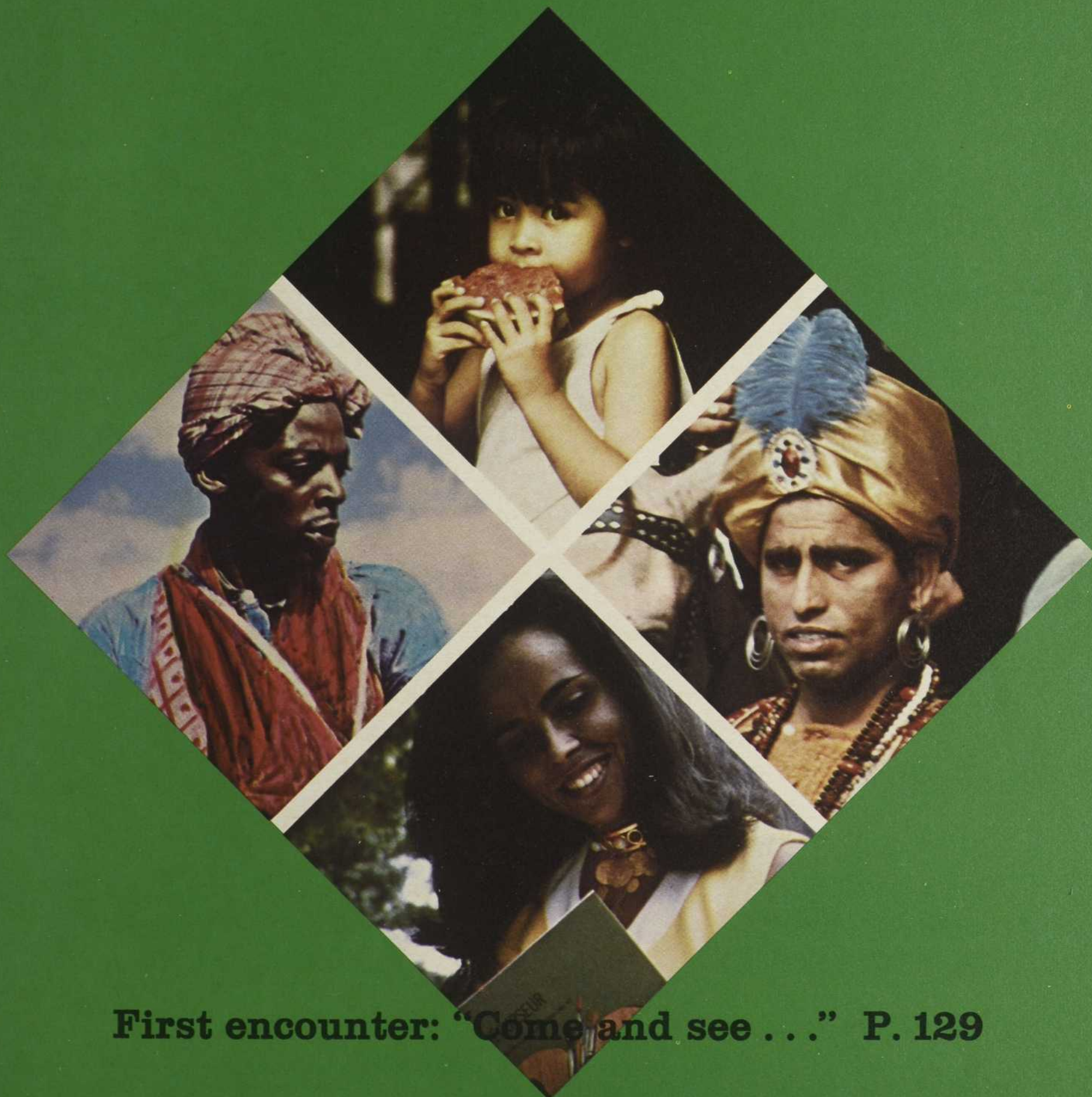




THE PRECURSOR

September-October 1972, Ville de Laval, Vol. XXX, No. 5



First encounter: "Come and see . . ." P. 129



For centuries, men sought to discover the mystery of
God hidden within the great forces of nature.

Photo: Canadian Tourist Bureau

THE PRECURSOR

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SPIRITUALITY

ENCOUNTER

The next day after this, John was standing there again with two of his disciples; and watching Jesus as he walked by, he said, "Look, this is the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard him say it, and they followed Jesus. Turning, and seeing them follow him, Jesus asked, "What would you have of me?" "Rabbi," they said (a word which means Master), "Where do you live?" He said to them, "Come and see." So they went and saw where he lived, and they stayed with him all the rest of the day, from about the tenth hour onwards.

John 1: 35.39

LOOK! John pointed out a man who could easily be seen. In fact he came that all might see him. But, can we see God? Not with our mortal eyes. Are there any signs of his presence in our midst? In the course of centuries, men have endeavoured to discover his mystery hidden within the forces of nature. They have heard his voice in the roar of tempests, seen his smile reflected upon the sea's shimmering waters. Our modern world, however, erects countless artificial barriers between man and nature. Should we feel sad at the thought that this wonderful universe of ours seems to be emptied more and more of God's presence? Not really. The great sign of God's presence is a man. We can see God in Christ Jesus if we take the time to look.

But where is Christ Jesus to be found? We can no longer catch sight of him as when he lived here below. Where, then, is the sign of God manifested to man? In the Church. This Church does not merely consist of buildings of stone or of wood, but in the community of believers in whom Christ continues to be present to the world.

Two of John's disciples had heard him say, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." They were young and reluctant to admit, in their yearning for purity, the turpitudes of a sinful world. They dreamt of a lost paradise to be regained. This is what had drawn them to the banks of the Jordan where John baptized. He spoke of purification, of deliverance from evil. But he could only raise the hope. The water he poured over men's bodies was merely the sign and the promise of a more radical liberation to be eventually brought about by another.

And now the promised Saviour had come at last. How could they fail to follow him? Christ is more than a sign of God, he is a call. He draws to himself like a magnet those who seek in him the realization of mankind's highest hopes. During his Passion, his enemies called him a seducer. Christ seduces indeed because he promises, as no other man could ever promise, to quench the thirst of all. He is the one for whom all have always yearned.

THE apostolate is not synonymous with propaganda. It is a mystery, the mystery of Christ's attraction which is still being felt even at present. The Church is not only a sign, it is a call from the Lord. As soon as men recognize it as the Church of Christ they are drawn to it, they go forward to meet Christ living in its midst.

But, do we not often conceal the face of Christ? Why should his vivifying and active presence fail to illumine the face of the Church? The image of the Church should be reflected in our Christian communities which are not, alas, as engaging as they should be. Those we come across should be able to say, "Come and see. . . See how these groups of men and women live in charity which banishes hatred, in freedom which severs the bonds of money and pride. . . We have truly found the Saviour himself. . ."

"They stayed with Him all the rest of the day." Jesus later urged his disciples to "dwell in his love".

LIKE Christ, the Church welcomes all men, whatever their race or mentality. Nothing which concerns man can be indifferent to her. She readily assimilates every human reality. What about modern civilization? She assimilates even that to the extent that her children integrate their faith and unify their life.

When they emerge from their churches of stone where they have gone to meet Christ in his sacrament, Christians must continue to live in Christ. Their whole life, their work, their love, their hope must be founded on Christ Jesus.

THE presence of Christ among men was felt for the first time on the banks of the Jordan as a sign to be considered, a call to which a response was to be made, a meaningful encounter. Such must also be his presence in the Church. This is the mission which devolves upon each one of its members. Men must be able to see Christ in his Church and dwell in the love of Christ himself.

Translated from *Pour que Vous Croyiez* by J.T.A. Sève

MEXICO

MEXICAN DAY OF THE DEAD

Long before the coming of the Spaniards, the death theme was prominent in Mexico. Among the Aztecs and the Nahuas, the majority believed in a life beyond the grave. According to their traditions, the souls of the departed were transferred to one of three regions: the resplendent mansions of the Sun; the delightful residence of Tlaloc, god of waters; the dreary inferior world of Mictlan. Death was a passing from this world to another; it did not necessarily bring reward or punishment. So firmly did the ancient Mayas believe in immortality that they called the newborn "prisoners of life." This belief was deepened in the introduction of Christianity. Today's Mexican celebrations in honour of the dead are a blend of pagan, Christian, Indian, and Spanish traditions.

Although the Day of the Dead wears an aura of nostalgic sadness, the fiesta mood prevails, a fiesta organized to soothe and cheer the souls of the dead. Death is considered the incorruptible judge of the great and the humble, the rich and the poor. It is an event as important as birth and marriage. Why should it not be celebrated in festive fashion?

