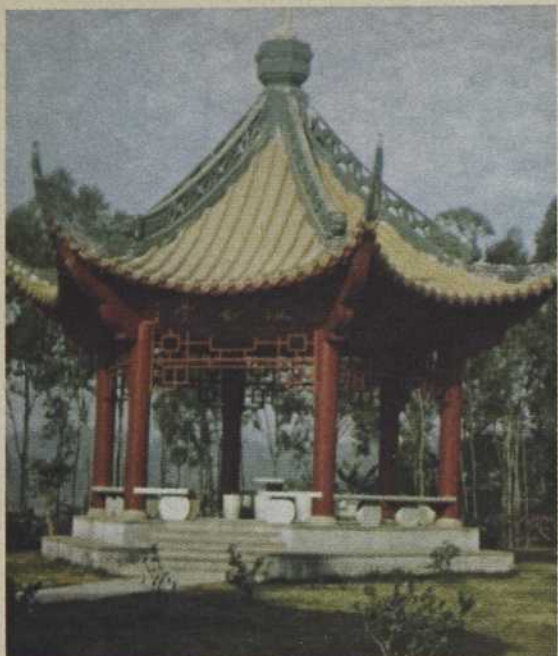




Precursor

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THE PRECURSOR

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MALAWI

OUR MISSIONARIES



by Andrew S. Chirwa, teacher
at Rumpi Secondary School,
alumnus of the Marists' School
and of the Madagascar University.



They come to our homeland and we welcome them with open arms and open hearts. The way is long and arduous that stretches out before them, so they must reflect seriously as they take up the challenge.

In order to understand the people to whom they want to convey the Good News, they must first of all learn their language which proves a key to local traditions and customs. For the tyro missionary, it is no sinecure to wade through multiple dialects and tongues strangely different from his own. He must study



He who wishes to learn the Bantu language, ought to look for someone who is gentle, talkative, and with whom he can easily exchange ideas.

almost night and day if he wants to succeed. Together with many of my compatriots I think that, as a rule, Europeans and Americans easily learn another language of European origin, nearly all such languages having something in common. This does not apply to Bantu languages or dialects; here a crucial problem arises for the foreign student.

How can we help our missionaries overcome this difficulty? As in the study of all languages or dialects, practice makes perfect. We must urge them to speak and write as much as possible even if this entails much work on their part. Perhaps a good idea would be for the missionary to find himself an obliging, talkative friend with whom he could freely exchange ideas and who would be willing to point out his mistakes. Now, let us suppose such a friend is available. The missionary's apprenticeship begins. On the one hand, he ought to avoid getting into arguments regarding the intricacies of phonetics, spelling, phrasing, etc., peculiar to Bantu languages; on the other hand, his instructor should readily answer questions put by the student in order to understand the language better. I recall how a Malawian friend of mine who was trying to learn Malagasy spent nearly all his time arguing with his Malagasy teacher who finally gave up in

disgust. Look out, you who want to learn a foreign tongue! If you really feel the need of arguing, do so in a sensible, logical fashion.

Until now, I have mentioned only the tyro missionary whose lot has been cast among the country's elite. The case is bound to differ for those who live in a rural area, where textbooks are unavailable, and where he has to depend entirely on the language as it is spoken by village folk. In such a case, it is essential for the tyro missionary *to adapt himself to the level of the rural population*. He must accept something of their traditions, their way of life. For instance, he should try to eat as they do, to exchange compliments in the local fashion . . .

I must admit that in spite of all these difficulties, our missionaries courageously endeavour to learn local languages. They may often be seen, squatting on the floor in country houses, chatting with villagers and learning the language, not as it is taught in books, but as it is spoken by human beings.

The climate poses another problem for the missionaries. Although they are not used to our sultry weather, they patiently adapt themselves to conditions as they find them. They even find the strength to work, in spite of excessive heat, in our hospitals, schools,

The training of future priests is part of the missionary's ministry. Here, is Father A. Bernard Chima with a few seminarians.



The inexperienced missionary must simplify his ways and manners, i.e., be on a par with the villagers, getting used to their food, etc.



missions, social centres, thereby contributing to the welfare and development of the people. From the point of view of climate, our country may be divided into three regions; but everywhere prevails dry sultry weather. However, heat intensity varies according to regions. Our missionaries keep in mind that in order to develop an emerging country such as ours, they must give up many a personal satisfaction.

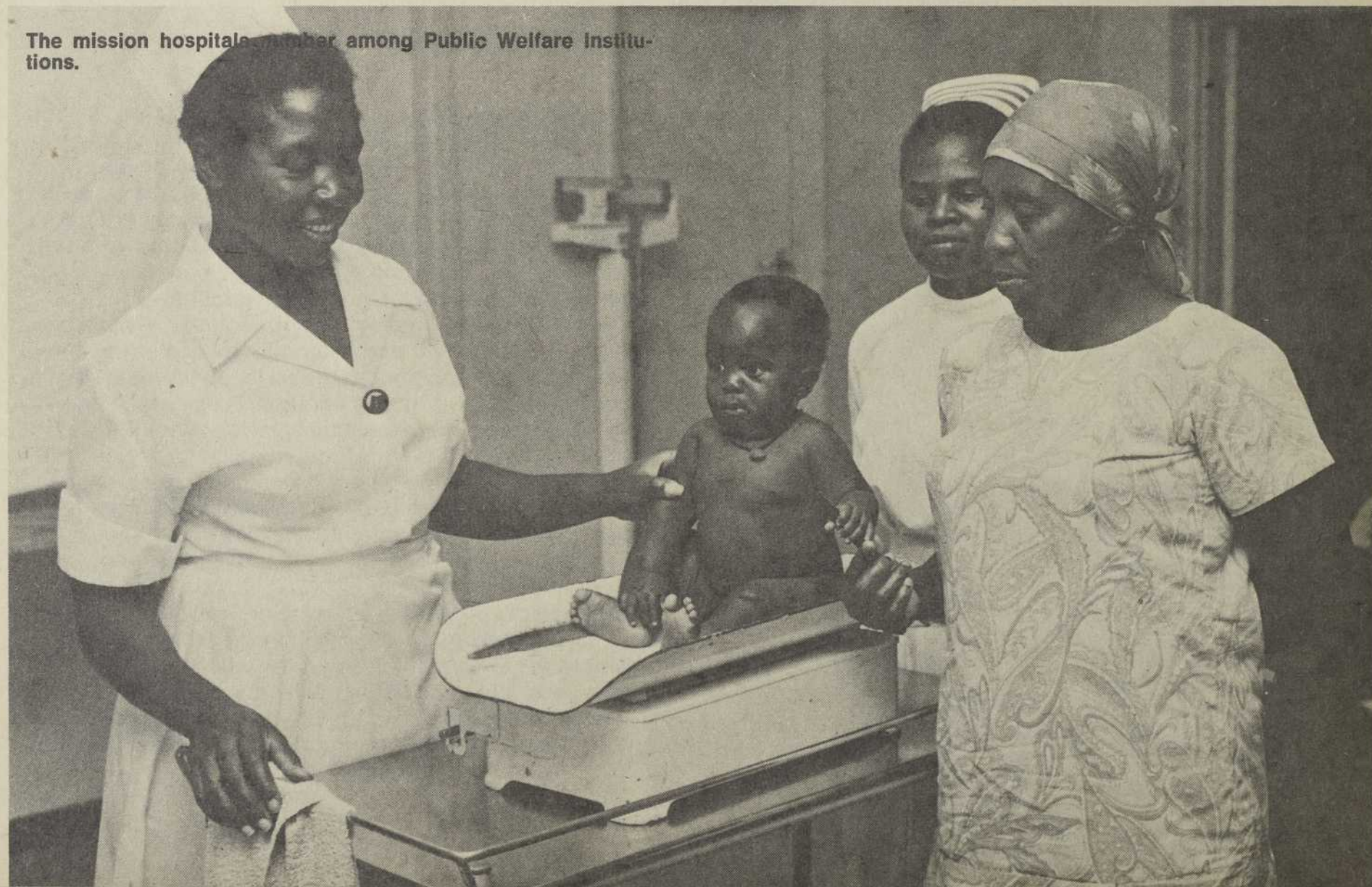
Regarding development in this country, I must say that both Protestant and Catholic missionaries have done much to promote progress in our Malawi. As a case in point, we may mention President Kamuzu Banda educated by Protestant missionaries. The latter first sent him to South Africa, then to America, and finally to Great Britain where he completed his studies. He is really the "Product" of missionaries who have made it possible for him to develop his homeland. We ought to be thankful to Protestants who have fostered such a "Product".

Our people benefit by mission hospitals. Expert care is lavished upon all, even those who have not a penny to their names. Missionaries who respect human dignity and personal effort, willingly accept in return for their care a little corn grown in the person's garden patch, beans, peanuts, and other produce of African

Village panorama. Note the hen-house (centre) and the *thuli* (front) hewed out of a log. Housewives use it to pound maize with a pestle.



The mission hospital number among Public Welfare Institutions.



gardens. Those who are completely destitute are nonetheless cared for and even given food when famished. The missionary's heart goes out to all, rich or poor alike. If the former claim privacy because they have grown more sensitive to hygienic standards, they are expected to pay for the room they require or for any extras. Thanks to the money received, the missionaries are enabled to buy drugs or appliances the better to assist the poor, the outcasts . . . But, the missionaries are perhaps unaware of what people at times say about such matters. Judging by appearances, the latter complain, "That's how it goes! They save the best places and the best medicine for the rich, because they pay more. Doesn't this prove that missionaries want money first of all? They care for the poor only afterwards . . ." As you know, we usually respect someone according to his work or according to what he hands out.

Another problem our missionaries have to contend with is food. Our ordinary staple food consists of *nsima* (corn mush), seasoned with vegetables, herbs, meat, or fish. Maybe, someone will remark that European dishes also contain fish, meat, vegetables, etc. But when we speak of our "maternal" dish, we mean the way that dish is cooked. Food displays an important role in individual wellbeing. A foreigner or a visitor with whom we intend to work deserves to be well fed. But, in order to communicate and work with the people of the country, where he is sent, the missionary is expected to put himself on a level with them. For his part, the indigene must take it upon himself to assist his new friend adapt to the situation, and get used to local food.

