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A Chakma village in the Chittagong Hills, Bangladesh.

Baptisms at Christmas

Keith Skirrow has been with the B.M.S. in Bangladesh since 1949. Here he writes about Christmas in that country.

December 25th was a holiday in the days of East Pakistan, but it was a holiday as the birthday of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, not Christmas Day. Sometimes the newspapers referred to Christ, putting Him incongruously alongside the "Father" of Pakistan.

Now East Pakistan has become Bangladesh and 25th December appears on the calendar as a public holiday; Christmas Day, taking its place with the Ids of Islam, the Pujas of the Hindus, and the Buddhist Full Moon Festivals.

Bengalis call Christmas the *Bara Din*, the great day. It is the one day in the year Christians are sure to come to church, if they come at all. New Year's Day comes next and in some places Good Friday. Easter is sadly neglected: Pentecost is often quite forgotten. I remember a national preacher pointing out how distinctive is Easter. Other religious leaders have been born into the world, and they have died. Only Christ rose from the dead. Twenty years ago an Anglican speaking at a Baptist Assembly lamented the lack of teaching on the Holy Spirit in the major churches, and the consequent inroads of unbalanced teaching in the sects; and he pleaded for observance of Pentecost. But Christmas is still *Bara Din* and as such it is known to all, Christians or not.

Christians hold feasts together. In some villages of the Hill Tracts, they invite their Buddhist neighbours to the feasts—and quite a number come who aren't invited! The Christians have to bear the expense of this (recouping a bit by collecting when they carol-sing). In these days few can manage the feasts, but they do invite their neighbours to the singing, and the elaborate plays they produce. At least it introduces them to the Gospel, provided Luke 2 is not the end as well as the beginning of the message.

Chandraghona has a large and closely-knit Christian community because the Hospital has a large staff, drawn from many parts of the country and abroad. There is so much activity, so many demands on energy—and on the digestive juices. Services in the church and hospital wards, house-to-house visiting, welcoming (!) the carol singers at 4.00 a.m. I think, however, that we foreigners all associate Chandraghona Christmases with the celebrations of the leprosy patients. It means so very much to them. Many came to Chandraghona not knowing the Saviour, and came to know Him there. They too had their carolling, their drumming and whistling, their fireworks and their feast, and, on Christmas afternoon, the service which many from the Compound attended ended up with the presentation of "Wants Box" scarves and vests.

Faith brought warmth

The most outstanding Christmas for me was in a village some 40 miles South of Chandraghona. Situated in a deep gorge, it gets sunlight for only a few hours in the winter time, and so is one of the coldest places at night in all the southern part of Bangladesh. To get there

involved a scramble down a steep cliff face with bamboos for a handrail in places.

That Christmas there were more than thirty new converts to be baptized. It was a cold job standing in the water but there was real warmth in the joy of the new-found faith.

There was an outstanding leader in the new church of Tipperahs in the village: in his heathen days he had been a wizard, but he had witnessed to Christ by burning his book of charms.

There were more than a dozen houses in the village, built in a circle round a central space, in which they put a church building. All through the night we went from one house to the next, tea at every house, with puffed rice or rice-flour cakes. And all the time singing and dancing in praise of God.



A reminder of a Baptismal service, some years ago, in which the Rev. J. K. Skirrow shared.

Decorations or food?

Edna Skirrow writes about how she was faced with this question.

IT was Christmas Eve. Peter, John and I had been making paper chains, streamers and mobiles to hang in our dining room at Rangamati. We had also made enough for a few streamers to decorate the veranda ready for the service next day. Christmas day is the day when we expect all the Christians, grown ups and children, to come to worship. Usually 60 or 70 crowd on to the veranda, too many for our small bamboo church.

I had spent about 40p on paper for the decorations. The children enjoyed climbing on chairs and table to reach a reasonable height for the paper chains. A little difficult with a room 15ft or more in height.

We were absorbed in our task when one of my regular beggar ladies came and sat in the doorway interested in all the activity. Eventually she said "Sister, you have gone and spent money on buying paper, my family are hungry". No bitterness in her voice just a bewildering

incredibility that here was someone who knew of her poverty, yet was able to waste money on paper. This woman over the months had had far more than 40p from us, not to mention all the free medicines for her children!