During the last days of October, bakers are busy making *pan de los muertos* (dead man's bread) baked in all sorts of human and animal forms. Shop windows display priests, widows, policemen, angels, chickens, all made of cookies. Candy ghosts leer at you from counters. Mountains of sugar skulls festooned with flowers are offered for sale. Vendors hawk incense burners, copal incense, tiny ceramic angels, candles, figurines to decorate the graves. Large orange marigold, sacred flower of the Aztec dead, are sold in huge bunches. Their pungent aroma fills houses, churches, and graveyards.

Closely related in this to Japanese Buddhist lore of the O Bon Lantern Festival of the Dead, Mexican tradition has it that the souls of the departed visit their homes on the night preceding the Day of the Dead. Flower petals are strewn from the cemetery to the

house to help them find their way. Offerings of food, drink, flowers, and incense are deposited on the home altar around which friends and relatives gather to pray and welcome ghostly visitors. Around midnight, there is a time of silence. The breeze faintly stirring curtains or paper decorations heralds the presence of visiting souls. Small glasses of cognac are often placed on the altar for their enjoyment.

On the Day of the Dead, cemeteries are filled with milling crowds carrying flowers. Tombstones are transformed into banquet tables laden with dishes of chili, tortillas, fruit, beverages. Along the main path of the graveyard, Masses are offered for the repose of dear departed ones. Bands play solemn marches. Portable organs make soft music. Bells toll unceasingly, inviting souls to enjoy the warm hospitality so thoughtfully prepared. Later in the day, when the dead have duly "feasted", the living share the food and drink offerings placed on the tombs in a festive mood.

Because the Mexican can consider death with a friendly even jocular attitude, it seems less menacing, less formidable than in other cultures. The living are comforted by the thought that in offering lavish hospitality to the dead. They are making up for any remissness in their conduct towards them. Another source of consolation is the assurance that when their time comes to leave this world, their children and grandchildren will make offerings, burn incense, and dance over their graves. This gives them a certain sense of identity, of defying time and space.

In Mexico, the Day of the Dead is filled at once with joy and sorrow. Joy because visiting souls have been fittingly remembered with prayer and offerings, symbolically entertained with music, tolling of bells, singing, and dancing. Sorrow because, in reality, loved ones cannot be recalled to life here below. However, on this day a link is forged between past and present. The dead live again in hearts that love is filling.

CHILE

S as in SALUD

Suzanne Labelle, M.I.C.

The Spanish word *salud* may signify health or the toast one gives to a friend by lifting one's glass. It corresponds, more or less, to our expression, "Your health!" In ordinary life, whenever one leaves the house or concludes a letter, one uses the word *saludos*, wishing all sound health, the best of material goods.

In Canada as well as in all parts of the world, the health problem is one of primary importance. Each country puts out its best efforts to solve it in the best possible way, limited only by financial resources on hand.

Latin American countries work hard to improve their health programmes. In Chile, for instance, the Ministry in charge of health is called *Servicio Nacional de Salud* (National Health Service). Would you like to hear how it functions? The following lines briefly explain its workings.

The *Servicio Nacional de Salud*, except in rare cases, controls all medical service offered Chileans. Only one university, the State University of Santiago, is authorized to award diplomas to physicians, nurses,

and others in the medical or para-medical field. Other universities have their own faculties of medicine, nursing sciences, etc., but all their students must pass examinations and be awarded diplomas by the above mentioned university.

Medical studies last seven years, plus one year of internship. Doctors may be admitted in the first year after completing the equivalent of our secondary 5. Once their internship concluded and their final examinations passed, the young physicians receive their diplomas. They are then obliged to leave the capital in order to practise medicine during three years in the provinces. Santiago, the capital, has a population of 3,000,000 on a total population of seven and a half million. It draws people like a magnet. In order to ensure a minimum of medical service outside this huge city, the government finds itself under the obligation of asking its young doctors to serve three years in remote posts assigned to them. Only after they have completed this service will they be allowed to practise in larger centres as they see fit.



Photo: Fides

Important Chilean medical centres have an excellent reputation. When they are financially sponsored by scientific societies or social welfare movements, their achievements stand comparison with the best elsewhere. In Valparaiso, for example, a Chilean specialist successfully performed two heart transplants which have prolonged the life of patients to an extent comparable to what has been achieved by the world's great heart specialists. At the hospital-clinic attached to the Catholic University, lesser operations on the heart are almost of daily occurrence. Chilean surgeons are fully competent.

On the whole, Chilean professionals enjoy an enviable culture. Besides Spanish, many among them speak French, English, and German. They appreciate music and painting. I am often surprised to hear them recall certain events in Canadian history or in its geography. They are justly proud of their intellectual formation.

Except a few private clinics which will probably soon pass into government hands, all Chilean hospitals

function under a unique system of socialized medicine. In Santiago, ordinary hospitals do not handle emergencies. These cases are referred to five great hospitals called *Postas*.

In each *Posta*, six teams of physicians assisted by auxiliary personnel, assume a continuous rotating service of twenty-four hours. Such teams become very competent in the treatment of traumas and of acute crises occurring in various diseases. This might be an excellent system were it not for the lack of adequate equipment, drugs, and financial security of personnel due to an insufficient budget. As each group of doctors, except those on night duty, works only during two and a half hours, all should be able to give their patients maximum attention. However, as their salary is too low, the majority work outside for long strenuous hours to make up deficits.

There is another flaw in the system. Patients are too numerous for available beds to be provided. Feverish activity reigns in the *Postas* where an average of eighty patients are treated within a little over two



Photo: United Nations



Talco
and the

After being awarded their diplomas, young doctors leave the capital in order to practise medicine in the provinces during three years. Rear: Talca Hospital.



No matter how hard everyone tries to change things, it is always the poor who suffer most from the penury of institutions. The health problem remains to be solved in such an environment. A street in a Santiago *barrio*.



Talca General Hospital. The statue represents a ragged mother and child, buffeted by a storm and struggling against illness and the vicissitudes of life.

hours. Each receives immediate treatment. This may suppose three or four operations. On Sundays, the same team remains on service from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. treating about three hundred patients, with ten or twelve major operations thrown in.

One need hardly be surprised when a head doctor reluctantly signs the discharge of a patient who has undergone surgery two days before, sending him home in an ambulance, to make place for a serious accident case just come in. One often sees patients lying for hours on two rows of stretchers placed between the beds in wards of forty patients. It rarely happens, however, that two patients have to share the same bed. But, in the great regional hospital of Talca, I once saw two expectant mothers sharing one bed. The two babies then shared the same cradle. A statue which stands in front of the hospital is very suggestive. It represents a ragged mother and child caught in a storm and struggling against the vicissitudes of life. No matter how hard everyone tries to change things, it is always the poor who suffer from the penury of institutions.

Gifted with a wry sense of humour, the Chileans can joke about this state of affairs although they deplore it. Changing one letter in the official title of the Ministry of Health — *Servicio de Salud* — they quip, *Servicio Nacio mal de Salud* — which might be translated the "Ministry of Health was born in poor health." On the whole, admirable efforts are being made in Chile to cover all the medical needs of the population.

S as in Salud! I close this letter with a *Salud*, "Your health!" It is pure coincidence if my signature begins with an S, this being the first letter of my given name.



by Lalao Ramanantsao

THE MALAGASY BABY

The Malagasy Republic is often in the news. Few persons, however, can situate it correctly on the map although it is as large as France and Benelux combined. (Benelux = Belgium + Netherlands + Luxemburg.)

It is called the Red Isle, because of its soil composed of laterite, the Sunny Isle, the Moramora Land . . . (This latter term will be explained further on.) Situated to the south-east of Africa, from which it is separated by the Mozambique

Canal, the thousand-mile-long island looks like a huge ship anchored on the waves of the Indian Ocean.

On the whole, it enjoys a delightful climate. Summer reigns for most of the year except on the high



This Malagasy baby is growing up in an entirely different environment from that of Madagascar. His mother (author of this article) and his father are pursuing studies at the Montreal Polytechnic School. They have been living in Canada for several years. Herizo is their joy and pride.



plateaus where the temperature drops down to 32 F in winter. While Canada has to cope with blizzards which practically block up the roads and bring circulation to a standstill, Madagascar is often whipped by cyclones which vent their fury on trees, telephone poles, and house roofs. Moreover, certain coastal regions are periodically plagued with floods.

All these mishaps we easily forget while we bask in mellow sunshine for the greater part of the year. The mildness of the climate influences the Malagasy character. As a people, we are known for our easygoing ways. We are never in a hurry. That is why our country has often been called the Moramora Land (the gentle land).

Is our gay nonchalance a quality or a defect? I really cannot say. It may explain, at least in part, our tendency to rely on Divine Providence, no matter what happens. We love life in its various manifestations. This point of view is linked with faith in God, Lord of our destinies. Everything that happens is willed by Him and this certainty helps us find a deep significance in all that comes to pass.