I mentioned that our country was divided into three regions from the point of view of climate and geography. A subtler division exists from the point of view of the various tribes who inhabit these regions, each with its distinctive customs and traditions. The latter play an important role in our spiritual life.

The Chewa tribe, for instance, dominates the central region. Tam-tams form an integral part of African life, particularly among the Chewa where it is closely linked with religious rite. These instruments are the core of every sacred dance, the core of ancestor worship. They are used to tap out the rhythm of certain ritual dances performed in honour of ancestors so as to thank them for their protection, to plead for further benefits, to obtain the cure of an ailment, rain for a plentiful harvest. Tam-tams are an old story — almost a thousand years old. Ritual ceremonies have in a certain sense informed them with a sacred symbolism.

Sacred tam-tams! Sacred dances! You are probably intrigued, dear foreign reader . . . Try to picture a masked figure cavorting and prancing about. Rhythmic thuds accompany his movements and underscore his chant, an imploration for rain made to long dead ancestors:

*We, your children,
Implore rain*



President Kamuzu Banda, educated in mission schools.

*For our gardens.
O Fathers! O Mothers!
Listen as we pray.
Give us rain.
Plentiful harvests . . .*

One by one, the men who sit around in a circle join the dance and sing in turn:

*O ancestors!
Without your help
We cannot prosper.
O forgive our sins!
Send precious rain
To your desolate sons.
Some day,
We will join you
Where you now hold sway . . .*

Dances performed at funerals are slow and dignified, songs and rhythms being in perfect keeping with the circumstances. The masked dancer sings:

*Alas! You are dead . . .
Remember such is your fate,
And you will know joy.
For now you will meet our ancestors.
Make ready to greet us,
After we have gone from here.*

The chorus takes up the mournful chant:
*O you have left us,
 But share with us riches
 Found in our ancestors' treasure trove
 Which will soon be yours.
 Our loving hearts mourn
 Because you are gone.
 But, how can we help it?
 Our ancestors call; you must go.*

On the occasion of a wedding, the dance takes on a joyful tone. The masked performer sings out:

*O ancestors, you desire
 To see your children multiply.
 Grant us then your bounties,
 So that thanks to you
 This wedded pair
 May live together till death.*

The other dancers surrounding the masked dancer sing lustily:

*O be generous!
 O be good to us!
 Share the treasures
 Of your kingdom
 With this new family.
 May your spirit
 Live on in them
 Forever!*

What can missionaries do in order to christianize these customs? This is another important problem to be solved. All will agree that the concept of honouring his forebears is deeply rooted in man. Have we not been used to honour those whom we felt superior to us in merit or age? Evidently, this idea that our ancestors can assist us in our earthly needs exists in the Church since she honours the saints. I have recently read a book written by a missionary anthropologist and sociologist, Dr. J. M. Schoffeleers, who has conducted expert researches on the NYAU society and the dances it performs. He resumes as follows the religious and cultural ideas underlying these manifestations: NYAU tends to unite men to the spirits of their ancestors. NYAU reminds the living that when they die they will take place among their ancestors. NYAU stresses the role of spirits as givers of fecundity to those who maintain traditions.

Dear missionaries, the more you study our people and their customs, the better you will be enabled to lead them to the true God they must seek. Please avoid imitating certain missionaries who considered NYAU dances as impious and threatened performers with hell fire. This cannot be true. . . Our traditions require that dancing should form part of our lives. If we dance with purity of heart, such dancing cannot be evil. Consider, dear missionaries, that dancing basically manifests something of man's inner joy; as God wants man to be happy, we must encourage the latter to dance and manifest his happiness. He will then perform his tasks with greater ease.

Among the numerous members of Yao tribe, who inhabit the southern region, many are Moslems. Some



The tam-tam is closely linked to the life of the African and to his religious rites. It is the core of all sacred dances.

of their young or not so young men want to become Christians. They cannot do so, however, because their milieu compels them in a certain sense to retain a creed inherited from their forebears. Perhaps they have no choice but to submit. For instance, a friend of mine wanted to become a Catholic, but his parents (read the entire family clan) declared that if he did so, he would be rejected and would no longer be considered as a member of the family. In such a case again, one must weigh the pros and cons of tradition before trying to have these people grasp the value of Christianity.

You are now convinced, dear reader, that the task of our missionaries is no easy task. I wonder with what sort of problems we will be faced when our missionaries will leave to take up the work of evangeliza-

tion elsewhere. Our problems will undoubtedly differ from theirs, but they will not be less difficult to solve if we in turn want to pass on the glad tidings of salvation. When the missionaries leave, will we have enough hospitals, schools, social centres, religious, priests, teachers, doctors to go around? We have to consider this eventuality and prepare for it . . . We now have an elite, thanks to their devotedness. In all fields, this elite keeps on working at the development of human persons, of the country as a whole. There will be crucial problems to deal with. We must prepare!

TO OUR MISSIONARIES

I

*In my memory
Lives an image,
The image of one
Who patiently
Built a house,
Then another.
What was this
House for, I wondered . . .
It sheltered the ailing,
Restored their health,
Made them whole again.
It gathered the children in,
Fed them,
Taught them
The truth.
Led them in ways
Of righteousness.*

II

*In this room,
I heard children
Shout with joy.
Going home,
They told their parents
Things the latter
Knew not.
All rejoiced
For their
Children's sake.*

III

*Day after day
They laboured
To foster
Love and knowledge.
Early they rose
To pray
To the Father above.
They gathered*

*Men together
To worship the true God.
Paganism lost ground,
Slowly, slowly.
But the missionaries
Never gave up.
They worked
With hopeful hearts,
Leading men to
Him who is the Way.*

IV

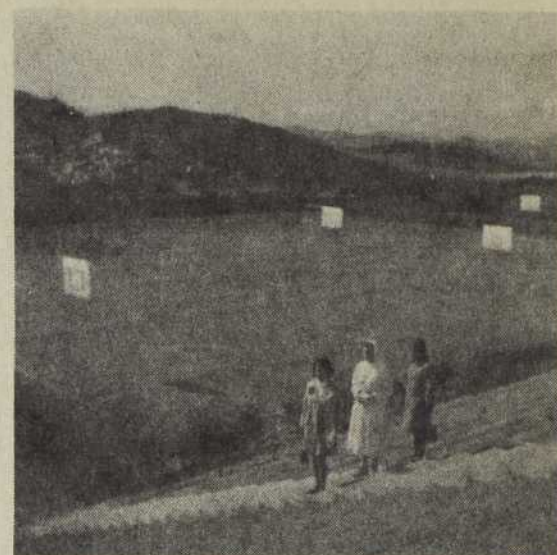
*O man, how great you are!
How will you thank
Those men of goodwill?
Will you not
Follow in their footsteps,
And strive after unity?
They gave up their lives
For this great cause.
Will you refuse
To cooperate?*

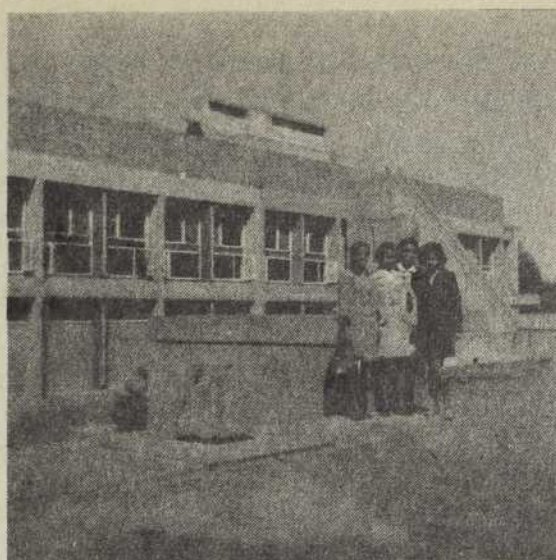
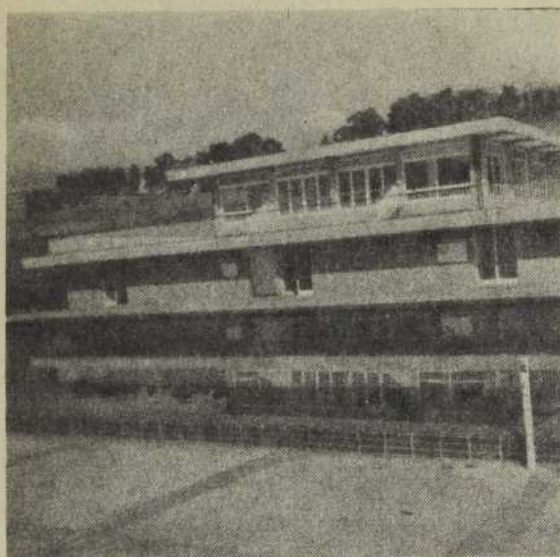
V

*How can we ever forget
All we owe our missionaries!
They are founding fathers,
Promoters
Of a civilization
Based on noble ideals,
The world over.
If you chase them away,
Troubles will plague you.
Who then
Will conduct your schools,
Your hospitals,
Serve your churches?*

VI

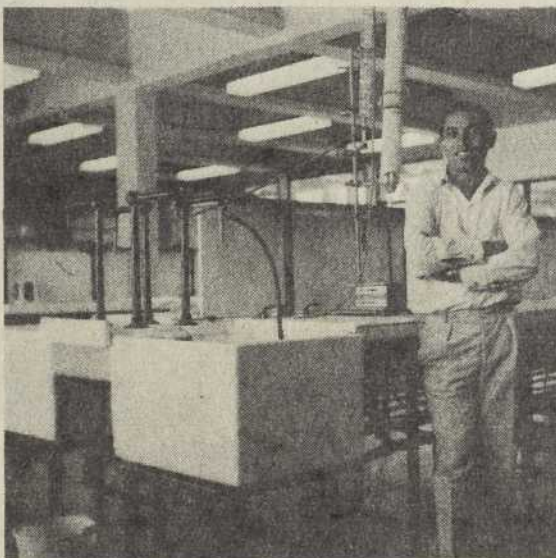
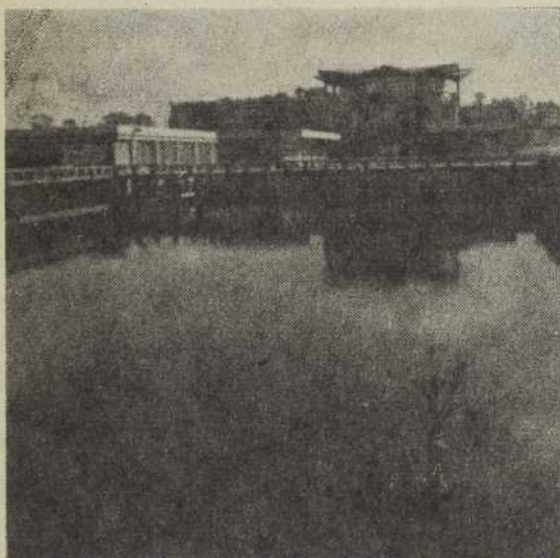
*Dear missionaries,
Our friends so true,
Should you have to go,
Please remember us.
Do not forget those
Who loved you well.
Come back,
And work again
In our midst.
Help us solve
Our problems.
Thank you,
Dear missionaries.
God hold you ever
In the palm
Of his hand.*





- 1—Marble plate at the entrance door of the University.
- 2—Administration office.
- 3—A part of the playground.
- 4—Sportsmen's hostel and swimming pool.
- 5—Cafeteria.

