



"A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO US ALL"

Comment by **Mr. S. Mudd**
Assistant Overseas Secretary

THE chief trouble with Christmas is that it goes on for so long. We are constantly badgered, bullied and brainwashed into spending money. Everyone asks for it, commerce, charities, churches, children, and carol singers, so that our lives are bound up with getting and spending, and something is felt to be wrong if we do not have a record Christmas. Of course one ought to give. Of course presents are an excellent time-honoured way of celebrating. Of course we ought to give to charities, but somehow the thing has got out of hand, the universal demand on our pockets, the strident demand that we spend more and more, overwhelm the reason for celebrating. Celebrating for the sake of celebrating is a weary business. We need something to celebrate, and here most overseas minority churches can teach us a great deal. For them Christmas celebrations are centred round one thing only—the birth of Christ.

In Bangladesh, for example, it is true Christians buy new clothes at Christmas if they can afford them. Most churches try to have a communal feast, and church buildings are gaudily decorated with colour paper streamers. But this small outlay unhampered by high pressure salesmanship in no sense obscures the central fact of Christmas. The all night singing (done not for money, but for the joy of it), the dancing, the long church services, the visiting of one house after another, is a celebration of the birth of the Saviour of Mankind. The poor celebrate the birth of a homeless baby later to be a refugee and their joy at Christmas is a direct fulfilment of the song of Mary "He has filled the hungry with good things" and, perhaps, in the commercialized over indulgence which for so many in western countries is all that remains of Christmas, we see a further fulfilment "And the rich He has sent empty away". It is easier to celebrate Christmas in Bangladesh than in Britain, but if we can delve below the tinsel, the sugar, the bottles, and find a joy which is independent of commercial accretions, we can then be certain of being at one with those whose celebration is unalloyed. Then we celebrate with them God's incarnation for our sakes, and our joy in that is one.

"NATAL"

Just like home

BOBBLER, tinsel, fairy lights on shining Christmas trees, even snow (artificial, I hasten to add), and all the trappings that go to make Christmas as we know it, are seen in the larger cities in Brazil where, from early December, the stores stay open until late on in the evening to encourage shopping. The Christmas rush as we know it in Glasgow or London is just as hectic in some of the Brazilian cities.

Brazil however spells contrast! Because of its vastness and many and varied cultural patterns, Christmas activities vary from place to place.

Echoes of Europe in the city

Curitiba is the capital city of the State of Paraná and it has a fairly strong European influence. Second generation Germans and Dutch spend Christmas much the same as their fathers did, including the lovely real pine tree with small candles, the Lutheran Christmas services and some lovely tasty German cooking. A late Christmas Eve mass is well attended by the predominant Roman Catholic population, after which many families gather in either the parents', or a relative's home for a "Ceia" or supper. Usually this is a big meal with many different delicious dishes and of course drink is provided.

Simplicity in the country

Christmas for people of the interior is quite different. Very much more modest as money is not available and in some areas difficulties are met in buying even the basic necessities. The Christmas dinner may consist of chicken, the usual rice and beans and perhaps as a treat some home made sweet.

No joy for one family

For some, Christmas is no different from any other time of the year, no receiving, no special dinner, no church worship. Such was the case of little Katia and her brothers and sisters. In some ways, Christmas time was worse. It tended to emphasize their poverty, no toys were received, but rather they saw their father come in more drunk than usual (if that were possible!), and a mother who, as well as being unable to cope, seemed to show little affection for them.

Conditions became so bad that a notice was read out over the local radio asking for people who would be willing to take the children . . . the notice was repeated quite a number of times.



Children share in a Christmas service in Brazil

Katia's great gift

Dona Walmura, a wonderful Christian and a member of the Baptist church, who, despite having six children of her own, admittedly some grown up by that time, decided that God wanted her to give a home to one of these children. So Katia came home! She was four years old, very thin, dirty and neglected. Things were not easy to begin with and much patience, love and understanding was required on the part of Dona Walmura and the other members of the family.

Christmas arrived and Katia, for the first time, was in a caring atmosphere. As time passed she was also able to realize that the greatest of all gifts was given to her by God.

Katia is now eight years old and a very bright, intelligent and happy little girl. Last year Katia was one of the "angels" in the Christmas play.