We carried on with the decorating. It made the place more festive for this great festive occasion. Yet those words will remain with me for the rest of my life. Is the money that I am spending necessary or extravagant? Christmas, wherever you are, is an extravagant time, more so for some than others.

If—!

I have often thought if we were in England at Christmas time the children would have far more presents to open on Christmas Day. If we were in England the Christmas dinner table would be full of good things to eat. If we were in England . . . Well, we are not in England, we are here in Bangladesh and as someone has said "there are no 'ifs' in the Kingdom of God". We may have chicken this Christmas or jungle pork. Chickens are expensive with little meat on them. Raisins £2.00 per lb. Flour, I might have if I am careful to save some. Last year the food controller gave the church a permit for extra flour, sugar and oil so I was able to make 180 biscuits for everyone to have two with a cup of tea after the service. We always used to have

a 'Prem Bhoje', love feast, at Christmas when all the Christians used to gather together for a rice meal. This is now too expensive for most churches. Also we feel that it would not be right feasting in such a way when so many round us are hungry.

"You've spent money on paper. My family are hungry."

Moni lives up the road from us. She has three children under ten years and her mother to keep. There is no father. Moni earns a pittance by cleaning floors in one of the government officer's bungalows. Often by the middle of the month her money is finished. They used to live in a little bamboo lean to but that blew down round them in a cyclone last December. They moved into a room in a house nearby which was empty. At least they have a concrete floor under them and a tin roof over them. But still no bed, no chair, no table.

More than once coming home from afternoon visiting I have found Moni and her family sitting gloomily by the roadside. "What's up Moni?" "We're hungry, *mashi* (auntie). Had nothing to eat all day long. Nothing in the house. Kakan (the eldest boy) has gone off because he is hungry and I was angry with him". How many of us don't get cross or irritable when we are hungry? There is always though a few tins of this, a few jars of that, in a well stocked store cupboard for emergencies. I find that I can't sometimes sit down to my evening meal knowing those children are hungry. We give to them

some wheat flour to make chapaties or some bread. This will stave off the hunger pains for a few hours.

"You've spent money on paper. My family are hungry."

I illustrate the above family because they are just one family in several millions like them in Bangladesh. But don't let this put us off enjoying the festival. What does it matter if we have jungle pork and not turkey, plain cake and not fruit cake, jam tarts and not mince pies? The poorest of poor Christians manage to scrape something together, some little extra to celebrate the birth of Jesus and make Christmas day a little different from every other day.

On Christmas Day we shall join together with the local church in worship on our veranda. Chakma, Marma, Bengali, English, we shall look out over the garden and the bougainvillia, blooming red against a pale blue sky. The lake shimmering in the sunlight the hills green in the distance. We shall raise our voices in singing "Tell to the world the joy of the 'Good News'".

As long as we are where God wants us to be, as long as we are doing what God wants us to do, as long as we give thoughtfully, wisely and well throughout the year, then I am sure we can enjoy to the full the fun and festivities this Christmas as we join together with Christians throughout the world in remembering Him who came to dwell among us, Jesus Christ the Saviour of the World.

THANK YOU

for your support during 1975. The B.M.S. hopes you will continue as a Missionary Herald reader during 1976.

TRINIDAD

will be featured in the January Missionary Herald. 1976 will mark the 160th Anniversary of the beginning of Baptist witness in this southernmost island of the West Indies. National Christian leaders and missionaries have combined to provide a series of interesting articles on Trinidad.

We hope you will enjoy every issue of the Missionary Herald in 1976 and will encourage at least one other person to become a regular reader.

THANK YOU!

Christmas in Sri Lanka

George and Betsy Lee,
*B.M.S. missionaries in Sri Lanka set Christmas
there against the cultural background.*

Sri Lanka is a land of festivals. With Buddhist, Tamil, Moslem and Christian communities, there are festivals for each, and everybody has a holiday for all of them.