OF MADAGASCAR



- 6—Faculty of Sciences.
- 7—Students' quarters.
- 8—Hall for all sports.
- 9—Interior garden, administration offices, and Faculty of Rights.
- 10—Chemistry laboratory.

judges of the Court of Appeal in Tananarivo took a major step in 1941. They introduced courses leading to degrees and qualifying certificates that would entitle their holders to practise law. A postwar decree issued in November 1948 launched Tananarivo's own centre, affiliated with the Faculty of Aix-Marseille, for examinations in legal competency.

The ensuing years brought happy developments. An Institute of

Higher Studies took shape in 1955 with a Higher School of Law and a Higher School of Sciences. A pharmacy course was added in August 1959, and a Higher School of Literature in October of the same year. Grouped together, all these establishments became the University proper in 1961. Plans for a magnificent University campus progressed rapidly beyond the blueprint stage.

The University of Madagascar is

closely linked with the Charles de Gaulle National Foundation of Education, which operates under the direction of the President of the Republic with representatives from the Government and the University in almost equal number. The Foundation Council is responsible for setting the general guidelines for the evolution of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

The Foundation comprises besides the University three other

establishments for teaching and research. These are the Malagasy National School of Administration, the National Institute of Telecommunications and Stations, and the Laboratory of Radio-Isotopes.

It may thus be truly said that the foundation of the University confirmed Malagasy independence pre-

cisely at the time that it was being affirmed on the political level.

Structures

Currently, the University of Madagascar has three Faculties and five Schools, all of them designed to answer the Malagasy Republic's essential requirements at the present time.



Photo: Service of Information on Madagascar

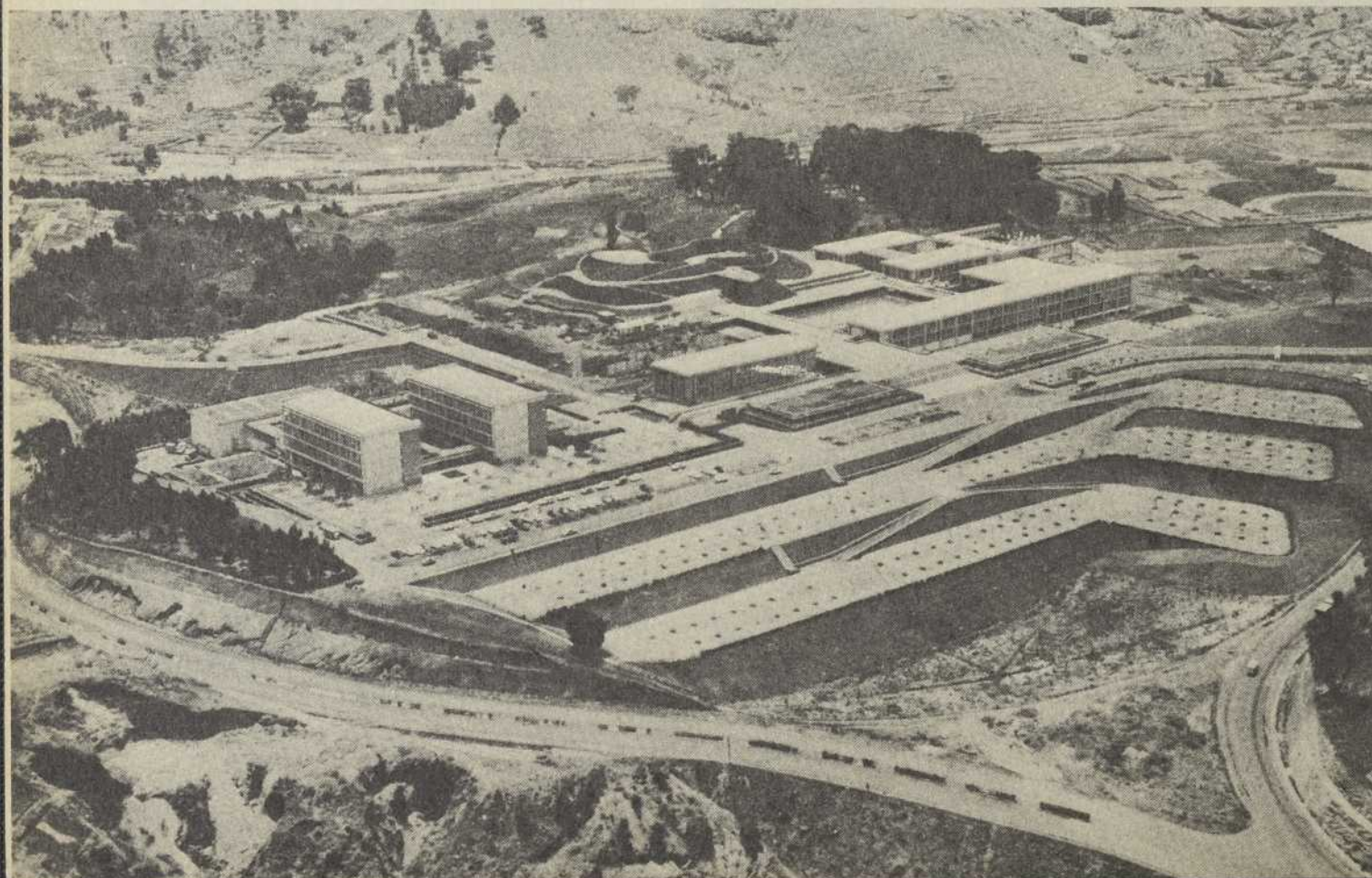


Photo: Stavi



A future university student?

A region in Tananarivo, capital of Madagascar.

A university campus.

The Faculty of Law and of Economic Sciences provides all the basic courses leading to doctorates, degrees, and qualifying certificates entitling their holders to practise law. Research here is guided by the Centres of private Law, public Law, Political Science, the Study of Customs, and Economic Studies.

An offshoot of the Faculty of Law, the Institute of Malagasy Law Studies prepares its young hopefuls for their eventual appointment as judges.

The Faculty of Sciences offers five university diplomas in scientific studies: mathematics and physics, physics and chemistry, chemistry and biology (for which agricultural sciences may be substituted), biology and geology. The Faculty also grants degrees in mathematical sciences, physical sciences, natural sciences, besides a number of master's certificates. Through its laboratories and its Centre of marine biology in Tulear, the Faculty of Sciences works actively in the arenas of basic and applied research.

Beginning in October 1967, the *Faculty of literature and Human Sciences* has gradually introduced its new regime. It now awards four university diplomas in literary studies: modern literature, living languages, English, history and geography, Malagasy literature. Also available are five degrees: modern literature, living languages: English, history, geography, Malagasy literature. The Faculty is also empowered to grant master's certificates in the related branches of instruction.

A Faculty-in-the-making, the National School of Medicine is scheduled to have its own University Centre of Hospitality.

The National School of Social Promotion, one of the University of Madagascar's most original creations, is constantly broadening its scope of action. In addition to its traditional activities, the School conducts several courses for professional training in highly specialized fields and prepares its own groups of trained personnel capable of training others.

The Institute of Applied Linguistics limits its action at this time to providing a crash course in French for English-speaking African students and a course in the Malagasy language for foreign students living in Madagascar.

Higher Education and Technical Training are combined at the *National Higher Agricultural School* and the *National School of Public Works*. Here the Malagasy Republic's future engineers acquire their technical training and perfect their skills.

Annexed services likewise fulfill their extremely important role in the students' intellectual formation, goal choices, and material life. These services are as follows: The University Library; the Radio-University with its broadcasts of courses and cultural programs in French and Malagasy throughout the Island (1200 hours of broadcasting); the University's Bureau of Information on Careers; and the University City, which is very adequately furnished and provides fine material working conditions for the students.

In all the Faculties, students can earn diplomas that compare quite favorably with those available in the universities of France.

Student Population 1969-1970

According to statistics made public by the University directors on November 15, 1969, the number of students enrolled at the University is 3,885. If we add to the foregoing figure the number of free auditors plus the students taking correspondence courses or enrolled in the various sessions of the National School of Social Promotion, we reach the impressive total of 5,272. The student population is 31% female. The nationalities represented at the present writing are about the same as a year ago: Malagasy, 80%; French, 16%; other nationalities, 4%.

Presence of the Catholic Church

The University has had its Catholic centre for several years. The Malagasy priest who serves as its chaplain contributes through his priestly ministry to the effectiveness of the different undertakings. In response to the requests of both

Malagasy and foreign students, a helper of French background was assigned to him in April. A committee to which I belong promptly came into being to learn the students' aspirations, map out projects for 1970-71, and initiate programs with our separated brothers at the University.

In this neutral milieu, the believers desire more and more to recognize themselves as such and to fashion a Christian community. Their objectives show how seriously they take their religious faith:

AGGIORNAMENTO — to rethink their religious convictions more maturely in the light of Vatican II teachings.

MUTUAL HELP — to foster interpersonal and social relationships in the City; welcoming new arrivals, leisure pursuits, associations, etc.

INFORMATION — to open a centre of data on the great problems confronting the Church here and now; to organize conferences, round tables, vocational discussions, etc.