Dona Walmura's home is not one of luxury, at times they have some difficulty financially, but it is a home where the true spirit of love, caring and giving is evident, not only at Christmas but throughout the year.

As the strains of the Christmas Carol ring out again this year, "Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love Divine, Love was born at Christmas . . ." remember that many as yet know nothing of this love, or of what Christmas is all about.



THANK GOD FOR THE CHEMIST ROUND THE CORNER

SUE EVANS, writing about the medical work at Tondo, Zaire, reports that the shortage of drugs still exists, and inflation has hit hard in their area. She feels we would find it hard to appreciate that for over twelve months they have lacked Elastoplast which causes some difficulty with the numerous cuts and bruises of the 1,000 school children at Tondo.

Unbelievably too, they have also been without aspirins for four months of this year—and this in a country where there are a lot of fevers due to malaria.

"I mention these points," she says "to give you some insight into the problems that are facing those in Zaire today, and I would ask your prayers especially for the medical work."



MR. SUDHIR SINGH

IS secretary of the Faridpur Baptist Union in Bangladesh. Responsibility was thrust on his shoulders at the early age of 22 when his father died and, as he was the eldest son, the support of a joint family of some 25 or more relatives became his concern. His father had held important responsibilities in the church and most of these, together with social responsibilities, were passed on to Mr Singh. He holds office in both the district union and in the Bangladesh Baptist Sangha (formerly the Baptist Union of Bangladesh) and is a highly respected man of strong Christian zeal.

AN L.P. FOR THE B.M.S.

THE Sutton Baroque Ensemble, which attracted attention when in 1974 it was invited to give a concert at the Glamis Musicale held in Glamis Castle, has published a record of its performances of pieces by composers ranging from William Byrd in the sixteenth century to Cesar Frank in the nineteenth, including a recitative and aria from Handel's cantata, "Nel Dolce del Obliv Callina", and one of his finest flute sonatas. The performers are Christine Ward (treble recorder and soprano guitar), Catherine Wyatt (descant and treble recorders), Mollie Hanna (soprano), Nigel Perona-Wright (flute and treble and tenor recorders) and Derek Smith (organ, harpsichord, and bass recorder). The recording is good and the standard of performance excellent. Copies of the record can be obtained from Mr. Derek Smith, 4 Hillbroome Road, Sutton, Surrey, at £2.95 each. Profits on the venture will be devoted to the funds of the B.M.S.

Remember to get your 1977

B.M.S. Prayer Guide

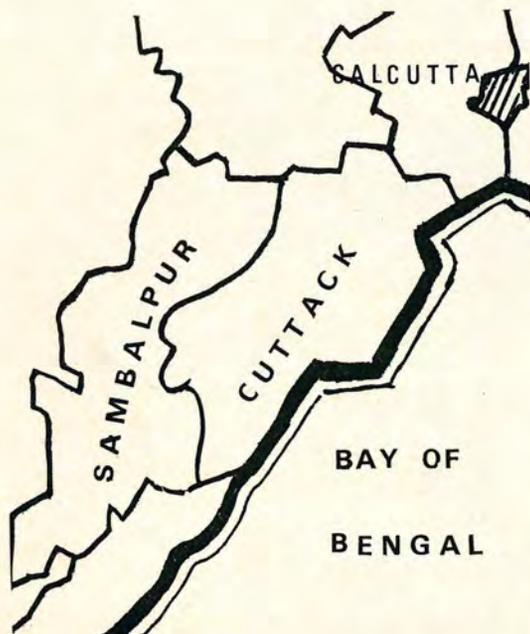
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A NEW "BAPTIST" BISHOP

IN the Church of North India Bishop Jugal Mohanty has been caring for two Dioceses, those of Cuttack and Sambalpur in Orissa. It was always intended that these should be under separate bishops and now that it has become possible for this original plan to be implemented, the Rev. Lingaraj Tandy, one of our Baptist ministers in West Orissa, has been appointed Bishop of Sambalpur. This is a very popular appointment because the Rev. Tandy has always worked in the West Orissa district and the Christians there feel he understands their circumstances and their hopes. He was brought up in the Balangir church by a Christian widowed mother, and in his youth he was leader of the Christian Endeavour. His early training was with the Uktal Pastor Training College and later he graduated B.A. Then he entered the Yeotmal Theological College to read for his B.D. He is a very fine evangelical minister, highly respected, who will value the prayers of his Christian brethren as he faces the pressures of this responsible office.