A case in point is the tender loving care lavished on our babies as soon as they are born and throughout their infancy.

In times past, children were born in the home, the mother being attended by a midwife or *reninjaza* (mother of all babies). Nowadays, expectant mothers enter the maternity centres where they are still delivered by midwives. Friends and relatives gather awaiting the happy event.

After the child's birth, the midwife carefully sets aside the

placenta and the umbilical cord to be later presented to the members of the family. The placenta is buried somewhere on the property. According to an ancient tradition, this will prevent the family from being scattered. The umbilical cord is fed to a cow if the family possesses one. (This animal is a symbol of wealth and a good friend to man.) If the family has no cow, the cord is buried with the placenta. On no account should it be thrown away. The Malagasy consider this as an important rite. It is believed that the baby whose umbilical cord has been lost will become lightheaded. Whenever a person is mentioned as having a short memory people will say, "*Very-tadi-pastra*, he has lost his umbilical cord!"

The mother's initial affectionate gesture towards the baby consists in anointing him with the "oil of life." This gesture symbolizes the child's introduction into human society, and the love his parents will ever lavish upon him. Those who do not perform this duty, fail in their responsibility and endanger the human fulfillment of their offspring.

During the week following delivery, friends and acquaintances visit the mother to congratulate her and wish her joy. The traditional gift on such occasions used to be *ropatsa* (shrimp soup). This particular food was supposed to express one's participation in the mother's recovery and in the child's welfare as it was believed to favour the flow of milk. Nowadays *ropatsa* is replaced by a symbolical gift of money. We consider the offering of many presents as a foreign custom we are reluctant to adopt as we do not attach the same meaning to it as foreigners do.

When Baby is three or four months old, he is ready for his "rain baptism." On some rainy day, he is taken outside for his first contact with nature. This is a symbolical Malagasy custom. A baby's age is often signified by "he has passed through his first rain" i.e., one or two rainy seasons, not by the number of the years.

Whoever makes Baby laugh for the first time owes him some chicken meat. He has made him acquainted with joy — and with pain also. Henceforth, the child will know the difference between being happy and unhappy, between laughing and crying.

Another marking event is Baby's first haircut, when he is five or six months old. The mother invites the children of the neighborhood to be present on this happy occasion. After the infant's hair has been trimmed, Mamma tosses it up in bunches with sweets and small change for which the children scramble. Is there any meaning attached to this custom? I am really at a loss to know, but I think it may symbolize Baby's growth from infancy to another period of existence.

Later on, the loss of Baby's first teeth calls for a more or less solemn family ritual. Baby throws his fallen teeth one by one over a tiled roof saying, "Give me a sound tooth to replace this bad one." Who is he talking to? To God, assuredly, God who is everywhere, who sees and hears everything.

When boys are three or four years old, they are circumcised. This ceremony is performed only when the child can understand what is being done and the deep significance of the rite. The hygienic reasons for this simple operation

Neighbouring children are invited to share in the happy event of Baby's first haircut.



are explained to him. Besides, he is acquainted with the fact that he is a man. He can now tell the difference between girls and boys. This is his first lesson in sexual education.

The above explanations will help you grasp something of the Malagasy pattern of living. We take the time to live, to enjoy the simplest events which may appear insignificant to sophisticated peoples.

Evidently, the scale of values cannot be the same in a country whose ambitions consist chiefly in attaining a high standard of living and in accumulating wealth, and in another where the truest values are sought in intimate acquaintance with nature, in the ordinary things of everyday life. To us, religion and poetry are one. We see beauty in our environment and we extract it to weave our pattern of living.

I think we should do all in our power to preserve these old traditions which give our country its distinctive character. Alas! They are at present practised only in villages and in regions remote from foreign civilizations.

PHOTO/REPORT

October, month dedicated to

PERU

If you were to visit Peru during the month of October, you would probably be surprised to see women and even little girls wearing a purple tunic tied at the waist with a cord. What can this fashion signify? In Peru, the month of October is a month dedicated to penance just as Lent is in North America. The purple tunic is a symbol of penance worn in honour of *Senor de los Milagros* whose feast occurs on October 18.

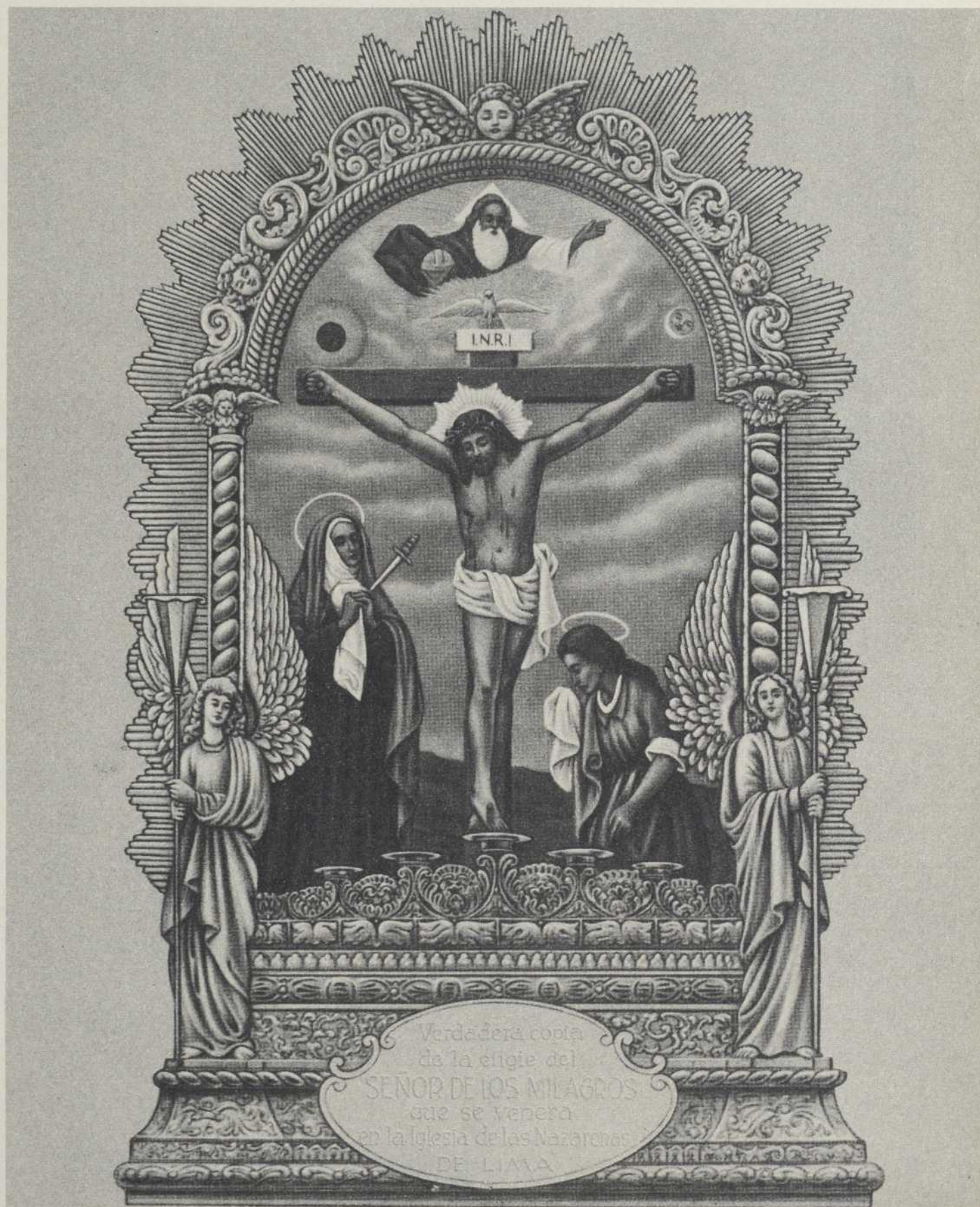
This popular devotion goes back to the middle of the seventeenth century. One of a group of mulattos living in the same house, painted on one of the walls of their dwelling a picture of Christ crucified, with Mary and John standing at the foot of the Cross. During a violent earthquake, the house was destroyed except the wall with the painting. The townspeople declared that a miracle had taken place and they built a small oratory to house the supposedly miraculous image. Several years later, another earthquake levelled Lima, but the wall on which hung the picture again remained intact. *El Senor de los Milagros* was then proclaimed patron of the city and processions were organized in his honour.

With the years, the procession has lost much of its religious aspect and has become a sort of show or pageant. Nowadays, October 18 is the event of the year in Peru. Crowds of people mill through Lima streets following the procession which lasts for forty consecutive hours. A halt is always called in the plaza facing the National Palace so that the President of the Republic and his ministers can pay their respects. The *Senor de los Milagros* is borne aloft on a magnificent float decked with gold and silver ornaments, on the shoulders of twenty-four hardy men wearing purple garments. At every street corner the bearers are replaced because of the enormous weight.