LITURGY — to promote community get-togethers and Eucharistic Celebrations in the parish or the U. of M. City.

University students in Canada may rest assured that the students at the great red Island's University share their goals and ideals. Here also in Madagascar one can find the quest for genuineness, the thirst for truth, the desire of brotherhood, the ideals and aspirations of young people in the springtime of life.

Again and again I find myself harking back to the unforgettable moment when this powerful truth first struck me with its unchanging appeal:

"What is the colour of God's skin?

Black, yellow, brown, red, white — you name it.

All men are the same in the eyes of their Maker."

Monique Prefontaine, m.i.c.

Sister Monique is currently studying literature at the University of Madagascar.

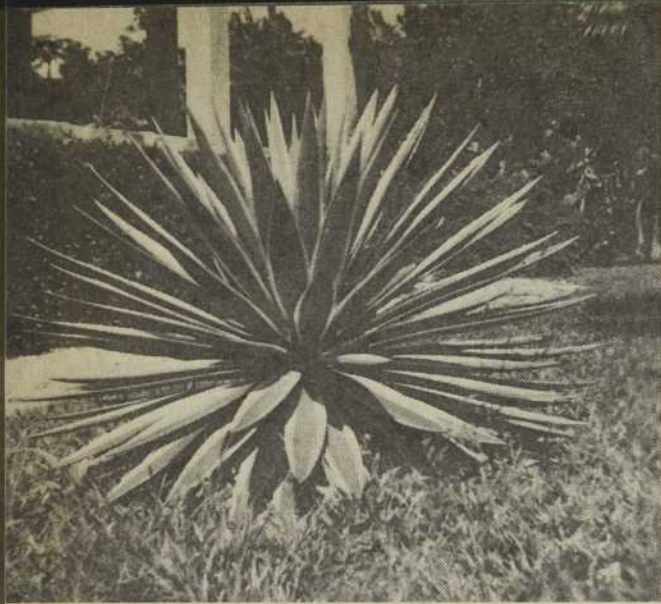
Picture Report

HANDICRAFTS IN PORT SALUT

Port Salut: a shelter for fishing-boats; an oasis where a wayfarer may quench his thirst; a refuge for those in search of an atmosphere of relaxation — this small seaside village offers idyllic stillness in a picturesque panorama. But its soil being barren, it cannot boast of a variety of culture. In compensation, this locality is renowned for the handicrafts in which its people excel. Yet, lack of factories and of means of exportation slow down local industries.



Photo: Frank S. Killam



1



2



3



4

The two most prosperous textile plants in the district are the sisal and the latania.

1 — Sisal: a perennial monocotyledonous plant. From its large leaves, a strong fiber is derived which is used for heavy cordage.

2 — Latania — of the palm family, growing in tropical countries. It is very beautiful; it has a single stipe and its palmated leaves are fan-shaped.

3 — Mr. Alexandre Forges dexterously weaves a sisal hat. A needle and his skilled fingers constitute his stock of tools.

4 — Haitian youth wearing a hat made of latania.

5-6 — Things made out of this textile material, by the people of Haiti, are varied: hats, carpets, hand bags, table-mats, belts, baskets, trays, etc.

Half of the population in Haiti depend, for their living, on small industries and on handicrafts.

Alexandre Forges
HAITI



6



5

Photo: Frank S. Kilham

Picture Report

NEW YEAR EVE'S OFFERING

Chinese generosity is naturally expressed through deeds; and the last day of the year is, at Saint Theresa's parish of Kowloon, the very occasion which can prove the fact.

Father Columbo, then rector of that parish, introduced in 1968, the habit of making donations in favour of the poor on December 31: such donations to be made at the Offertory during a Mass of thanksgiving — a solemn celebration.

The three officiating priests wearing beautiful vestments made of red Chinese silk, enter the church to the tune of firecrackers registered on a tape recorder. For some time now, firecrackers have been banned by law in Hong Kong.

The nave is full of people with beaming faces. The decorations consist of *kats*, fruit-shrubs, species of citron-tree and orange-trees, which symbolize peace, joy, and welfare. The pious liturgical singing seems to be the expression of the faithful's fervour.



After the homily, the Offertory procession starts. First come the associations of men holding their personal gifts, the most typical of which is, beyond no doubt, the roasted pig inciting the whole assembly's contentment. The Children of Mary come next, then all the other participants, religious and secular, each one with his offering in his hands.

The priests receiving the gifts pile them up around the altar. In the centre stands a beautiful flowering-tree in bloom, symbolizing luck and prosperity. According to a Chinese custom, a *laïsi* — a red envelope containing "lucky money" — is then distributed to each one present.

When the procession has come to a close, the celebrant blesses and censes the offerings which will be taken to the "Little Sisters of the Poor" in Kowloon.

After the Eucharistic Celebration, all the Christians are invited to a tea during which new year greetings are exchanged among the guests and their parish priests. Everybody having returned home, each family respectively, holds the traditional family party at a rather late hour in the evening. Is it not the last family meal of the year?



HONG KONG

Sister Véronique Therrien, M.I.C.



Christians of mission lands and social progress

Ad Gentes urges missionaries to form, from the very start, Christian communities deeply rooted in their own national cultures, capable of cooperating in the development and progress of their nation. "The Christian faithful, gathered together in the Church, out of all nations, are not marked off from the rest of men by their government, nor by their language, nor by their political institutions. So they should live for God and Christ by following the honourable customs of their own nation. As good citizens, they should practise true and effective patriotism" (*Ad Gentes*, No 15). This goal may be attained chiefly through education, the key to personal and national development. Not satisfied with emphasizing the education of youth in moral and civic as well as in international understanding, missionaries encourage the organization of lifelong education in order to meet the challenge of the world of tomorrow.

In Peru, for instance, *Telepuno*, a continuous education programme is dispensed thanks to the initiative of Maryknoll missionaries. This TV programme opens up minds, long accustomed to limit their perspectives to immediate local needs — crops, weather, the family — to broader horizons. It awakens in the people of their regions the hope and desire of improving their way of life in cooperation with their neighbours. It would be too long to enumerate all the missions which benefit by such assistance; much remains to be done in this sector, however, and Christians can find therein a wide scope for their generosity.

Several institutions founded in recent years for aid to developing countries have brought precious collaboration to missionaries. *Misereor*, for example, provides not only funds but lawyers, teachers, doctors. A missionary writes, "*Misereor* gave us a lawyer to protect the rights of poor farmers . . . Now, whenever the cowmen want to take away a Santal's land, they think twice." The *Misereor* idea is self-help. They teach the people how to help themselves and become really involved in social problems.

"Concern with the needs of other and poorer nations," wrote Lester B. Pearson, former Prime Minister of Canada, in a report on international support for social progress, "is the expression of a new and fundamental aspect of the modern age — the awareness that we live in a village world, that we belong to a world community." These words should encourage us to deepen our awareness of the spiritual and material needs of all peoples in our "world village". It is only right for those who have, to share with those who have not, since we are all brothers.

Madeline Maillet, m.i.c.

The Church in south-eastern Asia

The Fathers of Vatican II plainly stated: "The obligation of spreading the faith is imposed on every disciple of Christ, according to his condition."

You, the Church, are at work in south-eastern Asia as well as among many peoples and nations, spreading everywhere the Good News of salvation. But, after two thousand years, only two per cent of Asia (35 million) enjoy the benefits of the Catholic faith. Perhaps the reason for this is that we give too much attention to the very real social and economic problems, and our practical programmes for alleviating them, while we neglect spiritual priorities. It is not enough for missionaries to humanize, they must evangelize. We of the rear guard must uphold them in this task by our prayers and sacrifices.

If we do not give more missionaries to the world, and train more autochthonous clergy and catechists, Christians will become a comparatively small minority in the twenty-first century. Christians of all persuasions represented about half of humanity in 1900; today they represent only one third.

During this month, the Holy Father asks us to pray more particularly for the countries of south-eastern Asia — Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. Through mass media, you have certainly heard how sorely these countries have been tried by warfare and its aftermath. The Church has suffered heavy losses. Several missionaries have been killed during these conflicts. Services have been disrupted, churches

bombed, a great number of civilians killed or massacred. The needs of the Church in this area are, therefore, great and pressing. Crucial problems exist for which there are no easy solutions. Space does not allow a portrait of the sacrifices being made by missionaries and Christians alike to restore the order and peace favourable to the work of evangelization.

Everyone in the Church can aid them by praying more regularly for them and aiding the outreach of Christ to non-Christians. As an outgoing member of the Mystical Body, do not forget that *you* are the Church. Whatever the Church is doing to teach, heal, feed, and encourage the needy everywhere, *you* are doing it, *you* are helping your neighbour.

Let us ever be mindful of the Council's call to the apostolate which "should reach out to all men wherever they can be found."

Madeline Maillet, m.i.c.



The green colour of the pine tree is the emblem of limitless happiness, its needles, of union, solidarity; the bamboo signifies uprightness; and the flowers of the plum tree symbolize joy.

SHOCHIBUKAI

Tangible proofs of Japanese love of nature are found at every age of the country's history. In his book *Hojoki* Chomei, a classical writer of the thirteenth century, observed that a beautiful landscape is collective property which everybody is entitled to enjoy. "A beautiful landscape", he wrote, "belongs to no one in particular. Who then, can keep me from enjoying it?"

Towards the close of the seventeenth century, the philosopher Kaibara Ekiken remarked in his work, *Treatise of the Philosophy of Pleasure*, "If we open our heart to the beauty of heaven, of earth, of the thousand wonders of the created universe, these things will afford us unlimited enjoyment. The man who delights in them, becomes proprietor of the mountains, the waterways, the flowers, the moon, the stars . . ."

This love and reverence for the world of nature is at the root of the earliest and most fundamental Japanese religious impulse. It has led to the attribution of distinctive qualities and powers to a variety of birds, fish, animals, and other creatures, real as well as mythical. Mention of this may be found in the oldest of Japanese anthologies of poetry, the *Manyoshu* and the *Kokinshu*. In these brief poems are often described peculiar customs relating to the symbolical *shochibukai* used on the occasion of weddings, births, funerals, etc.

For instance, the evergreen pine tree stands for lasting happiness; its needles held in tight clusters signify solidarity and fraternal union. Because of its height and of its hard incorruptible wood, the bamboo symbolizes uprightness and integrity. Fragile blossoms of the plum tree exhaling their delicate perfume in early spring are emblems of joy and hope.