CELEBRATION WITHOUT A HOLIDAY!

by David Boydell

ARE you dreaming of a "White Christmas" this year? Or maybe you will be singing "See amid the winter's snow". In either case, you will have to make a mental adjustment to try to imagine a sandy beach, fringed with palm-trees, beyond which the small town of Bolobo can be seen.

From the river you can see some traditional mud and thatch huts, a growing number of large brick houses with corrugated tin roofs, the secondary school and the imposing white walls of the new hospital; all of these interspersed with tall mango and palm trees and with the sun beating down from the bright blue skies. As we stand there, with women washing their pots and pans in the brown waters of the river, and children splashing about in the water, their brown bodies glistening in the sun on a hot Sunday morning, we hear sounds coming from the village.

"Come and worship"

We walk towards the sounds, and soon we distinguish the regular beat of drums, and over the air come the strains of "Hark the herald angels sing", though the words sound unfamiliar, and the rhythm sounds more lively than we are accustomed to. It's Christmas in Bolobo! This service, on the Sunday morning before Christmas, is the climax of a whole week of special services in Bolobo.

Each day, at about 4.30 p.m. when most people return from their work in the fields or elsewhere, we have held a service in one or other of the six "prayer chapels" (which are strategically placed throughout Bolobo) to remind ourselves of the real meaning of Christmas.

Room for all

As we approach the church, decorated for the occasion with palm fronds, we see crowds of people outside. Mothers with small children are sitting on the steps, so they can follow the service without their children distracting other members of the congregation. Teenage boys are leaning on the windowsills, looking into the church, since there is no room inside on this special occasion, all 800 seats are filled. All, that is, except for the space that has been reserved for us on a bench near the pulpit, and into which we squeeze ourselves as the hymn ends and the congregation sits down.



Nativity
play
in
Zaire

**Behind
the scenes
of the play**



“Sing in Exultation”

Three different choirs sing, and a powerful sermon is preached to the rather voluble congregation. True to African custom, when the preacher asks a question during his sermon, such as “Isn’t that so?”, they reply as one man, “Yes!” After the sermon, and a further hymn, when one might expect the service, which has already lasted nearly two hours, to end, the congregation sits down again and it is time for the special Christmas offering. This differs from the usual Sunday offering in that, instead of the plate being passed round, people go to the front to give their offering while singing hymns. People are called out in groups, according to which part of Bolobo they live in and there is a certain spirit of competition between various groups! Another hymn follows, the service is over, and the congregation disperses to the six “quartiers” of Bolobo.

On Christmas Eve, a special carol service is normally held in the church in which various tribal groups sing carols or hymns in their own language. It is a very enjoyable time, and serves to underline the unity of the church despite the diversity of its members. The usual all night carol singing round the village was not held in Bolobo last year, though it was held in many of the villages in the interior as usual. This normally begins at about 9 p.m. on Christmas Eve, and in some villages only comes to an end long after dawn, though numbers tend to get fewer as the night progresses.

As at the Sunday service, most of the hymns and carols would be familiar to British ears, though the manner in which they are sung might seem strange at first! Apart from periodic intervals, when singing stops and the skins of the drums are heated over the fire to give a more resonant sound, there is no rest between hymns, and as soon as the last verse of one hymn ends, someone strikes up another hymn, which is taken up by all and sundry. In some villages near Bolobo, the singing is done in one particular place, round a “camp fire”, which successfully keeps mosquitoes at a respectful distance! In others, where the majority of the population may be church members, the singers will go round the village, singing as they go, pausing at certain houses, whose inhabitants may well make a special Christmas contribution to the church.

“Now in flesh appearing”

All the activities mentioned above took place in the Bolobo area last year and despite the initial dismay, perhaps the fact that Christmas Day is no longer a public holiday will have at least one positive result: that of preventing Christmas from being as over commercialized as it is in Britain. Christmas time in Zaire, although so different from a European Christmas, is still a time when the wonder of the Incarnation of Jesus is very much to the fore in the minds of Christians, and not, as so often in Europe, relegated to a secondary role amongst all the trappings of a European Christmas.



