also has responsibility for the care of the nurses' hostel and like Neihi and Veli she will be relying very heavily on prayer support but it is certain that these young ladies would have gained help and

inspiration from a conference in January of the Baptist Women's Group which was held at Serkawn.

Women's Project

It was a well attended conference spread over three days and had as its theme, 'Christian Maturity'. One of the days was given over to a Bible Study during which most realized how immature they were in the Christian faith.



Mizo women

The gospel has so changed the lives of the Mizo women that at each of the four services in the conference it was possible to have a woman speaker.

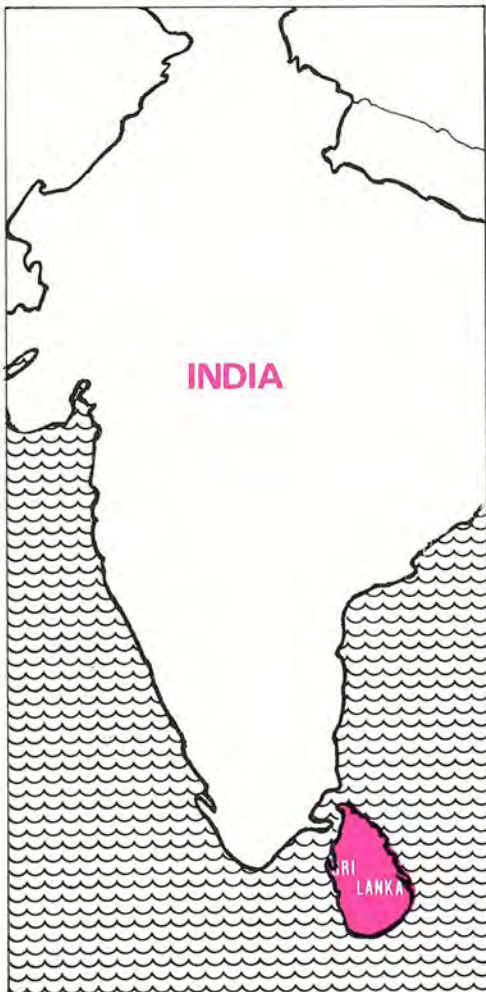
The women of Mizoram, like the women in this country, have committed themselves to a project. Increasingly they realize how indebted they are to the hospital at Serkawn and that they have a responsibility towards it, so they have undertaken to raise the equivalent of £1,500 to buy a sterilizer from this country and present it to the hospital.

Further they have undertaken to raise another £1,250 three quarters of which will be donated to the Zoram Baptist Mission, which has missionaries in Tripura, in Assam and in Bhutan, whilst the other quarter will be put to the general fund for the women's work of the Mizoram Baptist Union.

Raising such sums of money means very hard work for the women and in most cases it will be sacrificial. Let us give thanks for these women and pray for them.

Let us pray that those whose faith is strong may be used to encourage and help those whose faith is weaker.

INTO THE FUTURE



Christians in Sri Lanka are a minority group because it is mainly a Buddhist and Hindu country, but their influence on society is not inconsiderable. This is true of the women as well as the men. For many years now, girls and women have had good opportunities in education with the result that women can be found in most of the professions.

Until 1961 there were still many Christian schools on the island. Those in the villages taught up to O level and the bigger schools in the towns taught up to A level and university entrance. Since Christian parents preferred to send their children to Christian schools, the level of education among the Christian minority was quite high. When the government nationalized education the Christian schools were absorbed into a system which had developed into an efficient network of village and central schools. Qualified Christian teachers had tended to seek jobs in Christian schools, but at nationalization they had to sign fresh agreements with the government in order to continue teaching.



Employment Prospects

Teachers, as government servants, are subject to transfer from one school to another. Most of course, prefer to work in the towns or near to their own homes and for married women teachers this can cause problems. Imagine yourself employed in a good school in Colombo and your husband works in a government office and your son and daughter attend two of the best schools. Suddenly you are transferred to a school 100 miles away, maybe to a village, where there is no Christian church of any kind.