Among animals, the plodding long-lived turtle promises steadfastness and length of years and is used as a propitious symbol of festive occasions. The *tsuru* (crane) which yearly wings its way from chill Siberian wastes, to the mild regions of southern Japan is greatly admired. It is remarkable for its stately form and carriage and the elegance of its white plumage with black-edged wings and red crest. Moreover, it has long been honoured for its gentle behaviour as well as for its faithfulness to its mate which it guards in sickness or injury, even after the time for migration has passed. Therefore, it is considered as a symbol of fidelity and sacrifice, of good luck and longevity. It is used on all happy occasions, especially at weddings.

The folding of tiny paper cranes is still common among children who visit sick schoolmates. They are then offered as expressions of sympathy and good luck. One of the most moving sights in Japan is the statue of a little girl who died of leukemia in Hiroshima; it is hung with literally thousands of paper cranes made by school children all over the country during her last illness.

Florentine Dansereau, M.I.C.

A WORD IN FASHION: WITNESS

Let it be sufficient, in this very simple talk, to draw your attention to a word that is very fashionable in modern spiritual literature, the word "witness". It is a *fine word, pregnant with meaning*. It is akin to another more grave and specific word, the "apostolate", of which "witness" seems to be a subordinate form, though a very extensive one, *ranging from mere profession of Christianity*, silent and passive, to the supreme peak, *martyrdom*, a term which exactly means witness. This already tells us how the word "witness", so much used today, contains, or rather manifests numerous aspects of Christian mentality. We will mention only some of these aspects, enough to give you matter for reflection.

First aspect: what does the word witness mean? Jurists tell us: it is the declaration by which one certifies that a thing is true. Taken in this sense, it can be said that all our knowledge (except what we have discovered or verified directly ourselves) rests upon the witness of other people. Such is science; such is history.

Transmission of the message

In the sense that interests us now, witness is the *transmission of the Christian message*; a transmission *by way of example, by way of words, by way of works*, by way of life lived, of sacrifice in tribute to the truth possessed as value. A value that is superior to one's own comfort and sometimes even to one's own safety. It is a *truth professed with the intention of communicating it to others*.

Three elements: 1. conviction

This presupposes three fundamental elements: in the first place personal *conviction* . . . What Christian witness can be given by some one who has not a sufficient knowledge of Christ? Who does not live of His word and His grace? Witness is not a mere external, conventional profession; it is not a habitual occupation. It is a voice of conscience, a fruit of inner life and, in the best of cases (assured for the faithful disciple), the gift of an inspiration rising, limpid and imperious, from the bottom of the soul (cf Matt. 10:19). *It is an act of maturity and courage*, for which the Christian should constantly be ready. St. Peter teaches

us: "Always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have" (I Peter 3, 15).

2. A link in a chain

The second fundamental element regarding Christian witness is the function it performs in the economy of Christianity. This economy, that is, this design, this plan that governs *the whole system of our relations with God and Christ is based on witness*. *Christ is the first, the great witness of God*, Himself the Word of God, the Master who asks for faith in His person, in His word, in His mission. Then come *the apostles*, eye and ear witnesses. Remember the incisive words of the evangelist John: "*Vidimus et testamur*" (I John 1:2), we have seen and we testify to it. As Jesus had said on taking leave of His apostles: "*eritis mihi testes*", you will be my witnesses (Acts 1:8).

Quotations could be multiplied. They all have the effect of showing clearly that our relationship with the Christian fact, with revealed truth, *derives from our adhesion to witness, to a magisterium* . . .

3. Its purpose: to produce faith

And this teaches us, finally, a third point: the purpose of witness, what it aims at; and as regards ourselves, what it *should aim at*, that is, *to produce faith*. Witness is a producer of faith. The Council comes back to this repeatedly (cf "Lumen gentium", 10-12; "Ad gentes", 21; etc.). Christian witness is a service rendered to the truth that Christ bequeathed to the world; it is the transmission of this heritage of salvation.

The layman must be a witness

"*The layman — the member of the Christian faithful — is essentially a witness. His state is that of witness*" (Guitton). He is not a qualified teacher, he is not a priestly minister. *He is a witness to what the Church teaches* and what the Holy Spirit causes him to accept and, to a certain extent, to experience and live. But how great is this mission to be *witnesses of Christ*! Each of you can and must be one!

Paul VI, "Osservatore Romano",
November 1, 1969.



IN MALAYSIA



The village of Zainab resembles all those of Malaysia: neat, airy, with wooden houses standing on piles and shaded by coconut palms. There are no streets; the houses are built here and there among the trees.

Malaysia is a federation comprising two territories: the great peninsula which stretches to the southwest of Thailand and of what was formerly called Indochina, plus the northern part of the island of Borneo. Eleven million inhabitants live in this area, half as large as France. Its citizens belong to three distinct races; its official language is Malaysian; its national religion is Islam. It was in this enchanting land that we met our friends Zainab and Su.

ZAINAB



AND SU



Meeting Zainab in her "kampong"

Malaysian villages are called *kampongs*. Zainab's *kampong* is located in the great peninsula, which forms part of Malaysia, at a short distance from the city of Malacca, in the southern part of the country. Fortunately, Zainab knows a little English, so we could understand one another. Formerly a British colony, Malaysia continues to use the English language, although Malaysian is now the official tongue.

Zainab's *kampong* is similar to other local villages we passed through, during the two months we spent visiting the countryside. It is made up of about a baker's dozen wooden houses, perched on stilts, to which precarious bamboo ladders give access. Lush vegetation hems the village in. Proud palm trees surround it, and generous papayas offer their succulent fruit resembling melons but tasting like honey pots.

The house we entered was cool and neat, smelling of freshly planed wood. Zainab gave us a cordial welcome. "This is my home where I live with my husband and two children", she said as she invited us to sit, tailor fashion, on the bamboo matting. Outside of a few shelves and wall cupboards there was not a stick of furniture in this one-room house. "Every night", she explained, "we stretch our mattresses on the floor and the room becomes our bedroom".

We exchanged amused comments, while Zainab dived into a plank-walled partition. Our gracious hostess soon reappeared carrying two large cocoanuts with a hole drilled into each to allow for drinking. We

found the liquid delicious and refreshing. "Cocoanuts are our staple food," she went on to say. "The meat, grated fine and soaked in water, provides a wholesome drink for children. Sometimes I mix the gratings with rice flour and bake toothsome little cakes which we all enjoy."

Colonists become proprietors

Zainab is twenty-seven. Of slender delicate build, she wears the traditional Malaysian feminine garb: a colourful blouse and a *sarong* which consists in a long strip of cloth wrapped around the waist and falling below the ankle. This is called the *batik sarong*. Travelling through the eastern coast of the peninsula, we saw how such fabric was made; cotton or silk cloth is handprinted by coating with wax parts that are not to be dyed. At present, these original designs are mostly done by machines.

Our hostess related how, four years ago, she and her husband had worked on a hevea plantation, conducted by French Europeans, in the Johore Bahru State, south of Kuala Lumpur, the capital. They then lived in a *kampong* situated at a distance of twelve kilometres from the plantation, and had to get up at four every morning to catch the outgoing bus. Zainab helped gather the blobs of latex dripping from cuts made into the trees by her husband. Later on, she worked in a factory attached to the plantation where raw rubber was processed into slabs, ready for shipment abroad.

Latex is the pale lifeblood of Malaysia which leads the world in its production. With the federation, came independence and a higher standard of living for people like Zainab and her husband. The government bought the area where they are now living, planted heveas, built neat little homes on stilts, and invited Malaysians to people the new *kampung* and work the plantation.

Zainab and her husband pay no rent. Thanks to the \$400.00 a month they can earn on their six acres of heveas, they will eventually be able to reimburse the government for house and land, and become proprietors in their own right. Besides their house and plantation, they were given a small rice field and a vegetable garden which furnishes them with their daily food.

The *kampung* has its own school where boys and girls, in natty dark blue and white uniforms, study during the morning hours, and again in the late afternoon period.

Zainab told us that her two boys, aged seven and nine, enjoy their schooling. They learn Malaysian, English, and several other subjects. Religious education courses are also dispensed. Once a week, a Moslem teacher instructs them in Koranic lore. The *kampung* has its own mosque.

There is a shopping centre, at a short distance from Zainab's home, where she can buy supplies for the family, at reasonable prices. This new village provides everything the people need. During the day, Zainab performs household chores and busies herself in the garden or in the rice field, while her husband works on the plantation proper. He leaves at 6:00 a.m., returning only in the evening.

Ten thousand families have thus been relocated by the government. This number will be doubled in a few years. Such has been the progress in the relocation area that the Finance Minister is tempted to impose taxes! Formerly, Malaysian peasants used to rest

content with growing just enough rice, fruits, and vegetables to cope with their current needs. The government recently launched a programme of rural reconstruction in order to shake off the peasants' insouciance. Thanks to this programme, the latter will get out of their rut, and will become involved in the nation's economic and political life.

A government official we met remarked, "I don't think it is a normal situation to let the Chinese enjoy economic supremacy in our own land. Malaysian citizens must be taught to catch up with them. This is why we are giving them every chance to do so. They need help. We have made up our mind to do all we can in their favour".

Su, the Chinese shopkeeper

The Chinese immigration dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century, when British officials began importing foreign man-power to work in tin mines and in rubber plantations. Thousands of Chinese poured in from the Peking region, but they were not the only immigrants. Indians also came, although in lesser numbers, often returning to their native land with a neat fortune. By 1931, the Chinese constituted almost 50 per cent of the population. While Malaysians favoured a leisurely pace of life in their *kampungs*, the industrious Chinese chose to live in the cities where they functioned as craftsmen or merchants. Today 90 per cent of Malaysia's shops are in the hands of the Chinese.

Wherever they are at work in Penang, where the immigration was massive, in Kuching (northern Borneo), in Kuala Lumpur, the Chinese shops and the Chinese way of life are similar.

"Malaysians envy us," Su, a Chinese shopkeeper in Kuala Lumpur, confided, "because we have prospered so. But they should not forget that we worked hard in order to succeed."



An Indian family at Kuala Lumpur supermarket. Ten per cent of the Malaysian population are Indians who have kept their traditions and religion, but have adapted themselves easily to their new homeland. The Indian woman wearing the sari bears on her forehead a visible sign of her religion.