Peter and Susan Cousins

"The Lord's call to serve Him overseas came to each of us before we met." Peter's interest in Brazil began five years ago when he became aware of the need for Christian workers in Latin America. After a period as a Physics teacher he trained at the London Bible College and then, for a term, at St. Andrew's Hall.

Susan, a qualified nurse, spent two years at a mission hospital in Zambia as a V.S.O. On returning home to Port Glasgow she was very unsettled and felt that she ought to consider work overseas again. Eventually she applied to the Society and went to St. Andrew's Hall, where she met Peter.

"We are ministering at Holmer Green Baptist Church and hope to go to Brazil early next year."



Lyn and Carol Bulkeley

We are hoping to go to Zaire in the autumn of 1977, but at present we are in Antwerp, completing our training and experience by taking a course in Tropical Medicine.

We both trained at Westminster Hospital, London, where we met, Lyn as doctor and Carol as a nurse. We have since worked at Worthing and Bury St. Edmunds and have been members of the Garland Street Baptist Church for two years. We have a son Paul, who was born in August 1975.

NEW WORK



Martin Stagles

I am a member of the Baptist Church at Wokingham, and in my pre-Christian days at school I wanted to become a town planner. However, God invaded me and soon reset my intentions towards working as a doctor in the tropics.

Since I qualified as a doctor, nearly two and a half years ago at the Medical School at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I have been widening my medical experience.

I am now taking a tropical medicine course in Antwerp, prior to serving in a hospital in Zaire.

David and Sheila Brown

We were both converted and nurtured in our early Christian lives in Penlan Baptist Church, Swansea. Fifteen years ago we attended a missionary rally in Swansea, and quite independently felt the call of God to missionary work and offered ourselves. The advice from B.M.S. was that I should first complete my engineering training before taking any further steps.

Whilst David continued with his engineering, Sheila left her profession as shorthand/typist and

ERS FOR GOD

spent three years obtaining her S.R.N. in Morryston Hospital, Swansea, in preparation for missionary work. Since then the Lord led David through Theology College at Cardiff, and through seven happy and fruitful years of ministry in Elim Baptist Church, Pontllanfraith, Gwent. More recently, however, Brazil has been more and more on our hearts and after much prayer and heart searching, we felt sure of the Lord's seal and confirmation.

With three young children, and a happy church to consider, this has not been a step we have taken lightly or hastily, but knowing that we are in His will, and shall be kept by His all sufficient Grace, we shall be leaving for Brazil in January 1977.



Jean Flowers

It has long been a family joke that the only red-haired member of the Flowers clan was born in a thunderstorm on a March day in Leeds in 1957.

My colouring was almost as big a surprise to my parents as it was to the Zairians to whom I was introduced at Kimpese in August as their new agricultural volunteer helper. The announcement that I would be driving the same tractor that Keith Hallam had managed the previous year provoked peals of mirth.

When I left school I went to Germany for nine months' voluntary service in an old people's hospital. On returning to England my childhood desire to work on the land was reawakened and prior to entering an agricultural college I worked on a farm in Derbyshire.

When a letter from my former minister, Rev. Jim Grenfell, arrived from Zaire, mentioning the need for an agricultural volunteer at C.E.C.O., I jumped at the chance to work for people in a poorer country. Both my grandfather and uncle had served with the B.M.S.

I am a member of the Thomas Helwys Church, Nottingham.

TATA MBIEME'S CHRISTMAS

Jessie Boydell discusses it with him

AS Christmas approaches in Bolobo, it can be quite refreshing to notice the comparative absence of the commercial aspects of Christmas which can be such a problem (and give such a headache!) at home in Britain. What preparations do people here make for Christmas? The answer to this question can vary greatly, depending on the income of the family and whether the family is Christian or pagan. Tata Mbieme, who works for us, is a fairly typical example of a citizen from a Christian background. Let's ask him a few questions.

- Q. Tata, tell us what you do about Christmas presents in your family?
- A. Well Mama, I always give my wife an elamba to make a new outfit for herself, and with what's left she will make some clothes for the children.
- Q. How many children do you have, and do they get presents?
- A. I have eight children and six grandchildren. The ones who are here in Bolobo all get a gift of some sort: clothes if I have enough money left, and if not, a small sum of money per child to spend on minkati or on whatever they want to buy.
- Q. Do your wife and family give you presents?
- A. Oh no! It's not our custom to give anything to the man of the house, but I hear that they now do that in Kinshasa. Of course, my wife prepares and provides a lot of the food for the "feast" from her garden in the forest.