The Buddhist festival of Vesak, which celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of their Lord Buddha, occurs in May. Towns and villages are decked out with colourful lanterns, made on a frame of bamboo, often in diamond or octagonal shapes, and covered with coloured tissue paper. Large pandols, or high bamboo arches will support friezes of pictures which represent many scenes in the life of the Buddha. There will also be plays, on the lines of our medieval Mystery Plays, where people will gather to hear scenes from his life. These will be given in a traditional manner, with a story-teller giving a chanted introduction to each scene. The streets will be full of crowds in the evening, out to see the decorations, pandols and plays, and to catch something of the festive spirit which is abroad.

On the other hand, some festivals are perhaps more predominantly cultural, rather than religious. The Sinhala and Tamil New Year in April is a case in point. This is THE festival of the year for the Sinhala Buddhist, and especially for the villagers, when all the families gather in their own village. For many working away from home, this may be the only time they get home in the year.

Western influence

There are some customs and ceremonies connected with the New Year celebrations which are tied up with astrology and superstitions. For instance there is an auspicious time to light the first fire of the new year, eat the first



Life size figures depicting the Christmas story in the Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

meal, have the first bath and so on, as well as a different auspicious colour to wear each year. Apart from these things however, there are many customs and festivities in which the Christians also feel they can share.

The way in which they celebrate Christmas depends to a large extent on how westernized they are. Many Christians in Sri Lanka are very Westernized and urbanized, and they tend on the whole to celebrate Christmas to the exclusion of New Year. But many of our more rural Christians, of which we have a good number in the Baptist community, identify much more closely with the customs of their people, without the superstitions, while some of the customs, as regards food and new clothes, may be transferred to Christmas.

At the New Year period the Baptist denomination held a Convention near Kandy for about six hundred people. While most of the time was given over to a fairly concentrated spiritual programme, the New Year celebrations on the

Monday afternoon provided light relief for all and were especially enjoyed by the young people.

Closely linked with most ceremonial openings in Sri Lanka is the lighting of the traditional oil lamp. Accompanying this may well be the playing of the Rabana, a round, flat drum, heated first over glowing coconut husks to tighten the skin, then played by several women seated on the ground around it. Milk rice made with rice and coconut milk, is another 'must' at any festive occasion, or a piece of juggery, made from the sugar of the palm tree. Bananas will also be in evidence and we all enjoyed the deep-fried cakes; some cookies are made from rice-flour set in a patterned, five-sided mould, and of a consistency of potato crisps. All these customs are typical of almost any Sinhala festive occasion, but the games which followed are mainly associated with the New Year in April. They include such sports as pillow-fighting on a slippery pole, a tug-of-war and an obstacle race in which a clay pot, suspended on a string, must be hit with a stick and broken, while the contestant is blindfold.

Well-prepared

How does the Christian festival of Christmas fit into this cultural and religious background? Predominantly, of course, it is a festival for the Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, making

up between them about ten per cent of the population. Mostly they are concentrated either in the towns or in certain areas or villages. Preparations will start well before-hand in these communities, with carol practices, or nativity-play productions. In the big towns, carol singing is often organized on an inter-denominational scale, in the open-air, sometimes with a procession also. The young people in some churches may spend several nights going round the scattered homes of the congregation, carol-singing.

Last year, the young people in the Kandy church wrote and produced their own play, in the Sinhala medium, and with Sinhala lyric-style carols, rather than the traditional Western carols, which are so well known here. Most Christian schools have their own carol service, which will be very well polished, and draw a large crowd of parents, friends and old pupils, from all communities.

Inevitably, also, there will be Christmas parties, with a Christmas tree, decorations and Santa Claus. Santa, however, is no longer the staid old man of our culture, but a sprightly figure, complete with bright ribbons and balloons on a pole, with which he will dance a jig as his arrival is heralded by crackers. He will then tease some of the audience and crack jokes with the host, before distributing his small



The Buddhist temple of the Tooth at Kandy, Sri Lanka.