You will have gathered that it is common for an educated woman to have a career, and perhaps teaching is the most popular. The ability to earn a good salary is sometimes reckoned towards the value of the dowry given by the girl's parents at marriage and most women in Sri Lanka do get married.

Mixed marriages

Marriages used always to be arranged by the families. Not only were partners chosen from the same race, caste and religion, but their horoscopes had to match too. There

The old customs regarding marriage are beginning to break down but not completely. Even among Christians it takes a long time for 'in Christ there is no difference' to be completely accepted. However, several happy marriages have taken place between partners from different races: Tamil and Sinhalese have married where the two met in a church youth group.

Sinhalese and Chinese have come together after meeting at Baptismal classes. Sometimes the families have had misgivings when the



Elephants on a Buddhist shrine

Of course, a similar situation arises if the husband is transferred. This practice may effect a Christian community, since the wives of pastors in charge of churches, are, in many cases, teachers. Therefore such questions have had to be taken into consideration even when appointing pastors to churches although both the churches and the government usually do what they can to help, by taking into consideration the place of work of the partner who is not in their employment.

With the increase in population, as well as the recognition of the value of education, the number of students in the schools has risen tremendously. This means more and larger classes, as well as the opportunity for increased extra curricular activities. In a girls' school a Christian headteacher who wishes to do the best for the children under her care, may feel very disappointed when staff seem unwilling to do as much as she had hoped. On the other hand, it is understandable that a married teacher who has children waiting at home for her, may feel hesitant to stay after school for, say, a literary society or a games practice.

can be great sorrow when a Christian girl marries a Buddhist. Time was when he could forbid her to go to church and even today she might find it difficult to hold fast to her faith, especially if she herself is a convert and has no support from her family. She can find herself cut off from all Christian fellowship if she lives in a village with no church and has children to look after. Then the tension between parents of a mixed marriage, because of differing beliefs, can be a heart breaking problem for the children. Thank God that some have quietly kept their counsel until they became independent and felt free to declare their faith in Christ.



Preparing a meal

young people were first attracted to each other and caste can still be a barrier. On the occasion of her daughter's engagement a Christian teacher was heard to say, 'Of course, we are not worried, about caste since we are Christians, but it is nice to know they happen to be of the same caste.'

Young men and women living in the halls of residence at the university are free to meet others across all the barriers of race, caste and religion. There are facilities on the campus for worship in all the religions. One Buddhist girl, who had studied at a Christian school, began to worship with her Christian boy friend at the university church and after they had graduated she was baptized and they are now married.

Two at a time

In the country areas especially, it is not the custom particularly for the young women to walk in the streets or travel in buses alone.

Colombo

continued over

Recently a Christian teacher trainee, wishing to visit friends, went with a fellow student who happened to be a Buddhist. The two girls felt safe travelling together. It would not have been so easy to find a companion for the journey if she had been going to some Christian meeting because the number of Christian students in proportion to the total is few. One of our ministers reports that he goes regularly to give Christian instruction to the small group of Christian students in this training college, for here, as in all schools in the country, the rule is that every student should receive instruction in the religion of the parents.

Work among the young

In recent years the conviction has been growing that more and better teaching should be given to the young in church Sunday Schools. Though some churches have adequate facilities and able teachers, including women, others are not so well equipped. Therefore it is good to know that Sunday School specialists from overseas are being invited by the Sri Lanka Baptist Union to help develop this work.

It is some years now since there were Baptist Deaconesses in Sri Lanka. Even they, when visiting homes, used to go in pairs and this is still the accepted pattern. A woman church member setting out to visit someone who is ill, for example, would usually have to find a suitable companion to go with her. It could be a friend, a sister, or even a younger brother. This sometimes limits the amount of work that can be undertaken.

Some years ago the churches of Colombo joined in a project to introduce the gospel to every home in the city. The people in one of the poorer areas showed interest, and a group went there regularly over a long period with film strips of the gospel story. From this project a class was started for girls from the area who came to a Church hall on one afternoon a week and were taught sewing by members of the women's meeting. They sang choruses and listened to Bible stories, and from this witness a few have come to faith in Christ.