Latex harvest in a hevea plantation. A new cut is made after the latex which has dripped into the container has been gathered. It is said that the Chinese work to full output.

Su accompanied her parents to Malaysia back in 1920. The family never returned to the homeland as it had first intended, but it dug deep roots in its beautiful adopted country. Su told us the shop which she now owned had belonged to the family for forty years. "My parents arrived here practically penniless," she added, "but they worked hard to reach prosperity and independence".

On the ground, in front of the shop, were heaped sacks of rice, flat baskets piled high with dried shrimp, buckets filled with fish. Inside, wares of all kinds were displayed helter-skelter: soap, electric bulbs, drugs, canned food, ready-made clothes . . .

In the rear of the shop, two rooms served as living quarters to Su, her husband, their four children, and her own parents. "My children are wonderful helpers," Su boasted. "The eldest girl works in our shop after school hours. She is only thirteen, but is right smart. Although mother is really too old to work now, she insists on doing a few chores. Father's mind is as alert as ever. In the evening, he helps my husband go over the accounts, handling the abacus with lightning speed. We never close up before late in the evening, as our neighbours are used to late hours, and like to shop in the cool of the evening."

We prepared to leave but Su would not hear of our going before we had shared a meal with the family. We enjoyed the dishes she prepared with bustling activity: fried soya beans, eggs, rice crumpets seasoned with garlic . . . At first, chopsticks were a handicap, but we soon managed to use them less awkwardly, thanks to Grandma's kind supervision. Su explained, "Except on special occasions, we rarely sit down at a table to have a meal together. We're in the habit of bolting down a bowl of rice seasoned with soya sauce, every few hours, to keep going. Malaysians say we eat all day long . . . The fact is, we're kept so busy, we rarely manage to eat a full meal as we are doing now".

Tomorrow — the university

Su's eldest daughter dreams of pursuing her studies at the beautiful Kuala Lumpur University. We visited the campus with its broad avenues, its well-kept green lawns, its ultra modern buildings. Over the last four years, the number of students has increased 27 per cent. In 1970, over 7,000 students are expected to enroll.

Along tree-shaded avenues on the campus, groups of students, Malaysian, Chinese, Indian, stroll discussing animatedly on school subjects or world affairs. Lectures are given in Malaysian or in English. Buses convey students to and fro. Many, however, prefer riding bicycles or better still motor cycles. A relaxed atmosphere reigns throughout the campus. Students greeted us in a smiling courteous manner, and willingly conversed on various topics. They were eager to know where we came from and how things were in our homeland. Most of them secretly dream of travelling abroad.

In a Chinese restaurant of Petaking Jaya, a satellite city in Kuala Lumpur: pastries are plunged in boiling water to which several ingredients had been added.



Chinese praying in a temple of Kuala Lumpur. In Malaysia each nation has its own religion: the Malaysians are Moslems; the Indians, Hindus; and the Chinese remain faithful to the cult of ancestors. However, a minority in each of these adhere to Christianity.



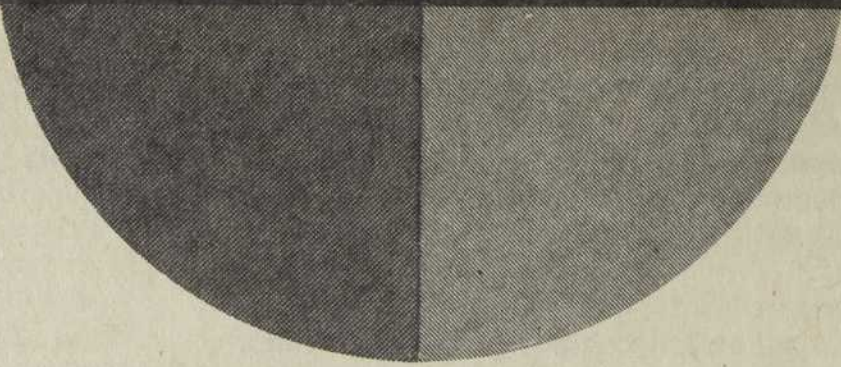
Three races which do not blend

Su wears Western dress, although her mother favours traditional trousers and jacket still worn today by many older women of Chinese origin.

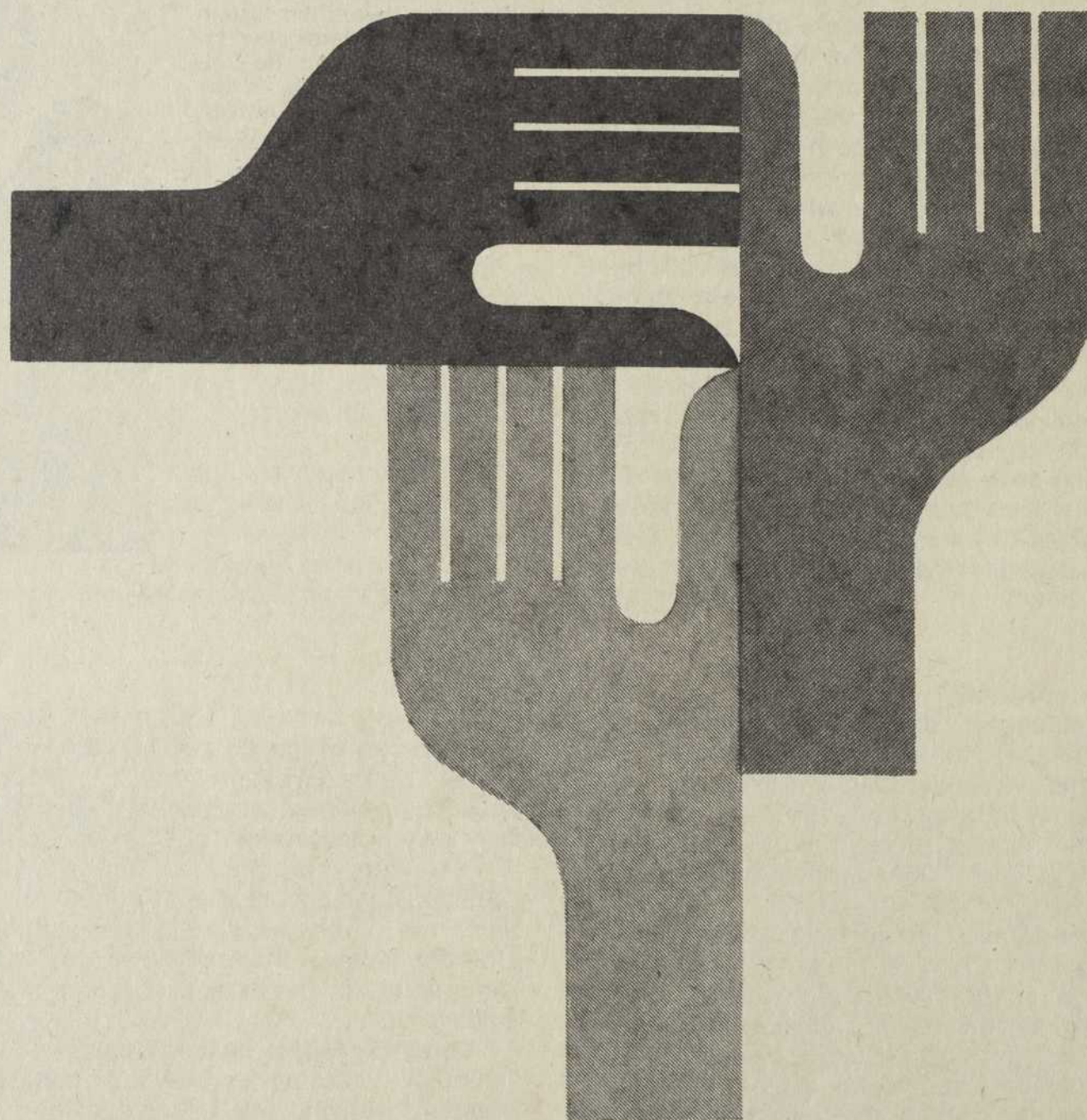
We were surprised to find the great variety of feminine fashions at Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian women wear the *sarong*; Indian damsels their graceful *sari*; Chinese women the traditional costume; the younger generation, for the most part, sport imported skirts and pullovers . . .

Three races live peacefully in this lovely land, each jealously guarding its national culture, religion, and standard of living. We enjoyed visiting mosques, Hindu temples, Taoist shrines; we ate in Moslem restaurants where pork is a forbidden item; in Chinese cafés where roasted pork is a favourite dish; in Indian eating houses where curried rice is served.

Continued on page 192



UNITED IN MIND



Week of prayer for Christian unity January 17-24, 1971

GOSPEL NIGHT

WHAT IS A GOSPEL NIGHT?

It is an experience to be lived, a celebration which makes use of every available means of communicating: words, singing, mime, audio-visual media, etc. It aims at ensuring maximum participation on the part of members of the assembly and at establishing as close a link as possible with life as it is lived today.

The term "Gospel Night" which originated in U.S.A., is being widely used in France and in Canada to designate a novel kind of celebration apparently different from Bible Services, or Prayer Vigils . . .

ORGANIZATION OF A GOSPEL NIGHT

The organization of a Gospel Night celebration requires team work. Subject matter should be used with tact, and be adapted to the mentality of the divers groups.

Participation of the members of the assembly is one of the main points in the organization of a Gospel Night. The subject matter offered here has been prepared with this in view.

SETTING: mounted photographs representing:

1. Divisions which exist among men and Christians.
 2. Efforts made by men and Christians to attain unity.
- The animator briefly presents the *Gospel Night* and gives a few practical indications on the performance. Then the lights are put out.

1 — HUMAN SITUATION

— Silence is kept while mounted photographs or transparencies are flashed on the screen.

— The text which follows is merely suggestive and may be proclaimed either by the animator alone or by a number of participants. It may even be omitted altogether, especially if transparencies have been used.

The world is divided into races, cultures, nations, social classes. Some people are poor, others are rich; some are powerful, others are helpless; some are leaders, others are followers; some are employers, others are employees; some are sick, others are healthy; some are good, others are bad.

Tensions exist between men, wars between peoples, quarrels between neighbours, generation gaps between youth and adults, misunderstandings between members of families.