A Hindu Temple at
Katagarama, Sri Lanka.



gifts. Christmas is also a special time to help those who have material need, and clothes, toys, food or money may be quietly given to some who are finding it especially difficult. But one is always left with the knowledge that such help is touching only the fringe of a vast problem of poverty and unemployment.

Christmas Day itself, for the Christians, is a family occasion, and may follow much of the pattern to which you are accustomed, except that of course there is no such thing as television! After presents and new clothes (maybe the dress or shirt to last until the same time next year), the family will make it a point to attend church worship. Always on Christmas day, the churches are full, and there is a real spirit of thanksgiving and rejoicing. After service, everyone will make it a point to greet each other and wish them the compliments of the season. Back at home they may visit their neighbours and take them some of the festive food, with perhaps an S.G.M. portion, giving the Christmas story. If they cannot afford it, a chicken curry, with rice and other dishes, will follow. In a rich family, there may be a party in the evening, with fireworks, but there are not now many families who can afford such celebrations.

To what extent is Christmas just another festival for a particular community to celebrate, and to what extent does its real significance stand out? This is very much an individual question as far as the Christian goes, and it is true that there is still a large group of nominal Christians, who may attend church only at Christmas, Easter, and for weddings and funerals. There is, however, a real awakening taking place in some sections of both Catholic and Protestant Churches, and a new search for a real and living faith. We believe that as this new reality moves through the Christian community, it will, through them, reach out to other groups.

Many in the past have been educated in Christian schools, have Christian friends and relations, and need to see the change which Christ can make in a life. On the other hand, there are many village folk who have no idea of the message of Christmas, and it is to these that we must make an especial effort to present the message in a way they can understand. The very simplicity of the birth of Christ, into a poor, homeless and underprivileged background has a ready appeal in itself. We value your prayers this Christmas for the Christians in Sri Lanka, as we seek to present Christ.

**Seventy three
people
use
buried cups**

Bangu is a small village to the north-west of Kibokolo in the Vululu district of Angola.

In 1961, 128 aluminium communion cups were buried under the deacons house there. Then the Christians left the area and in the years that followed the house was destroyed and the land became overgrown.

When Christians returned to the area this year they managed to find the site of the house and began a search for the cups. At first it was unsuccessful, then some of the younger members





of the family, who were only children when they left, recalled that the cups had been buried under the veranda.

The place where the veranda had been was located and digging revealed the cups (photographs centre and right below). They were still in good condition and were used on the following Sunday when 73 people were present at the communion service.

There are already eighteen inquirers in this district and a church has been built (photographs below left and centre top).

The Rev. H. F. Drake was able to tell this story of the communion cups on his return from Angola, where he spent six days in September.

Mr. Drake reported on the conditions which he found in Angola, where there were serious shortages of food and materials, and yet many refugees had returned and many more were returning.

Villages have been rebuilt and land has been cleared and prepared for planting. By now the seeds should be sown and short term crops should be harvested early in 1976.

Most of the Angolan pastors who had been working in Zaire have returned and progress has already been made in organizing local churches.

A great time of thanksgiving is being planned at Kibokolo for 2-4 January 1976.

(Photos by P. Gilbert)





Sebastiao (left) takes part in the Christmas story, with his son Claudio as Joseph, and his niece as Mary, at Vila Operaria, Paranavai, Brazil.

(Photo: D. R. A. Punchard)

We shall think about Brazil this Christmas

write Derek and Joanna Punchard,
now home on a short furlough

THE practices for the special programmes for Christmas eve have already been going on for some time. Not only the children, of course, but the men, the women, the young people too, preparing to transform themselves for a night into shepherds, kings, Mary and Joseph to portray the ever-new old story of the love of God being born in Jesus Christ.

This year we shall not be there, as furlough has brought us back to England, but we are thinking of them there in Vila Operaria in

Paranavai. This year the message will be given by the new pastor, Valdemar Martins Vianna, whom the church, after ten years growth, has invited to the pastorate, with his wife Rilda and their three-year-old daughter. It hardly seems possible that nearly two years have passed since we encouraged the church to buy a manse, and that the loan is fully paid this month. Praise the Lord that the work here has culminated in the fulfilment of the missionary ideal to leave a self-supporting church.