Senor de los Milagros

the Senor de los Milagros



Photos: With kind permission of La Prensa, Lima, Peru

PHOTO/REPORT



Photos: La Prensa



Senor de los Milagros



Rural artists trace a chalky outline on the ground with a sketch of their various designs. Flowers are placed in such a way as to fill in the figures. Among flowers used are chrysanthemums, daisies, gillyflowers, carnations, and roses. Thousands of spectators admired the flowery carpet laid by the villagers of Tarma. Top of first section: the hummingbird, symbol of Tarma, Peru. Below: the figure of Manco Capac, founder of the Inca empire towards 1000 A.D. Centre: the coat-of-arms of the Tarma province. Foreground: a *tumi* (scalpel) used by the Chimú tribe to trepan skulls before the Spanish conquest.

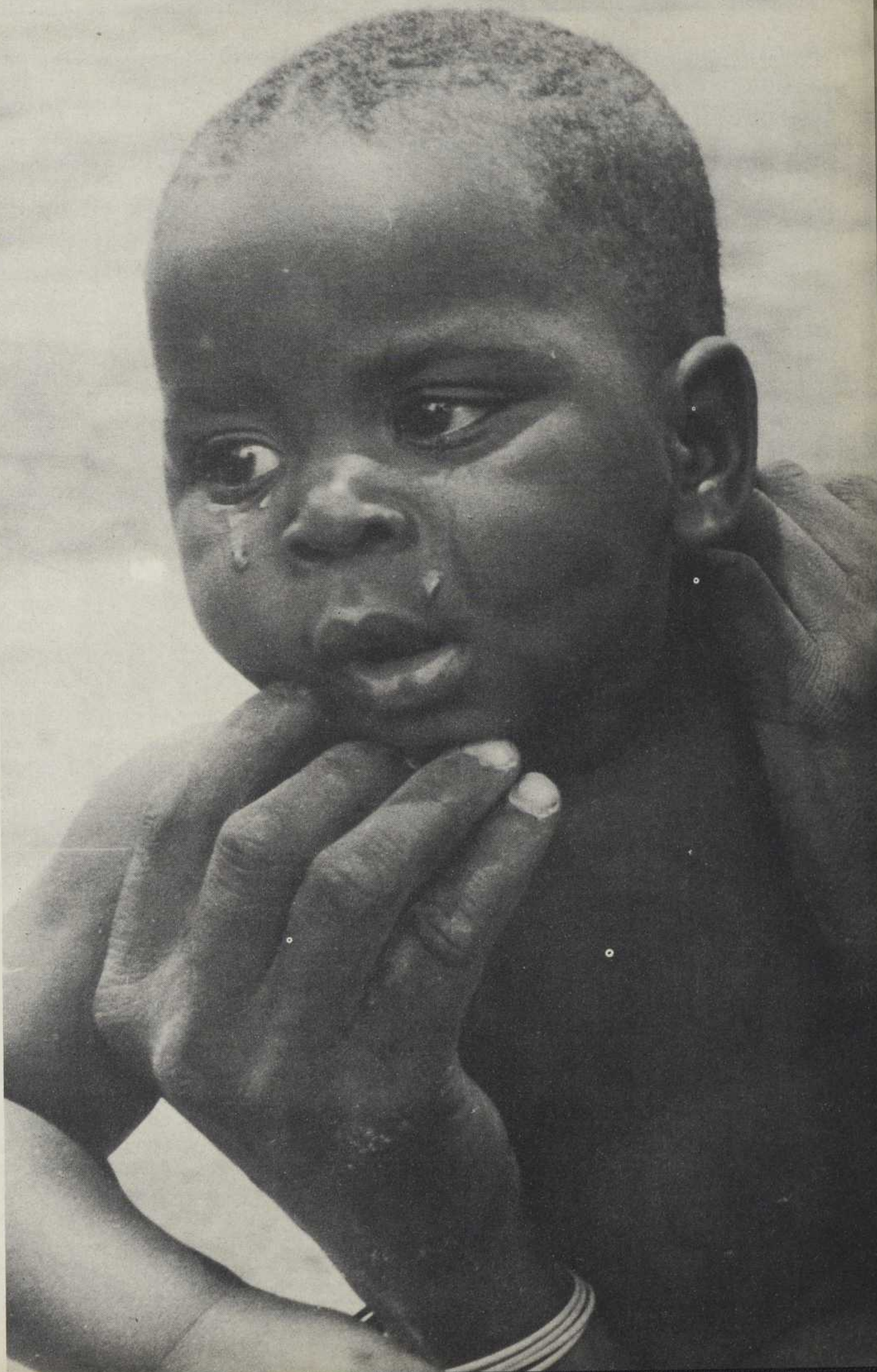
This year, a group of people from a small village called Tarma, decided to make a carpet of flowers whereon the float could be placed. To this effect, they used over two thousand five hundred pounds of flower petals in fourteen different colours: chrysanthemums, daisies, roses, gillyflowers, carnations, myrtle, etc. The Tarma artists usually use wild flowers to make their flower carpeting. This year, however, because of the drought, they could not gather enough wild blooms. They pooled resources to the amount of one thousand dollars to buy cultivated flowers. Such an amount probably represented the savings of several years. The carpet measured four hundred and twenty-five square feet. It was completed by one hundred and thirty persons in four hours (between 2:00 to 6:00 a.m.).

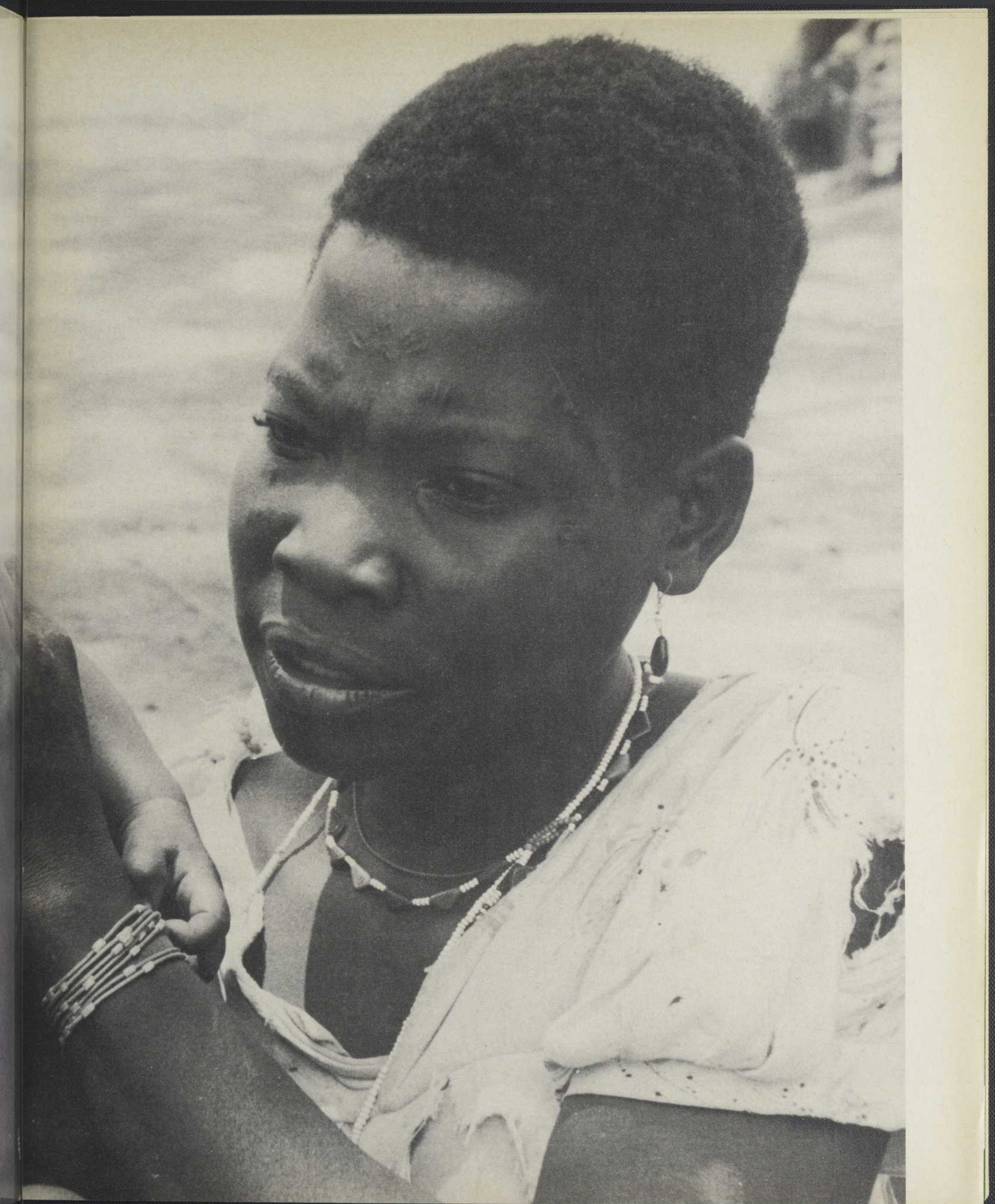
To begin with, the artists traced a chalky outline on the ground with a sketch of their various designs. The flowers were then placed in such a way as to fill in the figures traced. This artistic work was admired by representatives of over ninety-five countries who had gathered in Lima for the second ministerial meeting of Group 77. Peruvians were proud to manifest their faith and their trust in the Lord before numerous foreigners from all parts of the world.