Man himself, in his innermost depths, is divided between good and evil, between light and darkness. He is torn to shreds by opposite tendencies: love and hate, sharing and hoarding, giving and receiving, forgiving and taking revenge, accepting and refusing, serving and dominating. All of us are familiar with such commonplace experiences.

Silence is kept for a few minutes in order to experience a sense of solitude. Song.

Notwithstanding all these divisions, man constantly yearns for unity. He wants to create contacts, to communicate with his fellow man. Utilizing all modern technological aids, he lectures, writes, travels.

He rebels against war, injustice, the oppression of man by man. He contests, desires peace, longs for unity.

We all discover within ourselves this yearning for unity. For each one of us, unity is of the utmost importance. Otherwise, we would not be here tonight.

WHAT DOES UNITY MEAN TO US?

WHAT ARE OUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF UNITY?

Participants expose their personal experiences in unity. Song or hymn.

2 — CHRIST JESUS

The Bible is brought in and placed on a lectern while an appropriate hymn or song is sung.

Christ Jesus came into this world of ours to gather all men and bind them together in unity. To this end, he preached, worked, and prayed. Since he is still living in our midst even to this day, he is still preaching, working, praying to bring about unity among men.

READING (John 17, 21-23; 14, 15-17-23)

After reading of the text, moments of worship around the Bible.

3 — CHRISTIAN SITUATION

This part of the celebration may be performed in several ways:

- The animator alone may comment texts just read.
- This part of the celebration may consist in a dialogue.

Emphasis should be laid on the two main points of this part:

- a) Negative aspect — disunion of Christians which calls for a prayer to obtain forgiveness.
 - b) Positive aspect — Christian unity is gradually being established which calls for a prayer of thanksgiving.
- An appropriate hymn or song may bring this part of the celebration to a close.

A) Disunion among Christians

We call ourselves Christians, disciples of Christ Jesus. Well and good. But, what are we doing about realizing the Saviour's wish — "That all may be one in order that the world may believe"?

We can hardly expect men to believe in the truth of the Gospel, the reality of divine life within us, our

brotherhood in Christ, if we are divided among ourselves, if we manifest to the world that we are a dis-united family of separated brothers.

By our disunion we bear witness against Christ, we give scandal to the world, we become stumblingstones in a world seeking peace, brotherhood, and unity.

PRAYER TO OBTAIN FORGIVENESS

— For paying scant attention to your prayer for unity, on the eve of your sorrowful Passion; for the grief our separations have caused you.

Forgive us, O Lord.

— For our indifferent or complacent attitudes, our blunders and our mutual prejudices, our lack of simplicity and openness to mutual enrichment.

Forgive us, O Lord.

— For our sinful setting up of frontiers between races and nations, of social and cultural barriers.

Forgive us, O Lord.

— For the lukewarmness of our love and for the obstacles put in the way of the spread of the Gospel by our separations.

Forgive us, O Lord.

B) Constructive unity

However, in the life of Christians today, in our own life, positive factors are found which prove that constructive unity is in the making. Christians pray for one another; they work together against poverty and hunger.

Here, participants may spontaneously state positive facts which manifest that constructive Christian unity is already in the making. It devolves upon the animator to show that such facts are signs of the presence of Christ, of the action of the Spirit.

This unity, visibly in the making, stirs vibrant hope within the heart of all Christians who yearn for the day when it will be given them to realize the unity willed by Christ Jesus — "there shall be one flock, one shepherd" (Jn 10:16). In the Shepherd's Fold there is "neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). Love is the one way leading to this unity willed by Christ, to this unity which is a gift of the Spirit.

This is what Saint Paul teaches when he writes, "Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Rm. 15:7). We will build the world in unity, peace, and love if we ourselves cheerfully accept our brothers as they are.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

Response after each intention: Thank you, Lord, thank you.

- For constructive unity in the making between Christians and between men.
- For the desire to come in closer contact with one another.
- For breaches healed, for grievances forgiven.
- For your Spirit instilled into our heart.
- For the hope that inspires us.
- Because you have come to gather us together as one people.

An appropriate song or hymn may be sung.

4 — SHARING

We firmly hope that one day we will sit at the same table in order to share the Body of Christ and fully enjoy his presence. But even now we believe that Christ is present in our sharing, in our efforts to attain unity.

He is present whenever we pray together: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20). He is present whenever we welcome others: "As you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40). He is present in the hope by which we are inspired and in the love by which we are united. We will now do our sharing in the belief that Christ is present in our midst, and in the hope that we shall all one day be seated together at the Eucharistic Banquet.

Act of sharing

- 1 — Participants share bread and wine in silence or to the accompaniment of an appropriate song or hymn.
- 2 — This sharing will contribute in establishing a link between the celebration and life insofar as the group has been prepared to discern between this action of sharing and the Eucharist proper.

CONCLUDING PRAYER:

O Lord, you who desire to see all your children closely united in you, we pray for Christian unity. May your grace reassemble your scattered people so that the world may know you, the one true God, and he whom you have sent, Christ Jesus. Amen.

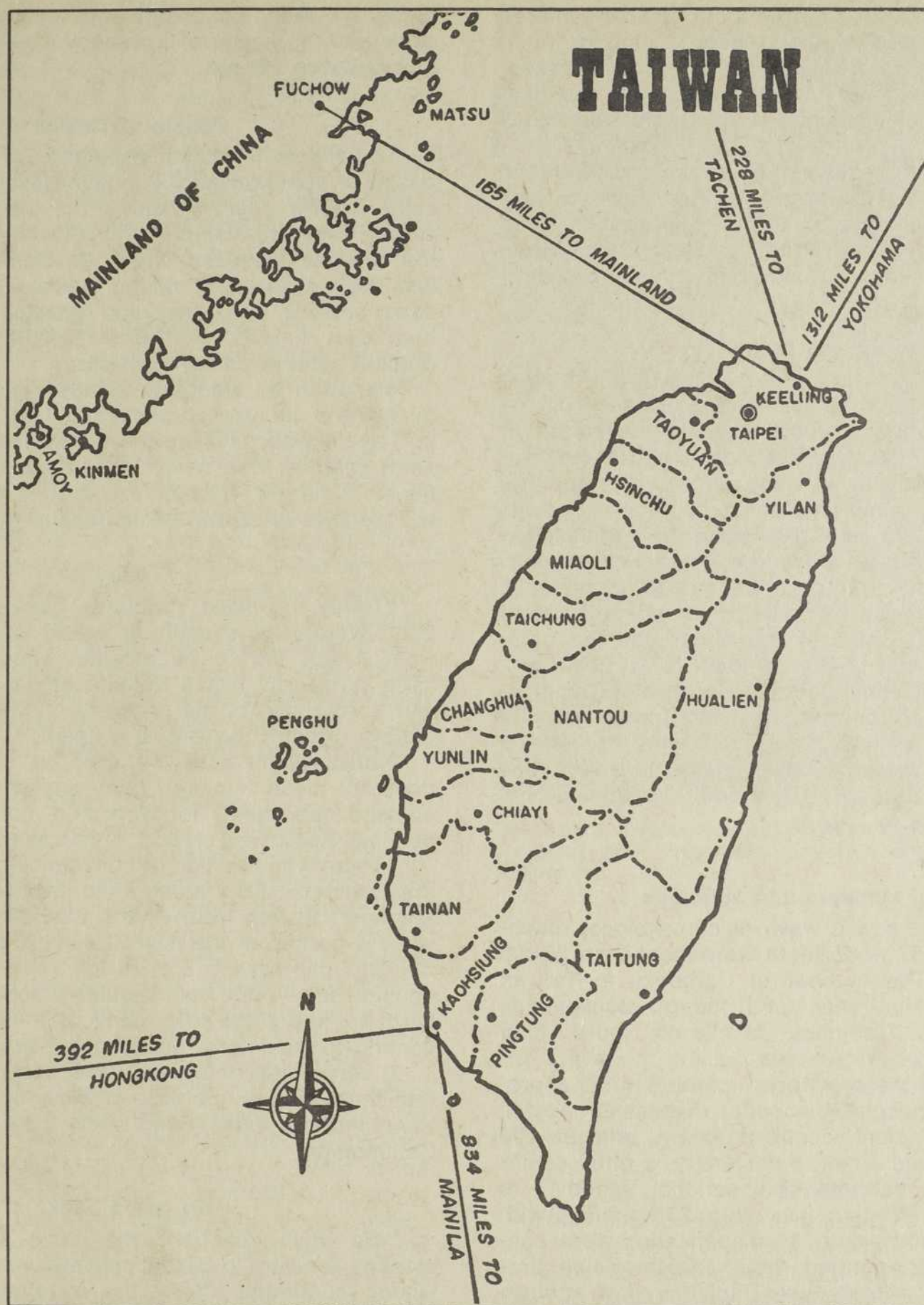
REFRESHMENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT:

Buns, biscuits, wine, grape juice. Friendly exchanges between participants. Dances, songs, games . . . After the proclamation of the word of God, it is only proper for all to enjoy themselves in a brotherly manner.

PIERRE DUFRESNE
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for the Interconfessional Committee
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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN TAIWAN

by Father Ivar McGrath, S.S.C.



Although the Catholic Church in Taiwan entered 1970 with an impressive 20-year record of large numbers of converts, rapid growth in church organization, and a crash programme of church, school, and hospital building, some aspects of this effort are today being questioned.

The critics are answered by those who contend that although the situation is far from perfect, still it is normal, in the circumstances, that routine, hard work will recoup many of the losses, and that from now on, one may expect a slower but surer growth.

Taiwan today

When Taiwan was returned to China at the end of World War II — after 50 years of Japanese rule — there were less than 10,000 Catholics, ministered to by a handful of Spanish Dominicans and three Taiwanese priests. Taiwan was one apostolic prefecture.

Today Taiwan comprises one archdiocese and six dioceses. Making possible this growth in organization was the rapid increase of Church personnel and surprisingly quick build-up of the Catholic community. During the 1950s great numbers of priests and sisters arrived here, both Chinese who either fled the communists or who, after studies abroad, could not return to the Chinese mainland dioceses because of Communist persecution, and foreign missionaries forced to leave the Chinese mainland. By 1955, there were 378 priests and 222 sisters working here. Today there are 364 Chinese and 446 foreign priests, and 701 Chinese and 422 foreign sisters in Taiwan.