Looking for work

Last Christmas Sebastiao was one of the shepherds. Like about half the members of the church, he came to Paraná from Espirito Santo twelve years ago, and is now the church secretary. He is a photographer and has a business in town. Francisco won't be a wise man again this year, as he has moved with his family to the State Capital, Curitiba, to get a better job. With the severe frost this year, many of the casual farm labourers, who will have no work next year, will be following him, and many more going to São Paulo, fast becoming one of the largest cities in the world.

Of course the children too, will play their part with poems and hymns telling the Christmas story. There should be some new faces this year of those who have been reached through the Holiday Bible School and children's organizations of the church in which Joanna has helped these last six years.

We shall be thinking too of those in Diamante do Norte, a small rural town some 50 miles from Paranavai, where much the same programme will be presented, with perhaps less polish than in the town, but with the same enthusiasm, and gaily coloured bedspreads and towels serving the same purpose. This is a coffee-growing region, and the church could lose a good number of members from the rural area with the frosts and increasing mechanization. We hope that the church will be able to support the evangelist who has for six months now been working with my pastoral guidance. He will spend Christmas in the new manse which the church have been building this year.

This church will benefit too, from the fulfilment of hopes and plans for a new work in Nova Londrina, a larger town, some fifteen

miles away, now linked with Paranavai by the new asphalt road, which is almost completed. September saw the arrival in the town of a new BMS missionary couple, Rev. Gerald and Johan Myhill who, apart from the new work there, are helping in Diamante and also Loanda, with its five congregations.

One of these is Porto Rico, on the great River Parana, which includes several new converts on islands in the river. Gerald will be visiting these with a boat recently purchased for the purpose. Among the converts there are twin sisters, living in an unusual situation. One is legally married, but both live together with the husband, in the same house and have several children by him, all of whom apparently live together quite happily. Now what?

Heat and snow!

Of the other congregations, Santa Cruz de Monte Castelo comes to mind, having been reopened in August after many years. On a recent visit to the Sunday afternoon meeting there were a total of 41 present, a good start, and the same night an eighteen-year old girl was baptized during the service in Loanda.

So, as we sit down to our roast turkey here in

England with the family, we shall be thinking of those we so recently left in the northwest of Paraná, and of the Christmas we usually spend with them. The biggest difference of course is the temperature, about 60°F of difference, which changes the whole atmosphere of the season. Somehow Father Christmas and his sleigh riding through the snow in the advertisements, with the tinsel and cotton wool decorations seem strangely out of place, but they're all there, with flashing coloured lights everywhere.

Nothing for men!

The usual gifts are exchanged, with the emphasis very much on the children, sometimes on Christmas Eve, though some wait till Christmas Day. The children buy presents for their mother, and the grandmother for the grandchildren. The husband buys a present for his wife but he doesn't get one at all!! This is the family day, and Christmas dinners are on a big scale, often served out of doors under a canvas awning for protection against the hot sun, or maybe a sudden rainstorm! Roast meat is the order of the day, and though the turkey may survive the day alive, there will be chicken, legs of pork and suckling pig, and plenty of roast beef, accompanied by boiled rice, beans in gravy, spaghetti, a cold potato salad, not to



Children spell out the message of Christmas—NATAL—at Vila Operaria, Paranavai, Brazil.

(Photo: D. R. A. Punchard)



**The Shepherd Scene
from the nativity story,
at Vila Operaria,
Paranavai, Brazil.**

(Photo: D. R. A. Punchard)

mention plenty of iced drinks to wash it all down. Afterwards, the womenfolk, who will have spent all morning preparing the meal, will do the washing-up, whilst the men enjoy the day as they sit chatting in the shade. Very often during the afternoon a party of younger folk is made up to go to the river on the back of a lorry, or in any vehicle that may be available for a swim to cool off.

We give thanks to God for these eight years in Brazil, for those who always remember us in prayer, and for many who, unknown to us, are enabling us to be in Brazil, through contributions to B.M.S. But most of all continue to remember in prayer those among whom we work, with whom our lives are shared in the great privilege and ideal of winning men to Christ.