After reading this, you are perhaps tempted to ask whether missionaries are still needed among the people of Peru, so true to their faith and traditions. Without, in any way, underrating the positive values of such religious manifestations I say, "Yes they are still badly needed." An immense work of evangelization remains to be done in the capital and throughout the land.

Suzanne Longtin, M.I.C.

Is this child crying of hunger or
simply because he is unloved?



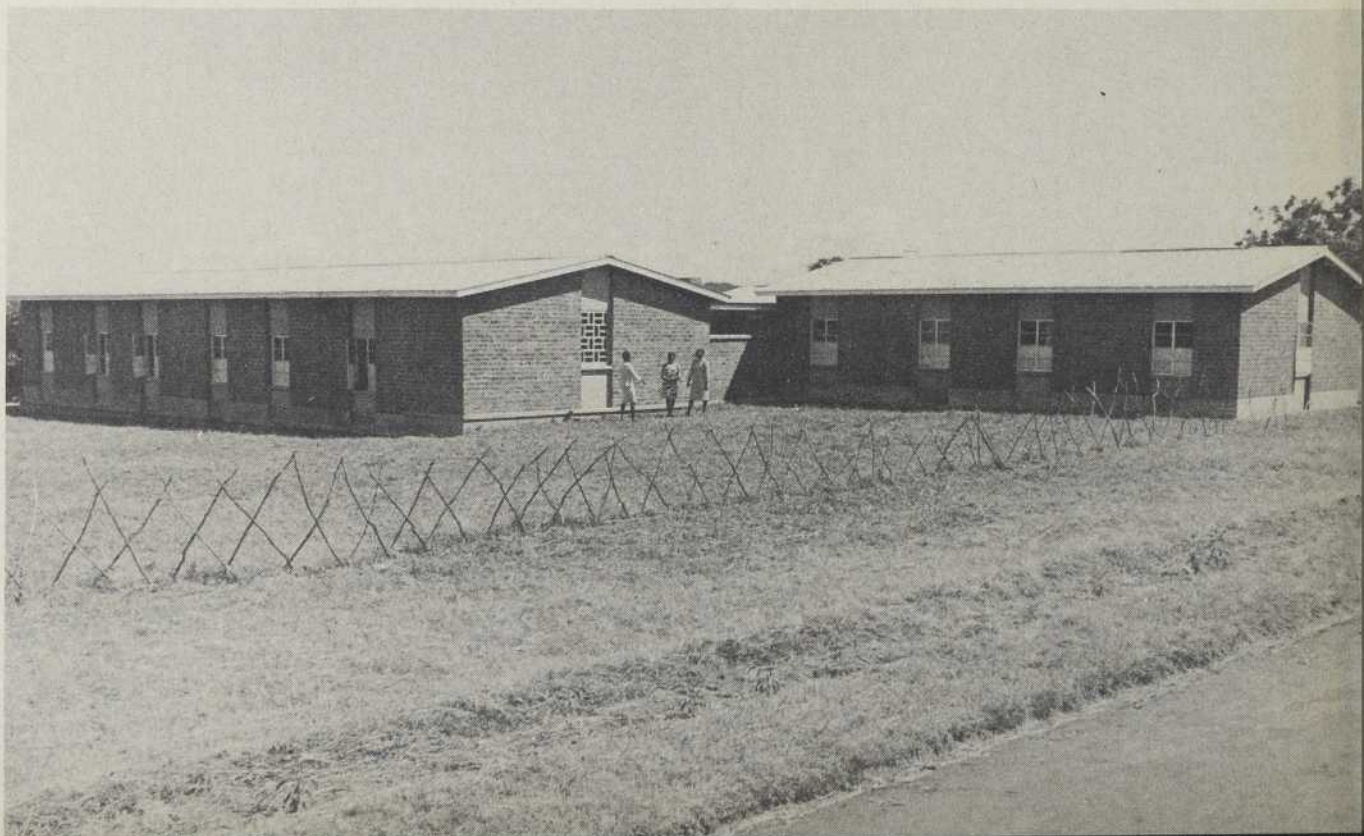


PHOTO/REPORT



Guido and Maria beside a stone marker indicating the "Guido Hostels" built for Katete students.

The three motels enclose a court appreciated by students.



GUIDO AND MARIA

MALAWI

Who can pretend that everything in the world today is perfect? No one indeed! But can we not as Christians, singly and as a community, try to transform it so that it will be a better place to live in?

Guido and his wife Maria have spent two of the most precious years of their lives with us. Soon after their wedding, they sought to get involved in this world of ours. Their first step in doing so meant the temporary giving up of a social position in their own country, and the acceptance of friendship with people of another culture. They readily admit that what they have gained from this experience has deepened their love for all mankind and made them understand all the better that the basic needs and desires of all men are the same.

When the two came to Malawi, they did not discard all the values of their own culture. On the other hand they are now able to appreciate them all the more as they return to their own country, LIECHTENSTEIN, enriched by the values that other cultures have added to their own.

The local "News Letter" tells us about the tangible results of the couple's apostolate in Malawi. It describes the official opening of a new hostel for the students of St. John Bosco T.T. College, Katete, Chimpira. The ceremony, presided by Bishop J. L. Jobidon, took place on Sunday, May 16, 1971. Staff personnel and students were present together with a large gathering of local people.

This modern hostel comprises bedrooms, a recreation hall, a dining room, a kitchen, and other household facilities. A considerable sum was donated by the city of Liechtenstein, in Europe. Situated between Austria and Switzerland, this principality covers 61 square miles and has a population of 20,000 inhabitants. Not content with their generous financial assistance, the people of Liechtenstein sent their representatives in the persons of Mr. and Mrs. Guido Nasher as lay missionaries. Their concern for the people of Malawi was a splendid manifestation of Christ's concern for all. "May their tribe increase!"

Alice Mills, M.I.C.



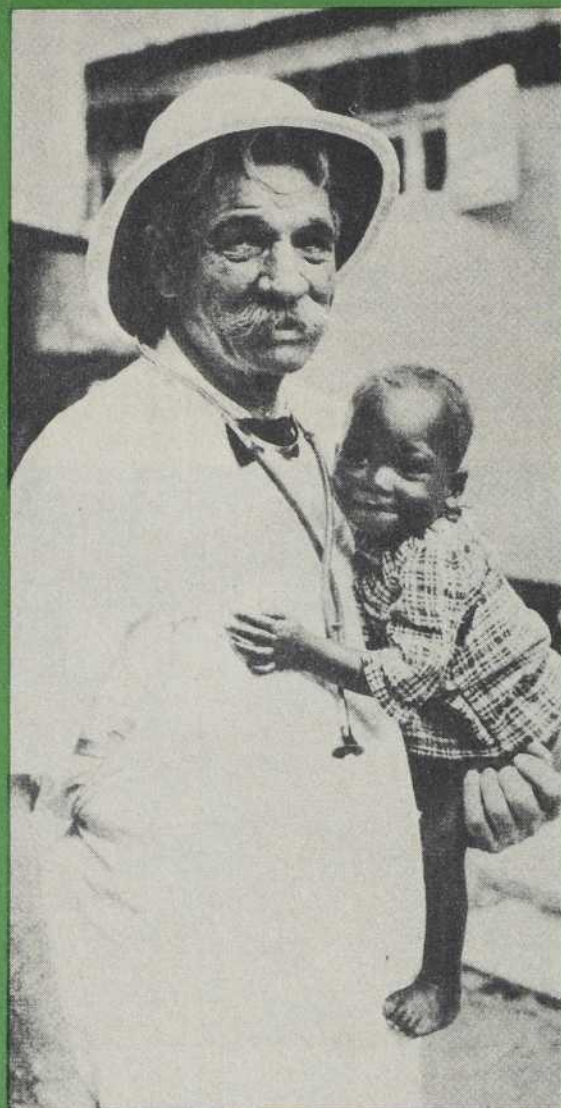
Mr. A. Shawa, school principal, thanks Mr. and Mrs. Nascher, devoted lay missionaries. Mgr. J. L. Jobidon blesses the new enterprise.