- Q. What "feast", Tata?
- A. On Christmas Day, we have a big meal with beef or goat or mutton with kwanga and mpondu.
- Q. Where does the meat come from?
- A. The goat or sheep we buy here in Bolobo, while the cows are bought from Malebo and cut up and sold here on the mission. I generally buy about three kilos of beef for my household.
- Q. But what about the people who cannot afford to buy meat or who cannot obtain it?
- A. They go to the forest to hunt for antelope or monkey or wild boar, which are even nicer than beef. On the rare occasions when they don't catch anything, the family will have to be content with fish from the river.

"What your joyful news today?"

Despite the absence of so many things that to us are part and parcel of Christmas, nevertheless the happiness and joy of the occasion is hardly ever obscured. One Christmas Day, a year or two ago, on meeting Pastor Eboma, our Bible School director, on the road, I asked him the stock Lingala question, "What news?" With a beautiful smile, he replied, "Just great joy because of Christmas!"



Glossary

- ELAMBA, a piece of material, six yards long, and of very colourful design.
- MINKATI, doughnuts.
- KWANGA, very solid rubbery lumps made from manioc flour.
- MPONDU, pounded manioc leaves, cooked with palm oil and sometimes mixed with tinned fish.
- MALEBO, cattle ranch to the south of Bolobo, a three hour truck ride away.

Acknowledgments

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

(1st-24th September, 1976)

General Work: Anon: £30.00; Anon: £9.98; Anon: £5.50; Anon: (One of the least, Guildford) £10.00; Anon: £2.00; Anon: (Faith) £20.00.

Medical Work: Anon: £5.00.

Relief Work: Anon: £2.50; Anon: (Grateful) Edinburgh £5.00; Anon: (Edinburgh) £5.00; Anon: (R.P.) £5.00; Anon: (C.M.W.) £5.00.

Agricultural Work: Anon: £40.00.

Transport Target Project: Anon: £5.00.

LEGACIES

	£	p
Miss E. M. Holroyd	179.11	
Mrs. L. N. James	100.00	
Mrs. E. M. Kimpton	300.00	
Mrs. M. D. Lewis	4,178.76	
W. E. F. Palmer	5,000.00	
Mrs. Payen	50.00	
Georgina Rees	888.35	
Mrs. A. Stocks	10,000.00	
In memory of Mary McHugh, from Pat and Ron, New Jersey	5.00	



CHRISTMAS PICTURE

The B.M.S. has a series of full colour pictures, approximately 28" x 15". One of these depicts a scene from a nativity play performed by young people of the Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church, Colombo, Sri Lanka. It would make an added attraction to your Christmas festivities and can be obtained from the B.M.S., 93/97 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA. Price 30p.

Missionary Record

ARRIVALS

- 1 September. Rev. D. and Mrs. Grainger from Campo Maurao, Brazil.
- 3 September. Miss E. Talbot from Kathmandu, Nepal.
- 5 September. Miss G. S. Evans from Tondo, Zaire.
- 25 September. Rev. W. C. and Mrs. Fulbrook from Pottinga, Brazil.

DEPARTURES

- 7 September. Miss V. Green from Ngombe Lutete and Miss E. Newman for Kinshasa, Zaire. Rev. M. G. and Mrs. Collins and family for Cornelio Procopio, Brazil.
- 10 September. Miss M. J. Greenaway and Miriam for Upoto, Mr. P. Chandler and Miss D. Osborne for Bolobo, Zaire.
- 12 September. Miss M. A. Hughes for Kisangani, Zaire.
- 14 September. Miss M. M. Mills for Diptipur, India.
- 15 September. Dr. J. D. L. and Mrs. Bulkeley and son for study in Belgium.
- 22 September. Mr. and Mrs. D. Sorriil and son for Chittagong, Bangladesh.
- 24 September. Dr. M. Stagles for study in Belgium.
- 29 September. Rev. G. H. and Mrs. Grose for New Delhi and Miss M. Bushill for Delhi, India.
- 5 October. Rev. F. J. Grenfell for Kinshasa, Zaire.
- 6 October. Rev. A. G. and Mrs. Lewis for Dinajpur, Bangladesh.
- 12 October. Miss J. Sargent for Orissa, India.
- 13 October. Miss V. Campbell for Dacca, Bangladesh.