Churches believe in witness and service

Carole Whitmee, B.M.S. missionary has sent a report of the Sambalpur Diocese.

Those who read B.M.S. literature are familiar with the names Diptipur and Balangir. B.M.S. missionaries continue to serve at both places.

Diptipur and Balangir are now within the Diocese of Sambalpur in the Church of North India. This diocese was formed in February 1972 and within it there are five Pastorate Unions (groups of churches), 53 paid pastors and 83 honorary pastors.

The Christian community totals just over 34,000, of which over 19,000 are communicant members. Most of these people, like all the

people in the area, are dependent on farming or weaving for their income.

A report of the diocese which has been prepared recently shows how active the church is and how its work affects the whole community.

Here are some of the sections from the report.

YOUTH WORK: We have throughout the Diocese of Sambalpur some very keen and active young people who participate in all kinds of Church activities. They are particularly active in singing and music.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR: There are 30 Societies in the Diocese holding regular meetings for young people of all ages. These societies meet together for an annual meeting. At the beginning of this

year, the Balangir Society celebrated its Silver Jubilee and here we really saw the Youth at their best as they worked, planned and prepared for this event for many months. The result was a tribute to any youth group and the final meeting was attended by more than a thousand people.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: There are about 100 Sunday Schools in the Diocese. Sunday Schools are in all Pastorates in the Diocese, though not yet in all congregations. Several of these Sunday Schools are very large. An honorary Sunday School Supervisor has been appointed by the Diocese because it is felt that Sunday School is a very real means of strengthening the Church.

GIRLS' BRIGADE: The first company of the Girls' Brigade has just been started in one of the Pastorates. It is hoped that this will be enlarged and other companies too may be started. The activities include a four square programme—Physical, Educational, Spiritual and Service.

EVANGELISM: Meetings for Evangelism, Revival and the deepening of spiritual life have been held in many of the Pastorates. Frequent Church activities give opportunities for witness and evangelism. Baptismal services are held in the open at different places in the Diocese throughout the year. The evangelistic effort of the Diocese is seen in the many new areas where work is being started. New churches are being formed and new members are coming into fellowship in several of the Pastorate Unions. There is one notable area in the Bargarh Pastorate Union that has been growing for many years. This is an area of Telugu people. It was a real answer to prayer when a Telugu/Oriya speaking man came into the Diocese to be the Pastor there. He was later joined by his sister who helps with the work among women and children and also runs a school for the children.

SCHOOLS and HOSTELS: Within the Diocese there is one Lower Primary School for boys and girls, four Middle English Schools for boys and for girls and one High School for boys with a separate Girls' Section. In all these schools daily Christian prayers are held and several of the schools have almost all Christian teachers. Some schools have almost 100% Christian

pupils, while others have as many as 40% non-Christians. Most Schools receive a 2/3rd Government Grant.

There are seven hostels within the Diocese—four for girls and three for boys. The demand for places in these hostels has been on the increase in recent years and this year some hostels have the highest number ever. Daily Christian prayers are held and opportunities for working among these children are unlimited. The children have come from a variety of backgrounds, many from extreme poverty. The hostels have been a means of saving them from malnutrition and many other dietary deficiencies that would otherwise have befallen them. In one girls' hostel during this year eleven decisions for Christ were recorded and nine of these young people were baptized. These young people attend Church, Sunday School and other youth activities.

HOSPITALS: The two hospitals in the Diocese are widely known and exercise a very real ministry both spiritually and medically. The bed strength of each is 120 in Khariar and 60 in Diptipur. The hospitals programme includes rural health, baby clinics, relief work in drought areas and children's feeding programmes.

WEST UTKAL AGRICULTURAL CENTRE: Apart from participating with the hospital in the relief work, the agricultural centre in Diptipur has been a means of helping many of the farmers to grow better crops. The introduction of high yielding short duration crops has been of great help in an area that is constantly drought prone. The Agricultural Centre has plots in which it demonstrates the growing of different varieties of rice. Recent experiments have been made in growing sunflowers and groundnuts for oil as well as other crops. The centre is also well known for the goats which it keeps and the milk they provide for the local people and especially for the hospital patients.