A pleasant spot to rest and chat.

GABON

LAMBARENE TODAY



Schweitzer, "the great white doctor."

Pessimists predicted that once Schweitzer was gone, the hospital would disintegrate. They had reckoned without the force of his example which became a source of inspiration for a great many savants and research workers. Such a one was Doctor Walter Muntz who is now chief of the medical staff at Lambarene.

Walter Muntz had dreamed of going to Africa ever since, as a small boy in Switzerland, he had heard about Doctor Albert Schweitzer and his work. Having completed his medical studies, he went to Lambarene as a visitor. He was never to leave it again. Far from the comforts of his homeland, he continues the work that his hero initiated.

Under his direction the hospital keeps on growing. A new sanitation system has been installed; operating theatres have been air-conditioned; modern equipment has been purchased; an up-to-date laboratory has been

LAMBARENE IS



YEARS OLD

(continued)

organized. A greater number of doctors have volunteered their services; a programme of preventive medicine has been expanded.

Doctor Muntz came to Lambarene when he was only thirty years old. Like so many others, he had been drawn by the influence of the "great white doctor" who renounced fame and fortune to dedicate his life to the service of ailing mankind.

A volunteer like the rest of his staff, Doctor Walter starts work early every morning. Doctor Friedman, a striking figure with a bristling mustache, examines a pregnant woman. An interpreter who speaks French stands by, he is an important link between doctor and patient as there are about a dozen dialects used by the people around here. For her part, Rhena Eckart carries on the tradition of service inaugurated by her parents.

Clinic charts are kept of every patient who passes through the hospital. They are referred to as the UN files because each doctor may make out the chart in his own language, although French predominates in the hospital service.

One hundred thousand patients have passed through Lambarene since its foundation, and their history is that of the hospital itself. No patient has ever been denied admittance. Those who can afford to do so, pay a small fee. The others pay whatever they can in produce: eggs, chickens, vegetables or by giving help around the place.

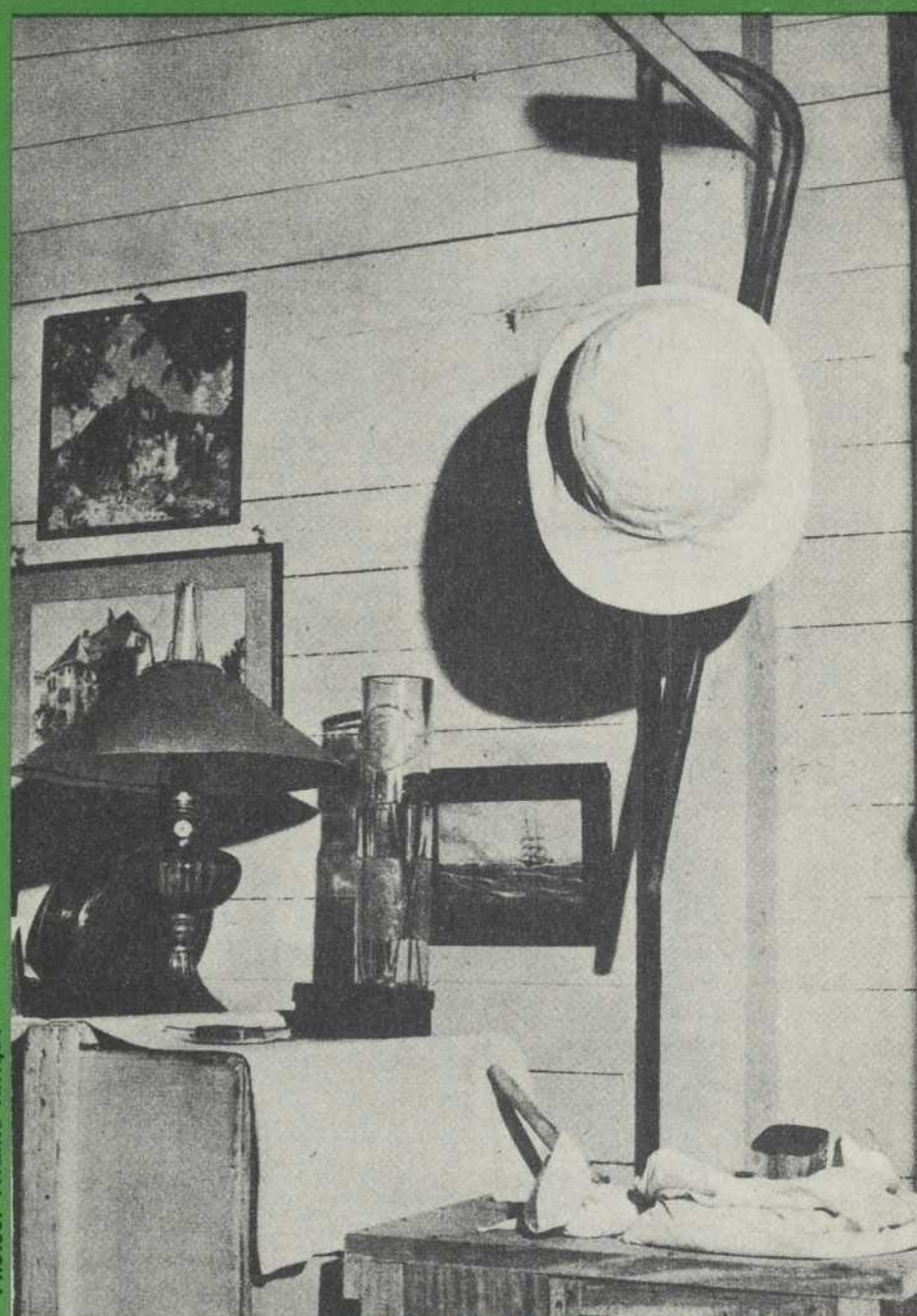
Many Africans born in Lambarene hospital, in the early years of its existence, now return as patients or to give birth to their own children.

After lunch, patients line up at the pharmacy. They would feel slighted if the doctor failed to give them each something. Careful instructions must be conveyed, as the patients reason that if one pill can prove efficacious how much more so if a whole bottle be taken at once! Again, why not swallow with a little water, the powder supposed to be rubbed over affected parts?

Rhena Eckhart, Albert Schweitzer's daughter, is the hospital administrator. She also runs the laboratory. It is no easy task to diagnose a Gabonese patient. Before attempting a diagnosis on his ailment, practically every new arrival must first be examined for parasites, more especially amoeba, besides being treated for anemia and malaria.

The pediatrician, Doctor Ali Von Vapen, presides over the children's clinic. To Doctor Schweitzer, nothing was more important than children. They were the darlings of his heart. He once said to a mother leaving the hospital after delivery, "Tell your daughter, when she grows up, that I was her first admirer. Here she spent her first night; here she dreamt her first dream."

The baby clinic is one of the hospital's busiest spots. To overcome the timidity of mammas reluctant to visit a hospital, Doctor Schweitzer introduced the practice of presenting each newborn baby with a bonnet and a dress. Now, doctors are considered good luck!



Photos: Vivante Afrique

Doctor Schweitzer's presence seems to linger on in this modest room where he planned and elaborated his work.

Doctor Schweitzer always had a soft spot in his heart for little ones. He was fond of saying, "Whenever I hear a baby's cry of pain changed into a normal cry of hunger, that's the most wonderful music in the world to my ears — and there are those who say I have a good ear for music."

In this part of Africa, before a hospital was built at Lambarene, one out of three children died before the age of five. To bear a healthy baby was only half the job; keeping it healthy was the other. In order to remedy the situation, Doctor Schweitzer set up classes in nutrition and child care. A nurse taught women how to prepare a reasonably balanced diet from available local foods. This was a notable improvement over past practices.

Although such a diet is inadequate from our Western point of view, it certainly is an improvement over practices of the past. The mothers show keen interest in nutrition classes. They are not only learning something new and useful, they are enjoying the opportunity

of swapping baby stories. While the mothers follow courses, the children gleefully practise eating with a spoon while kindly hands guide their efforts.

Today, a kindergarten has been added to the vast Lambarene complex. Randy Paulson, Yale University student, is the director. His ten-month stay at Lambarene is part of a five-year experimental Bachelor of Arts programme sponsored by Carnegie Foundation. He writes: "I have been here seven months. A few weeks ago, we finally set up a kindergarten to be attended by the children of the hospital personnel and those of long-term patients. We teach them how to sing, to recite, to mime, to name familiar objects. Once a week, we take them for a stroll in the woods and teach them the names of trees and of medicinal plants."

How is the work at Lambarene sustained? By donations from individuals and groups formed for this purpose all over the world. Everything here is a gift from generous hearts. The hospital receives no government subsidy, no foundation grants.