Nominations

Nominations
for the
Baptist Missionary Society
General Committee
should be received in the
Mission House by
15 January, 1977

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

GOD'S WAY

Architecture to Medicine

IT was in a train during the blitz that God spoke unmistakably to James saying, "I want you to be a medical missionary". An impossible position for a young man who was merely an office boy to an architect and earning a very meagre wage. The cost of medical training seemed astronomical, but committing himself and the little he had to the Lord he began to discern that he was in the service of the God of the impossible.

Independently, and in another context, God also spoke to the young lady who was one day to be his wife, saying, "I want you to go to Africa". So began an exciting adventure of obedience to the guiding of God.

Not here today and there tomorrow

After graduation from Edinburgh, James and his wife Peggy were accepted for service in Zaire (still called Congo then), and set sail in the autumn of 1948, glad of the long sea voyage to reflect. A six week period of orientation in Leopoldville (now Kinshasa) was followed by a four day journey on a stern-wheel paddle steamer to Mbandaka. A smaller boat then took them up one of the tributaries of the River Zaire and after a week's travel brought them to their first destination. Here they engaged in language study and hospital techniques for six months before going on by lorry to Yuli where they were to work at a primitive bush hospital.

"Cut my throat!"

The equipment was practically non-existent. One scalpel, one pair of scissors, a student's roll of anatomy instruments, and an ordinary darning needle. The operating theatre could be observed through the mosquito-netted window-opening and always there was a crowd of incredulous observers. If the door was opened to let in more air when the heat got intolerable, invariably it also let in the stray goat, or chicken. This hospital served 200 villages in the area yet had no ambulance to bring in the critically ill.

One day James was stung by a scorpion and became so ill from the poison that everything



depended on Peggy being able to pull him through. Another time he succumbed to a branchial cyst and handing a scalpel to Peggy said, "cut my throat!" She couldn't bring herself to do it, so he had to operate on himself.

The operating table collapses

A red letter day was when some much needed equipment arrived for the hospital and with great joy it was unpacked and set up in the theatre. One of the first people to benefit from this new equipment was a local chief who was admitted to the hospital with a strangulated hernia. He was an immense man, and at the critical moment when the local anaesthetic had been administered, the table collapsed under his weight and the instrument trolley went flying scattering sterile dressings and instruments all over the floor.

The unexpected

"Serving suffering humanity is not a romantic pursuit especially in such primitive conditions," writes Peggy, "and we needed the power of the Holy Spirit constantly to keep us in line with the will of God, but as the years slipped by we learnt to live in and love our African home. We did what we could to heal the sick and tell the people about Jesus. By attending to their physical needs, we could often gain their confidence and lead them to realize their urgent spiritual needs. Then the unexpected happened. We never quite know which way God is going to lead and often His decision takes us completely by surprise." The deterioration of Peggy's health led to their coming home for good.

God prepares

There was much they could not understand at the time but, says Peggy, "the simple conditions, lack of facilities, equipment and drugs, were imprinted on our minds to such an extent that in years to come we were burdened and constrained to do something constructive to alleviate a situation which was far from restricted to Africa!" Such an opportunity came when Dr. James Burton was appointed Medical Director to the B.M.S. in 1964. At that time our National Health Service was rebuilding and re-equipping hospitals in this country. A variety of equipment, not thought to be advanced enough, was being sold for scrap, but these things were desperately needed in the Mission Hospitals of the world. James had the vision of creating a non-profit making company to buy up and refurbish such equipment and despatch it to wherever the need was greatest. With encouragement from other Medical Officers at the Conference of British Missionary Societies, ECHO (The Supply of Equipment to Charity Hospitals Overseas) was formed and grew over the years into a "Ministry of Supply". By 1976 it had an annual budget of £260,000 and had shipped overseas to the help of hospitals, equipment to the value of £1,051,000, but at a cost to them of only £263,000.