Era of numbers and buildings

The 1950s also saw a wave of conversions, reaching its peak in 1957 when there were more than 25,000 adult baptisms. The number of Catholics in Taiwan passed 100,000 that year, and though conversions began declining, Catholics numbered more than 300,000 by 1968.

Together with the growth in numbers went a programme of church, school, hospital, dispensary, hostel, and social or student centre building. Almost 700 churches, large and small, a university, a girls' senior college, 24 high schools, 5 vocational schools, 10 primary schools, 44 student hostels, 23 hospitals with a total of 1,301 beds, and 115 dispensaries were constructed. A Jesuit-operated radio and television programme service with its own facilities and studios, two radio broadcasting stations, and seven publishing houses were established.

The fact remains, however, that conversions have slowed down considerably. In 1969, there were less than 5,000 adult Baptisms, and Mass attendance had dropped off.

There is much self-questioning these days, especially among the young priests and sisters, who sometimes say the conversions of earlier years were made in great part through mixed motives, and that the converts were poorly formed. There are those who

decry the building programme claiming that it has projected the image of a wealthy Church widening the gap between people . . .

People of Taiwan

The almost 14 million population of Taiwan is composed of approximately 8 million descendants of early settlers from coastal Fukien province who speak a south Fukienese dialect, 3 million who have come from the Chinese mainland since the Communist takeover and their children, 2 million Hakkas (descendants of early settlers from mainland coastal provinces with their own dialect), and some 200,000 aborigines, the original settlers, of Malayan stock.

Mandarin or standard Chinese is the official language and its use is compulsory in all schools. All in Taiwan who have completed at least the six (now nine) years of free compulsory education speak fairly fluent Mandarin. It is only a matter of time until all will be able to speak the national language.

Today

"Today the living standards have risen so rapidly that I would say a family as a unit is getting 10 times what it got before as income," Father Smith said. "The prosperity has a definite effect on conversions. Our Lord spoke of that when he mentioned the camel getting through the eye of a needle."

Father Smith said the drop in Mass attendance does not mean a loss of faith, and often is due to increased opportunity for work and moonlighting in the bustling Kaohsiung export processing zone.

"There was this tide of conversions, and for a while the converts went along with the practice of their religion," Bishop Paul Cheng of Taiwan said. "Then, while a portion of the new Christians continued to live full Christian lives, a portion fell away — not that they apostotized — but from regular practice of their faith. Now we see signs that many of the latter are again coming to Mass and receiving the sacraments."

It was noted, this year, in at least three dioceses that there was an increase in Mass attendance and in the number of those going to confession and receiving Communion.

No going back

"We shall not have the same unusual circumstances leading to many conversions again," Bishop Cheng continued. "Now the mainlanders are to all intents and purposes the same as the Taiwanese, with roots here and stability. Conversions will be slow, as they always were in China, and priests will have to go out, visit Catholics, and seek every means of contacting non-Catholics. Priests, for many years, were used to the people coming to them; some don't yet realize that from now on we must go to the people."

"Things are looking up," said Father Clarence Engler, a Maryknoller active in Taichung diocese for 10 years. "Each parish now seems to have a solid group, ranging in my experience from one-half to two-

thirds, with solid faith and a sense of Christian community. The drop in conversions — if there be such — is due to economic prosperity, and to an apparent rise in loyalty to the local folk religion, which is really a nationalistic phenomenon."

Father Engler has worked in almost exclusively Taiwanese parishes. The Taiwanese have a strong folk religion, which borrows much from Taoism, Buddhism and primitive animism, and as Chinese, they are deeply influenced by the Confucian system of ethics.

Old and new missionaries

Some of the older missionaries are afraid that the young will not carry on the traditional apostolic work they consider essential.

"Every priest who has been on the missions knows that home visitation is the heart of the matter," said Mgr. Leonard McCabe, M.M., vicar general of Taichung diocese. "The young right away try to prove that one shouldn't visit, that there is no need to visit. But those priests who are having any success are using any and every means of contact — English classes, anything."

According to Father Heribert Welte, a German Dominican, the young who have arrived in Taiwan after the years of numerous converts want to prove themselves in their own way. "They are interested in social action, in specialized work, possibly in teams, in the cities. They feel the village apostolate gets nowhere."

Christian Community

Father Jesus Brena-Sanchez, a Spanish Jesuit, probably speaks for the young when he says: "I firmly believe that the Church doesn't move so fast in Taiwan because our Catholics are not giving the testimony of a Christian community in a pagan society." Father Brena-Sanchez is executive secretary of the Institute for social action in Hsinchu that organizes leadership courses, and is involved in the credit union movement. This movement has so far produced the most tangible results from Church involvement in social action.

Converts to Catholicism during the last 20 years have included not a few intellectuals such as Dr. Chiang Fu-tung, curator of the National Palace Museum, and (the late) Dr. Pao Tsen-peng, director of the National Central Library. Another interesting aspect of conversions here has been among college and university students. The apostolate of priests and sisters teaching at state universities has proved very successful, not only because of general influence, but in terms of converts. For many years there has been an average of more than 100 undergraduate converts annually in the Taipei area alone. Student centres staffed by priests have been established wherever there are institutes of higher studies.

Fujen Catholic University, with Cardinal Yu Pin of Nanking as rector, has an enrolment of over 3,000 students. The colleges of liberal arts, sciences, and foreign languages, law, and business administration, are in charge of Chinese secular clergy, the Society of Divine Word, and the Society of Jesus, respectively.



The arrival of numerous missionaries expelled from China, around the years "50", inaugurated a period of progress for the Church of Taiwan.

The university has an attached theologate staffed by Jesuits. The regional major seminary is just off the campus and seminarians study theology and philosophy at the university.

Vocations

Vocations for the priesthood are not very numerous, but that is to be expected when the great majority of Catholics are new Christians. Vocations normally come from old Christian families. There are 60 boys at major seminaries and 236 at minor seminaries. Vocations to the religious life among girls have been more numerous. The number of those leaving the priesthood here, both among indigenous clergy and foreign missionaries, has been relatively low.

There is a new impetus in Catholic circles to study the local religions. The Ricci Institute has been established with research in Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and related matters, high on its agenda. Relations with other Christian communions are slowly improving and there is ever-increasing ecumenical dialogue.

Present problems

The Church in Taiwan is faced with two major problems. One is the loss — or at least the failure to attend Mass — of high-school-age children. The other is the government-encouraged birth control programme.

The vast majority of Catholic children are enrolled at public schools. Because of the highly competitive nature of the educational system, Catholic schools cannot accept children who fail the entrance examinations, while the brighter children choose the more prestigious public schools. There is a considerable falling away from the practice of religion with students at public schools, and success in keeping in touch with and giving a Catholic formation to them seems to depend on the initiative and personality of the individual priests and sisters responsible. There is no easy solution.

Public image of the Church

The public image of the Church is, on the whole, good. There is little overt antipathy shown in predominantly non-Christian Taiwan, and the Church is generally respected. Bishops, priests, and sisters are normally regarded with esteem. The mass media treat the Church fairly, as a rule. Freedom of religion is the national policy and the government is generally favourable towards the Catholic Church, its known anti-Communist stand being an obvious reason.

Condensed from *Sunday Examiner*

(Continued from page 183)

We once asked our friend Su, "How do you explain that the three races have not mixed?"

"The Moslem religion," Su explained, "will not tolerate any other form of worship than its own. For our part, we, Chinese, often hear the reproach that we stick to our own people, but Malaysians do not try to make us feel at home among them. We keep on practising our traditional ancestor worship." She gestured to an alcove where incense sticks were kept burning day and night, in front of the family altar decked with flowers. "We like to sit before our little shrine, to thank the spirits of our ancestors for benefits received . . . All we ask of Malaysians is that they will let us live in peace. We are an industrious race. Many among our people have prospered. We have our lawyers, our doctors, our bankers, our teachers, but we also have our destitute for whom little is done. Why should Malaysians keep the monopoly of administrative and governmental posts? As long as justice is not observed, there can be no truly Malaysian nation."

And yet, as far as we could judge, Malaysia is a country where it is good to live. Perhaps the day will come when perfect harmony will blend the three distinct races into a strong united nation. This is what Su hopes for. "Race is not the main thing for me," Su confided. "My children have Indian and Malaysian friends. They are all welcome for they are all children, and children are the same the world over."

by *Danielle Scialom*
"Christiane", No 234

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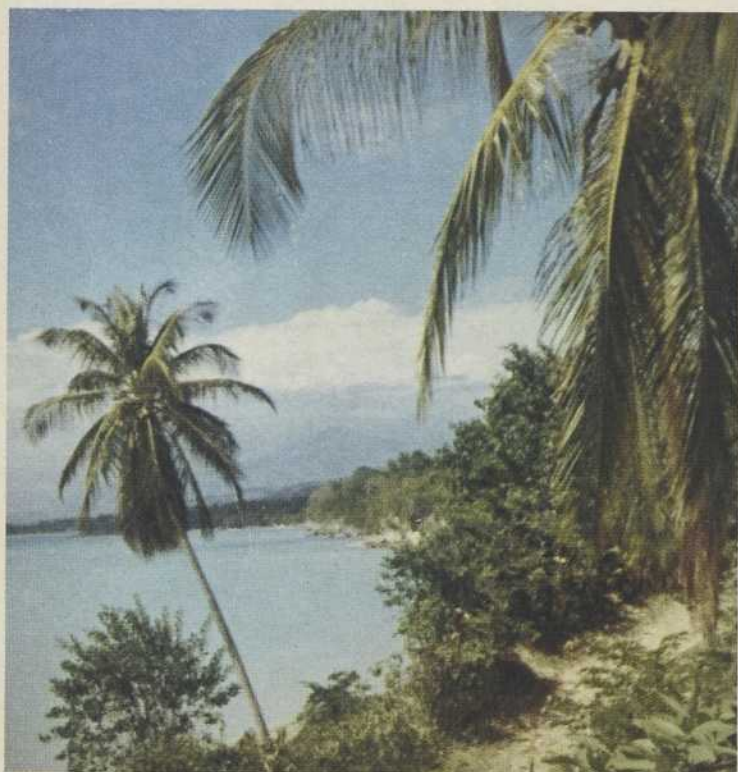
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