Drugs are sent from the United States, from Switzerland, from Germany; Argentina has forwarded a wheelchair; vaccines came from Denmark; clothes are sent from everywhere. Children appreciate the latter more than everything else. There is a saying here that "something has to happen in someone's heart before anything happens in Lambarene."

Albert Schweitzer used to say that if the soul had no Sunday it would become an orphan. Therefore, every Sunday, non-denominational services are held at Lambarene, as during his lifetime. The simple Christian service is presided over by Doctor Friedman. He uses the French language, the one most widely used at the hospital, but interpreters translate his words into the Galloan and Fong dialects.

Although not of the Christian faith, the doctor is a member of what Doctor Schweitzer called the "fellowship of those who bear the mark of pain." Those who have learned by experience about pain and physical distress belong together, united by a secret bond, the world over.

What kind of illnesses are treated at Lambarene? According to Doctor Muntz, "On certain days, we feel as if we could never perform all the tasks waiting to be performed: examinations, diagnoses, treatments, consultations. . . Every one seems to fall sick at the same time. But, once the long day is over, we look back on it with contentment and find we have been well repaid. A smile from a sick child, a look of gratitude from his mother, these are reward enough for all our pains."

Superstition, however, dies hard. A woman had already lost two babies at the hands of tribal witch doctors. Once more pregnant, she wanted to go to Lambarene to consult the "great white doctor." But the witch doctors told her, "Your babies died because you were possessed by the devil. If you consult a white doctor the child will surely kill you. Don't say you were not warned." What was the poor woman to do? It takes no small dose of courage to stand up to witch doctors,

to go against tribal customs. Finally, like hundreds of others, she did go to Lambarene although it was not without apprehension. What horror tales had she not heard! Other women recounted how the doctor "killed" the patients, examined them with strange tools; he cut them open to take something out, sewed them up again, then brought them back to life. . . But she also knew that most of those who were cared for at the hospital, returned home happy and healthy. She would take the risk.

Caring for the sick is not the only task performed at the hospital. Residents serve in many capacities. Professors teach classes to train African assistants who will prepare patients for surgery, supervise anesthetics, help in the post-operative care of patients. It was one of Albert Schweitzer's fondest hopes that some of these students would eventually work towards a medical degree and return to Lambarene as full-fledged doctors.

Classes are at times interrupted by emergency cases brought in by dugout canoe, the only ambulance known along the Ogowe. The doctor is called from the classroom. After examination, he finds the patient must undergo immediate surgery for strangulated hernia. The complaint, common in this region, is usually ignored until severe pain sets in. In a single day, surgeons once performed twenty-seven hernia operations. Fifty years ago, Doctor Schweitzer performed this same operation on his very first patient. Had this patient died there might be no hospital in Lambarene today.

Although the hospital is the main reason for the existence of Lambarene, there are a number of daily tasks to be done in order to support it. It usually has a population of over five hundred patients and their families. Everyone who is able is expected to help. Water still has to be hauled from the wells by hand as the plumbing system is not yet in operation. The Ogowe River is a centre of ceaseless activity. While mothers do their daily laundry stints and chat, the children wade or swim in the warm waters.

Eight tons of bananas are brought in every week to feed the population. The hospital truck visits jungle villages for fifty miles around to purchase this staple food in the local diet.

Lambarene Hospital, beside the Ogowe River. The complex presents the aspect of a thriving village with its shops and outhouses. The convalescents can rest in large covered sheds. Lambarene represents the work of a lifetime — the work and spirit of Doctor Schweitzer.



Photo: Vivante Afrique



The Libreville-Lambarene ferryboat makes haste slowly.

The dispensary provides medical care for numerous patients.



Virtually all that the village needs is brought in by ferry or by steamer: medical supplies, tools, equipment, clothing, food. Nothing goes to waste. Packing cases are ingeniously transformed into desks; baggage tags are used as identification cards for the patients' beds. . .

When Doctor Schweitzer first came to Africa, the only vehicle was the wheelbarrow. Eventually, the personnel were presented with a truck and a jeep, the gifts of generous friends. At dinner, one evening, the Doctor made the following announcement with a twinkle in his eye, "Civilization has at last caught up with us! We have had our first automobile accident."

Not without a great deal of trouble, some of the vegetables needed for the hospital are grown in the fifteen-acre garden. Top soil is carried by hand to replace that periodically washed away by tropical rains. Almost each seedling must be hand-nourished. Mats are put up during daytime to protect tender plants from the fierce rays of the African sun. Every single fruit on the grounds has been planted by Doctor Schweitzer and his workers.

New constructions are always being planned and put up in order to keep pace with Lambarene's growth. Located about one mile from the hospital, the leper colony was built with funds received by the doctor when he was awarded the 1954 Noble Peace Prize. It can accommodate two hundred and fifty patients and their families.

Modern drugs used to control Hansen's disease allow the children to live with their parents. The risk of contagion is small compared to the emotional damage involved in the drastic breaking up of family units. Each patient learns how to make his own dressings

and how to sterilize them. All those who can, are encouraged to work. This is not merely good therapy. It enables them to learn a trade in preparation to their return to normal life in their native villages.

Albert Schweitzer once declared to a young African, "You will become truly efficient only to the extent that you benefit by deeply religious and ethical teaching along with adequate training in manual labour." He firmly believed in the spiritual part of every human being. "Our generation," he went on to say, "is justly proud of its numerous achievements, but it no longer believes in the one all important Being — God."

Conclusion

In an age when sentiment, loyalty, and fidelity are empty words, when so many refuse to get involved, Doctor Schweitzer plunged into reality and lived his life to the hilt. His example acted as a ferment. To an aimless generation he showed, through his total dedication, that it was still capable of playing a noble role.

We can, of course, squander his heritage, but we can also continue where he left off, acting upon the principle that "reverence for life" is the ultimate rule of the universe. If we want to survive, we must each have our own Lambarene.

To the skeptical who call this sheer idealism, Albert Schweitzer replies, "Believe me, not a single ray of sunshine is lost. The seed, however, needs time to sprout and grow. Seldom does the sower reap the fruits of his labour. One must not say that reality will ruin idealism, but that idealism will become so much part of oneself that life will be powerless to rob one of its fruits."

Sources: Radio-Canada

Soon all Gabonese girls will be allowed to attend school.