New frontiers

As world inflation and world poverty increased, making the work of medical missions so much harder, the demand for ECHO's services developed far ahead of expectation. It was no use supplying equipment if the vital life saving

drugs for their work were not available. Why should not ECHO extend its services to the bulk buying of a shipment of drugs on the same non-profit making basis to the help of the Mission Hospitals?

Peggy Burton tells this fascinating story in a book called *Flying Forceps*, priced 80p from the Victory Press.

NO CONCORDES but . . .

THE B.M.S. is indebted to the Missionary Aviation Fellowship for the great help it gives to our society and other missionary agencies in flying personnel into and out of remote areas, or overflying difficult terrain. The International M.A.F. now has eighty planes flying in twenty-four countries.

The type of plane operated by the British Section is the well tried and popular Cessna which can be seen on most airfields in this country. Even so, each of these planes cost £28,000 and has to be flown by a fully qualified and licenced pilot with at least 1,000 hours of flying experience.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING! LET'S CELEBRATE!

ARE you wondering what you can do to make your Christmas Services a little different this year? Why not make it a time when you think of how they celebrate Christmas in other countries. The new study pack for teachers, produced jointly by the B.M.S. and the Methodist Church Overseas Division, will give you details of the Christmas celebration in Asia, Africa, and Brazil. There is also a very short play about a refugee family in Bangladesh. Also included in the pack is material on other Christian festivals overseas (Easter, Harvest, and other celebrations). The pack is available from the B.M.S. Young People's Department, 93/97 Gloucester Place, London W1H 4AA, price 50p plus p & p.

A MIRACLE THAT PRODUCED A FILM

An interview with Mr. Hugh Baddeley

TO get there at all was quite a miracle," stated Mr. Hugh Baddeley, describing his consignment to produce the film "This is Bangladesh".

The assassination of Bangladesh's premier earlier in the year, political unrest and military coups just before departure date, threatened the whole project. Then, miraculously, the air ban was lifted and the film could be made.

Four and a half weeks of continuous travelling provided Mr. Baddeley and his colleagues with much excitement. He recalled, in particular, the trip to Barisal, describing it as "the trip that had everything".

"We had one day's respite during our whole tour," he said, "the first day's journey in the old paddle steamer 'Comet'—a hang-over from the British Raj—sitting on the foredeck, sipping coffee and watching the marvellously colourful river scene. Arriving in Barisal at night we had to load £5,000 worth of equipment on to rickshaws. It was terrifying, watching all that equipment going off into the night . . . wondering if we would ever see it again!"

The return journey was even more hazardous. The "Comet" had broken down. An old van, donated to serve as a mobile church building, but which still bore along its sides the slogan—"Meredith & Drew Biscuits Ltd."—was pressed into service. "Mobile Church or not, it looked and felt just like a biscuit van to us," commented Mr. Baddeley. "The equipment was carefully loaded into it and, sitting on borrowed dining-room chairs, we hung on grimly as the van proceeded to roar along the Bangladesh roads, leaping into the air at each pot-hole and hurling all our precious equipment about. Then the van would suddenly stop and the driver would shout, 'All out, ferry'. The fourth river crossing proved the most dangerous. It was too shallow to allow the van to board the ferry. Indeed the weight of the equipment alone caused the boat to touch bottom for most of its two-and-a-half hour crossing. But safe at last the journey to

Dacca was continued by a very old and almost windowless taxi."

In recalling his journey Mr. Baddeley spoke highly of the Christian communities in Bangladesh, and of the missionaries endeavouring to cope with the needs of the people by projects in education, medicine and agriculture.

"I enjoyed a oneness with them," he explained, "and I was very impressed with the devout and enthusiastic congregations. I was amazed that these communities in such a predominantly Muslim and Hindu country, should have these Christian groups so marvellously loyal and enthusiastic. That they are prepared to erect a building for worship and been seen to worship in such circumstances, I find, tremendous.

Then again, the baptismal services we witnessed were very moving, particularly that in Bhutia. It was a most inspiring scene—a great line of people singing as they scrambled down the river bank. It was like a flood, a river of colour pouring down, and so very impressive—as I think the film shows."

In truth it does, Mr. Baddeley. Thank you!

Interview by Keith Hodges.

"THIS IS BANGLADESH"

16 mm Sound, Colour Film

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