Residents and nurses at Jayanthi Nivasa



Jayanthi Nivasa

One of the ways in which the Baptist Women's League in Sri Lanka celebrated its Golden Jubilee was by helping to start a home for elderly Christian ladies where they could end their days in a peaceful Christian atmosphere. The oldest inhabitant recently taped a message of appreciation for the home known as Jayanthi Nivasa. She mentioned the comfort of the house, the beauty of the garden, and the freedom enjoyed to go out to the shops or the park. She was particularly grateful for the regular visits of a Christian doctor, and the welcome ministry of the pastor and his wife.

Sharing experiences

Among the leading women of the churches are some who have had the privilege of attending conferences abroad, meeting Christian women of other nations and sharing their experiences. They have a broader view of the church in the world. May they also have the wisdom and enthusiasm to share a vision of Christ for the world and for Sri Lanka with all their Christian friends.

Jayanthi Nivasa



NEWS IN BRIEF



SOURCES OF ENERGY

A Rural Energy Centre has been established at Pattiapola, in the south of Sri Lanka, under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Sri Lankan government.

The aim of the project is to produce electricity using the sun, wind, and animal manure. All three forms of fuel have been used effectively elsewhere. In Sri Lanka the difference lies in the use of these in combination so that even small amounts of any one source can add to that produced by the others. Pattiapola receives more sunshine than elsewhere in Sri Lanka and experiences winds in excess of ten mph. Village cattle provide ample animal waste to feed the bio-gas unit. The energy produced from these sources are fed into common storage batteries in anticipation of the local electrical requirements. If this project is a success the centre will be copied throughout the Third World bringing the electric power so essential if these countries are to develop.

A VOLUNTEER

Andrew North, a master butcher, offered his services to the Society for one year as a volunteer and was sent to Kinshasa, Zaire. He has been looking after the vehicles of the Society, has undertaken some building projects, and has been responsible for meeting people from the airport and for buying materials for the up-river stations. He has done this work so well that when he offered to stay a further year the Society was happy to agree to his staying.

TELEPHONE COUNSELLING

The New Year saw the start of a new ministry, to be known as *Teleminuto Diario* (Daily Teleminute) in Cali, Columbia.

At *Comunicaciones Bautistas*, the mass communications arm of the Baptist Mission, three telephone lines have been installed. In Columbia such lines are very hard to secure and their installation is an answer to prayer. Two of the lines will automatically play prerecorded devotional messages which will be in service 24 hours daily. At selected peak hours the third line will enable counsellors to take personal calls and talk to those needing help. This service will be in addition to the Mission's personal counselling by mail and Bible correspondence courses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously or without address. (23 February-25 March, 1977)

General Work: Anon: £10.00; Anon: £1.00, Anon: £3.30; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £3.00, Anon: £10.85; Anon: £10.00; Anon: £1.00, Anon: £5.00; Anon: 10p.

Medical Work: Anon: £2.00; Anon. £10.00, Anon: (Prove Me) £5.00.

Widows & Orphans: Anon: £7.00.

Relief Work: Anon: £10.00.

In Memory of Mrs A Le Noury — £51.50.

Legacies

	£	p
Miss M L M Bion	300.00	
Mr H M Clark	1402.93	
Miss E A Couch	14.00	
Miss D B Dodwell	100.00	
Miss G Grove	400.00	
Miss E L Holt	380.00	
Ellen Jenner	50.00	
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Miss C L Lonergan	98.46	
Miss D Lord	500.00	
Mr A Pratt	471.68	
Mrs W A Rowland	50.00	
Mrs M E M Tomkins	374.97	
Marjorie N Thorne	2265.00	
Miss J M Williamson	100.00	

MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

Arrivals

Rev B L and Mrs Taylor and family on 21 March from Umuarama, Brazil.

Miss B Cooke on 26 March from IME Kimpese, Zaire.

Miss P E Gilbert on 26 March from Kinshasa, Zaire.

Rev E Sutton Smith on 26 March from Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Birth

In Cupar, Scotland, on 15 February to **Mr and Mrs Nigel E Bull** (missionaries designate for Zaire), a son, James Edward.