The area of the diocese faces the problems of poverty and illiteracy. Deaths from malnutrition have been recorded and many have meals very irregularly.

The lack of finance affects the work of the church but its aim remains, the winning of people for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mulvany House, Calcutta

The Rev. Ernest Madge, the General Overseas Secretary of the B.M.S. is spending some months of this year in Asia. When in Calcutta, India, he wrote about different aspects of life in the district and the articles will be appearing regularly in the *Missionary Herald*.

Mulvany House, Calcutta, is named after Miss Editha Mulvany, of the Church of England Zenana Mission, who, with lady missionaries of several denominations, founded it as a Home for Homeless and Friendless Indian Women and Girls. Opened in 1899, it still continues its good work.

A number of B.M.S. missionaries have served on its committees in Calcutta and London. Miss J. E. Knapman is on the Calcutta Committee, and has supplied much of the personal detail in this article. Mrs. H. C. Bowker is chairman and Mrs. E. G. T. Madge secretary, of the London Committee. Other Baptist ladies who were formerly missionaries in West Bengal, or who lived in Calcutta, are members. The chief function of this Committee is to administer trust funds invested in this country, the gift of earlier generations.

Tucked away in a side street of North Calcutta, the House provides accommodation for

eight old ladies and fifteen children under five, as well as a few young women needing protection.

Old and Young

One of the older residents of the House is Mrs. Biswas, a very fine Christian woman who was for many years a school teacher. She taught in a large mission school in Calcutta where her influence over a number of years was quite considerable. A little over ten years ago Mrs. Biswas, early in retirement, applied for admission to Mulvany House: at that time she was active and physically fit, and she very soon became a great asset to the House, able to support herself from her pension.

Shortly after moving in, however, she suffered quite a severe stroke which seriously impaired her speech and left one side of her body permanently paralysed. Although she made a good partial recovery, Mrs. Biswas remains virtually bed-ridden, but continues to enjoy the security of Mulvany House and her consistent cheerfulness continues to encourage those who share her room and others living in Mulvany House.

Finding a mother

Shanti is a young woman who has enjoyed the safety and shelter of Mulvany House for a number of years. Her childhood was far from happy and she has long since ceased to have contact with any of her own relatives. She was admitted to Mulvany House in need of special care, love and protection. Soon after Mrs. Biswas became a resident in Mulvany

House, a very natural close bond developed between the two women.

Ever since the older woman became ill, the younger—Shanti—has been her devoted companion and is regarded now as an adopted daughter. Shanti, coming from a non-Christian background was impressed by the Christian faith and witness of the other residents. After some time she herself became a Christian by personal conviction and just last year was baptized, becoming a member of the Church of North India in Calcutta.

Another long term resident is Sushila Hembron who came to reside temporarily in Mulvany House—until such time as she might be given a place in the Cheshire Home in Serampore . . . an institution for the chronically ill. The so called temporary residence has extended over more than five years! Sushila is a member of the Hindustani speaking congregation at Carey Baptist Church: totally bedridden, Sushila lies flat, face down, and is quite unable to rest in any other position.

With the help of a physio-therapist she has been able recently to raise herself on her elbows, but she is the most seriously handicapped person living in Mulvany House. However, visitors to the House are impressed always by her indomitable cheerfulness—usually it is she who offers to pray with those who come to encourage her, and most leave feeling it is they to whom someone has ministered.

Among the children living in Mulvany House is a small

boy who, with his older brother, was admitted because their mother died soon after he was born. Their father works to support himself and to contribute nominally towards their keep. The older boy is now in boarding school and his young brother will join him just as soon as he is five years old. Another little girl also looks on Mulvany House as 'home' as she has spent most of her five years there: she has a bad health record having contracted tuberculosis. She has no father, and her mother (working in a family as an ayah—domestic help) is unable to provide a settled home.