Marriage

In Emmen, Holland, on 25 February, **Dr Martin John Stagles** of Wokingham to **Miss Jeannette Eunice Pronk** of Emmen, Holland (missionaries designate for Pimu, Zaire).

Deaths

Miss Muriel (Jill) Starke on 8 April at Worthing, aged 77; India/East Pakistan Mission 1934/55.

Rev Eric Sutton Smith, MA on 9 April at Mildmay Hospital, London, aged 62; China Mission 1939/51, Eltham College 1951/59, Sri Lanka Mission 1959/74.



CAPITAL GROWTH

by David McClenaghan

Arriving in Cuiabá from the cool south of Brazil may be likened to coming to live in the vicinity of a large hot oven whose supply of energy knows not of any crisis! Although it is only two years or so since Irene, Karen and I left the cold weather of Scotland for sunny Brazil, and scarcely more than one year since our arrival in the state capital of Mato Grosso, we already find it difficult to imagine what it must be like to be cold. Now that you're envious, we will change the subject!

Comparisons

Comments about Cuiabá are many and varied. Here are two. 'Cuiabá is one of the most beautiful interior capitals in Brazil.' This comes most unexpectedly from the Brazilian equivalent of the Tourist Board. 'Cuiabá, is a dirty little town.' This latter comment comes from a fellow missionary, who, unlike the man from the tourist agency actually lives in Cuiabá. As you might expect the truth lies somewhere between these two extremes. There are several well cared for public squares or *praças* with the usual assortment of fountains, monuments, statues, benches and 'please do not walk on the grass' signs. Cuiabá boasts a Federal University, several schools of high standard, two non-lending libraries and several other interesting buildings and office blocks.



Rev D and Mrs McClenaghan and Karen

However, on the other hand, to leave the town centre in any direction is to begin eating dust and bumping over unpaved roads into the sprawling suburbs. The difference between the high rise apartments, shops and government buildings in the town centre and the scattered dwellings in the suburbs is truly staggering. Most of the little houses are two-room wooden structures, many patched with polythene sheeting and cardboard. For many there is no running water, no electricity and no proper sanitation. The inequality in Brazil presents the government with a mammoth social/economic problem. Ninety per cent of the population do not earn enough to pay income tax.

Our appointment as missionaries of the First Baptist Church, with particular responsibility for new work, means that most of our ministry is centred outside the town. Let me introduce you to the suburb called Jardim Leblon.

Ability to endure

Imagine an assortment of small houses spread out haphazardly like a child's scattered building blocks. A few of the houses have electricity from the nearby lines, but none have water piped in. The 'town council' fill up a large water tower twice a week and an armed guard sits near. Temperatures are in the nineties and beyond, dust is everywhere. Children carry water in large corn-oil tins while others have bundles of wood for the stove. Smaller children, almost naked with protruding stomachs, cling to their mothers' trailing skirts. All the sadness of the world is in their wide expressive eyes, the meaning of poverty written on the faces of the women. Yet they surprise you with their ability to endure and to overcome. Conversations can be animated and humorous, time can always be found for *café* with friends and neighbours. Politeness is always evident, especially from the children. Clothes can be washed whiter by the riverside than in many modern machines.



Cuiabá

There is a school nearby. It's a modern building, but the day it was opened it was already too small for the needs of the area. The teachers, too, are not noted for their sense of vocation. Absenteeism among them is high though the school is open from 8.00 am to 10 pm. During the day it enjoys average attendance but in the evenings every place is filled. The classes are packed to capacity by the pupils who have worked at least part of the day to help pay for their lessons, books and uniforms etc. Nothing is free, but hard work and sacrifice bring their own rewards.

A living witness

In this particular suburb there is a family, recently converted, whose home has become the centre of our evangelistic effort in the area. There are eight children in the house with ages ranging from seventeen years down to ten months. The father's story is common. A near alcoholic he spent most of his meagre earnings in the twenty four hour licensed bars while his family lived in abject poverty.

He was involved in the spiritist movement, often taking sick members of the family to a *Macumba* specialist rather than a doctor, although in many cases the spiritist's fee was much higher. Three years ago, completely broken, he was lifted literally from the gutter and taken to a Christian's home in Caceres. There he clearly heard what the grace of God could do and be for him. Committing his life into the care of the Lord Jesus Christ he continues today to be a living testimony to the saving power of the gospel. His name is Nicolão de Oliveira. Pray for him and his wife Isabela as they seek to serve God in the place where they live. Every Friday evening we hold a Bible study group with this family. On Sunday afternoons we have a programme of door to door visitation using evangelical tracts and copies of John's Gospel. This is usually followed by a short open air service and then an all-age Sunday School at our regular preaching point in the home of Nicolão and Isabela. The work here goes slowly with little sign of progress. Visitors are few, most people being at first a little wary of the 'foreign missionary'. But only those who are really seeking come and remain. So we are not discouraged.

continued over



We enjoy too a wider ministry with a congregation in the small town of Coxipó, only four kilometres from the centre of Cuiabá. This work is more developed and numbers average anything from forty five to sixty most Sunday mornings. About twenty five people are already baptized and in membership with the First Baptist Church, Cuiabá. Sunday worship begins at 8.30 am and is followed by all-age Sunday School, finishing around 11.00 am. Irene teaches a lively group of youngsters (including ours!) every week, and twice a month a ladies meeting for sharing recipes, Bible study and hygiene talks. A prayer meeting and Bible



Market at Cuiabá

Irene and I, together with Karen and Angela, would take this opportunity of asking for your continued prayerful support as you remember the BMS work in Mato Grosso. Labourers indeed are few, climatic conditions take their toll, but we remain convinced that Mato Grosso is one of the greatest missionary challenges in Latin America.

If you can pray,
pray earnestly,
If you can give,
give generously.
If you can come,
phone the Candidate Secretary
immediately!
And may the God and Father of our
Lord Jesus Christ bless you richly.



Study once a week at regular get togethers for 'singalongs' and 'talkbacks' with the youth groups complete our programme in Coxipó.

Action and prayer

The BMS work in Mato Grosso is yet in the early stages of development. The social needs of the area are such that preaching and teaching is not sufficient. The whole gospel for the whole man means that our ministry must have a social and welfare side also. Mato Grosso needs nurses and/or specialists in health care, children's illnesses, etc. We could use medicines and drugs and

someone to administer them. The girls' club of the Cornton Baptist Fellowship in Stirling have kindly agreed to 'adopt' one family who live out in the 'mato' a great distance from the town.



First Baptist Church, Cuiabá

MISSION THROUGH COMPASSION

by Pauline Trounson

In Brazil there are 400,000 Baptists gathered into 2,500 churches and cared for by 1,800 pastors. The denomination also has a publishing house, four theological colleges, and a number of Bible Institutes.

As everywhere else in the world so in Brazil the women take their share in the life of the local fellowship, so what is the contribution which they make to Baptist church life in that country?



Meeting in the open

They meet together under the auspices of the Women's Missionary Union which stimulates local interest for the church and engages in practical evangelism. The women sometimes meet in house groups and sometimes in the open air. When the latter course is taken invariably a group of curious bystanders gather and this becomes an opportunity for witness.

Helping their neighbours

The programme of the Women's Missionary Union is made up of meetings for prayer and devotional inspiration, together with other meetings at which they can talk over any problems which may face their members.

They also show a loving concern for those who are impoverished by the collection and distribution of clothes and food to poorer members. Classes are arranged to teach women how to knit, how to sew, or how to crochet, and this gives an opportunity to express the love of Christ to their neighbours.

Using the holidays

On the occasion of national holidays retreats are arranged for the women and these are always well attended, especially as there are facilities for them to bring their children. These are popular with the youngsters also because they are usually held on a farm.

A holiday Bible School is also arranged which is attended by hundreds and not infrequently women come to the point of decision at these gatherings.