From time to time young expectant mothers come for protection and shelter. One such pregnant girl was brought several hundred miles from the Punjab, so that her pregnancy could be kept secret in her own home area. She seemed determined to take the minimum interest in her baby, who was later happily adopted by a couple locally in Calcutta who had been denied a family of their own.

Another young woman, a college student from the northern hills of India, came to take refuge in Mulvany House as soon as she realized her predicament. Only very shortly before her baby was born was she prevailed upon to inform her parents, fortunately, the loving reaction of her distressed but understanding Christian family enabled her to return quickly to her own home area. Unfortunately, her very attractive baby lived only a few days.

This piece of loving Christian service goes quietly on. Many Christians in Calcutta do not know of the Home's existence, and fewer still in this country have ever heard of it. Those who do know are determined that the Home shall continue its work for many years to come.

B.M.S. Stamp Bureau

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33 Brickhill Drive,
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MK41 7QA

Missionary Record

Arrivals

- 7 Sept. Miss M. Smith from Ludhiana, India
- 16 Sept. Miss M. White from Bogra, Bangladesh
- 30 Sept. Rev. and Mrs. R. Young and son from Dinajpur, Bangladesh
- 4 Oct. Miss M. Rasmussen from Curitiba, Brazil
- 6 Oct. Mr. J. T. Smith from Diptipur, India

Departures

- 5 Sept. Mr. and Mrs. O. Clark and family and Miss P. Woolhouse for CECO, Kimpese, Zaire
- Miss J. Cowey for Kisangani, Zaire
- Mr. P. Chandler and Miss G. Mackenzie for Bolobo, Zaire
- Miss R. Harris for Ngombe Lutete, Zaire
- Miss R. Montacute for I.M.E., Kimpese, Zaire
- 9 Sept. Mr. and Mrs. C. Sugg and family and Miss J. Sillitoe for Upoto, Zaire
- Rev. and Mrs. D. Norkett and daughter for Kinshasa, Zaire
- Miss V. M. Hamilton for Dacca, Bangladesh
- 24 Sept. Mr. J. Oliver for Upoto, Zaire
- 30 Sept. Miss B. M. Cooke for I.M.E., Kimpese, Zaire
- 3 Oct. Mr. N. Webber for Kivuvu, Kimpese, Zaire
- 5 Oct. Rev. and Mrs. F. W. J. Clark and family for Cascavel, Brazil
- 7 Oct. Mr. and Mrs. D. J. Hampshire and family for Cuttack, India
- Miss A. Kimber for I.M.E., Kimpese, Zaire
- Miss M. White for Colliers, U.S.A.

Deaths

- 11 Sept. In Worthing, Miss Annie Jessie Lambourne, aged 87, Angola Mission 1917-1945
- 24 Sept. In Australia, Mrs. Gertrude Edmeades (widow of Rev. R. W. Edmeades), aged 84, Indian Mission 1915-1945

Acknowledgements

The Secretaries acknowledge with grateful thanks the following legacies and gifts sent anonymously or without address.

(1st September, 1975 to 6th October, 1975)

General Work: Anon: (Cymro) £20.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: (Prove Me) £5.00; Anon: £2.00; Anon: (Cymro) £8.00; Anon: £5.00; Anon: £50.00; Anon: (Jean) £10.00; Anon: £1.00;

Medical Work: Anon: (G.W.) £5.00; Anon: (A Christian Prayer Partner) £3.00; Anon: (W.P.C.) £11.00;

Chandraghona Appeal: Anon: (M.E.G.) £10.00; Anon: £1.00; Anon: (E.M.W.) £5.00;

Relief Work: Anon: £5.00; Anon: (Edinburgh) £3.00; Anon: (E.M.C.) £5.00; Anon: (R.J.) £2.00;

Agricultural Work: Anon: (W.P.C.) £11.00.

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Mr. T. Wait	200.00

Nominations

Nominations
for the
Baptist Missionary Society
General Committee
should be received in the
Mission House by
15 January, 1976

Nominations should be sent to:
Rev. A. S. Clement,
B.M.S.,
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London, W1H 4AA.

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those who live without hope in this world?
those who have never heard of the coming of Jesus?

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