The women also take an interest in the younger members of a family. When a baby is born to a family, whether that family is a Christian one or not, the mother is visited and a gift is made to the baby. The women also offer to arrange a thanksgiving service. This is usually held in the evening and in the house of the mother so that the men of the family can also attend. In this way complete strangers are often brought together and a sense of community built up.



Nurturing the child

This sense of caring is established not only at the time of the baby's birth but on every successive birthday up to the age of four a visit is made and a gift taken. On the baby's fourth birthday the child is introduced to the Children's Society. Such interest in a family has often been the means of winning the parents or others for the church.

The Children's Society is run by the women and caters for children from four to eight and because children in Brazil do not start school until they are seven it is concerned mostly with the children of pre-school age. A lot of them come from very poor homes where there is no money to spare for toys. So the children are taught to play together and to help each other and from these groups children are introduced to the Sunday School.



Girlhood to womanhood

There is a young girl's society which is usually called the 'Messengers of the King' and it caters for girls between nine and fifteen. The emphasis of this group is on mission, but not all the girls who join the society are Christian.

It has an award system spread over four stages and as a girl passes from one stage to the next so a service of commemoration is held. In order to complete the fourth stage the girl must have made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of those who complete this stage go on for leadership training and now a few have later become wives of pastors.

The women of the churches in Brazil take a keen interest in the family from its earliest days, in their neighbours, in the organizations of the church run for children, and they play a full part in winning others for Christ.

A NEW

VENTURE

by Pauline Trounson

Brazil for so many people is little more than a name. It is the other side of the world and only rarely does it find mention in our newspapers. Even the people within our churches know only those aspects of Brazil which affect our missionaries and their work.

Like a tide which ebbs and flows there has been a constant movement of people in this vast country. The records show that fifty years ago the bulk of the population lived in rural areas, but today over three quarters of the people live in towns.

Now there is a general movement away from the densely populated coastal plains into the newly opened interior. As access has been given to such areas by new roads, and the felling of the forests, so the people have moved in seeking a better way of life.

In the north east of Paraná there is the district of the Northern Pioneer Association which until a few years ago had thriving coffee plantations but then came the disastrous frosts which killed off the coffee bushes and with the loss of the crops went the source of employment. It takes five years to re-establish a coffee plantation and no worker could wait that long for the opportunity to earn wages, so people started moving out of this district. The result was the region fell on hard times and the area became depressed because there is no

industry to which the coffee workers could turn for alternative employment.

A new effort

Today there is a concerted effort to raise this district to prosperity once more and there is a general air of hopefulness and encouragement. General farming has taken the place of the coffee plantations and there is a Baptist cause in this part of Paraná although it is a small one.

This district is about the size of Wales and its main town is Santo Antonio da Platina. In this town there is a Baptist church but it has never been able to have a resident pastor.

The Baptists of Paraná do have theological training colleges but there are not enough men coming from them to supply all the churches.

A new co-operation

In their co-operation with the Paraná Baptist Convention the BMS has agreed to one of its missionaries and his wife, Rev Keith and Barbara Hodges, going to San Antonio da Platina to help this small fellowship, eager for leadership, to build up the work of the Lord there.

It is the practice in Brazil when a church is established to create preaching points, or

congregations, attached to it in the area around. These points are rarely near and can be as much as 150 kilometres away and this arrangement makes great demands on a pastor.

The fellowship to which Mr and Mrs Hodges have gone has two such congregations, one at Vencasiau Braz and the other at Santo Antonio da Platina, which will be their responsibility. In addition they have the oversight of three other churches, one at Joaquim Tavora, Ibaity and Jacarezinho. So their task will be a demanding and a complex one involving pastoral oversight, in fact, to the whole region.

It will mean uniting the churches, stimulating new life and carrying out training programmes. This is a pioneer effort if ever there was one but there is no house from which our missionaries can spearhead the work and make their home.

A new house

The women of the churches in Britain have always been generous and anxious to play their part in the work overseas. The Women's Department of the BMS is therefore launching an appeal to raise £15,000 over a period of two years to provide a house for a missionary couple and family so that they may engage in this strategic work, a work that must continue for many years to come.