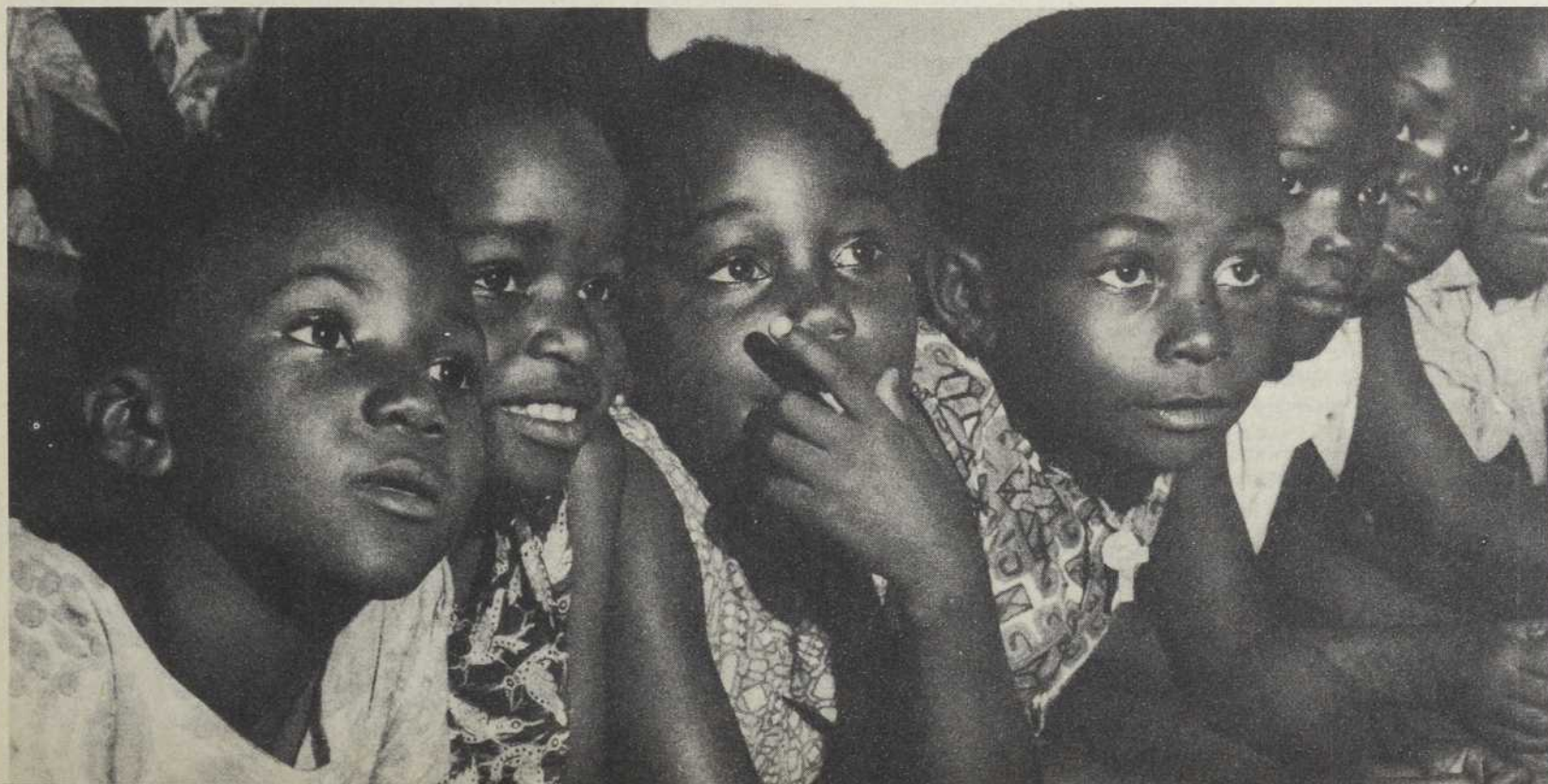


Photo: Vivante Afrique

WHAT DOES THE PRESENCE OF MISSIONARIES

Numerous answers have been given to the question, "What does the presence of missionaries in your country mean to you?" In its July-August issue, "The Precursor" published a few sent from Japan, Bolivia, Quebec, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Montreal.

This month's issue brings you others from Chile, Madagascar, Malawi, Peru, as well as from Japan and Montreal. These will enable you to know the reactions of the young relating to this question.

CHILE

From Gustave Gonzales, a student of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart College comes a short and personal reply. (Compiled in collaboration with Elmore Allary, M.I.C.)

In my opinion, the Christian missionary must be capable of imbuing others with an ideal to be perseveringly attained through generous self denial. Desirous of helping his brothers in Christ, he must forego the joys of family life and his own material welfare in order to relieve the destitute in their misery. He must willingly make his own their poverty, their trials, their hunger. His must be a determined effort for the propagation of the faith carried to the point of stubbornness. We read in the Acts that the Apostles found it impossible to refrain from speaking of what they had seen and heard. This determination they carried to the point of self-sacrifice. They are the missionary's models.

Moreover, he must play an important role in the formation of leaders who will promote the welfare of the nation and transform the ambient atmosphere. His is far from being an easy role. It requires specialization in certain fields as well as natural dispositions with which to play one's role well. The missionary should always be capable of self-forgetfulness. Otherwise, his work will not prove successful.

I am convinced that all of us baptized Christians are, in a certain manner, called to be missionaries in spite of our limitations. We will be able to fulfill our mission only inasmuch as we quicken the spirit of apostolate in the hearts of others.

However, it has been my misfortune to observe that certain persons do not measure up to their fundamental obligations as missionaries:

- 1 — Certain members of the clergy who have not pursued higher education are content to remain on a mediocre level.
- 2 — Some missionaries tend to fill up their days with more or less useful tasks for which they have received no training. Their lack of competence in such matters is more of a handicap than a help.
- 3 — Among young missionaries, there are a few who think that the only way to get things done is to have recourse to violence. I think they cannot be expected to build thriving missions.
- 4 — Finally, there is another breed of missionaries whose principles are of a rigid pattern. These principles they try to force on others. All they can expect is a morbid opposition to their views.

Although I deeply respect missionaries, I feel the need of stressing the points mentioned above which, according to my personal opinion, mar the image of a genuine apostle. But, I hasten to add that such missionaries are rarely met with. Of course one must keep in mind that nothing that is human can ever be faultless.

**Gustave Gonzales, student
College of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart**

MISSIONARIES IN YOUR COUNTRY MEAN TO YOU?

Madagascar (Antsirabe)

Together with a group of final year students at Antsirabe, Yvette replies to the question, "What does the presence of missionaries in your country mean to you?" (Compiled in collaboration with Monique Préfontaine, M.I.C.)

The presence of missionaries in our country brings a practical answer to our urgent needs:

Spiritual point of view

Their presence manifests the love of God for us. We need missionaries to deepen our quest for the Absolute, quest so dear to our Malagasy people as a whole. Predisposed to accept the Good News, a number of our young people courageously enlist as authentic missionaries. Alas! They are too few in number. Besides, they lack adequate formation except the privileged few who have benefited by courses followed at the Catechetical Institute.

In certain parts of our Island, some Christians meet the priest only once a year. They have nobody to guide them except perhaps a catechist assigned to several villages. There are many places where Christianity is as yet unknown.

Thanks to missionaries, the young feel the urge to work for Christ. Although they are still too few, their number will increase with the years; of that, I feel sure. Never has the appeal for apostolic activity among young people been so insistent as in the last decades.

Social point of view

The missionary does not confine his concern to spiritual things. He takes our daily problems to heart. In the fields of education, nursing, promotion of women, progress in agricultural development, he has done more than his share. He provides for the most urgent needs and teaches our people how to assume their responsibility in the development of our country.



The presence of missionaries in our country meets urgent needs.

In many villages, help from the government was received only after the arrival of the missionaries who organized schools, domestic science centres, technical institutions.

The presence of missionaries (Catholic, Protestant, Anglican) is of great help to the Malagasy. All the young people whom we have consulted appreciate their presence and deplore that they are too few to cope with present-day needs.

Canada (Montreal)



Michel

Diane

Sylvie

Céline

The following replies complete those published in the July-August issue by Marie Paule Charbonneau, M.I.C.

To me the missionary is a messenger sent to other countries to announce the Good News to all who want to listen.

At the same time, he teaches children and heals sick. A missionary does not expect to be paid. On the contrary, he often has to fast and suffer. When he arrives in other countries, he must spend long tiresome hours to learn the language. A missionary is like Jesus. He travels, spreads the Good News, helps everybody, forgets his own troubles, teaches people, and finally goes up to heaven hoping somebody else will replace him.

A missionary gives up his life so that others may learn to read and write, and to love God. A missionary does not want his brothers to die in war or of hunger or sickness. He does not want them to remain in the darkness of ignorance. I think he is a wonderful person, a true hero. It takes lots of courage to found each mission as each one brings on new trials which he cannot endure alone. When he founds missions, the Lord helps him out. Otherwise he could not be successful. The missionary is a useful person.

Michel Dagenais (9 years old)

The missionary is important

I think the missionary is a very important person. He is a man who goes out to those who are hungry, who are poor; He spreads the Good News everywhere. Whenever he hears about people in trouble, he goes out to help them. He is always ready to help his brothers, even those he does not know.

Thanks to him we can hope to build a world of peace and of love. In my opinion, a missionary is a very brave person, one who loves others so much that he wants to share everything with them. That takes a lot of love and courage. He tries to understand people so as to love them more.

Missionaries remind us of Jesus' Apostles. They also were very brave men. It must be hard to leave one's homeland, one's parents. When the missionary returns home, after many years, he may not find his dear ones because they are dead. He does not mind because his task is to build a new and better world, the world of tomorrow.

Sylvie Lapointe (11 years old)

What does a missionary remind me of?

First of all, he reminds me that he has heard a call just as you and I have received one, and that he has responded to it. This call comes from God. It required him to leave for destitute countries in order to help them out. By answering "Yes", the missionary proved that his heart was in the right place.

The missionary may not return to his homeland, may not see his dear ones again. That is not easy. But he pities those who suffer. He wants to tell them the Good News of God's love for them all. Teaching them to read and write, he makes them realize how important they are as human beings. Once they have learned this, they can help hundreds of others. The poor will grow rich, perhaps not in money but in love. A missionary wants to make all unhappy people happy.

I cannot imagine what the world would be like without missionaries. War, fear, misery would reign everywhere.

We, young Canadians, can also become missionaries even if we cannot go to distant lands. I think that if we want to give people joy, we must start by our own land, our city, our family. That is why missionaries are so important.

Diane Racine (11 years old)

In my opinion the missionary has a very difficult vocation. He must accept to give his life to help those who have never heard of the Gospel.

I think missionaries are very useful. It takes a lot of courage, thoughtfulness, and patience to answer such a call. How brave one must be to leave home and family! It must be a very hard thing to do.

To leave for the missions is to give one's life instead of keeping it selfishly.

Without missionaries, the world would be poorer. Their vocation is an extraordinary one. Missionaries enrich our hearts because they teach us compassion for other people's misery. I think this is a worthwhile thing to do.

Céline Choquette (11 years old)

Japan, Tokyo

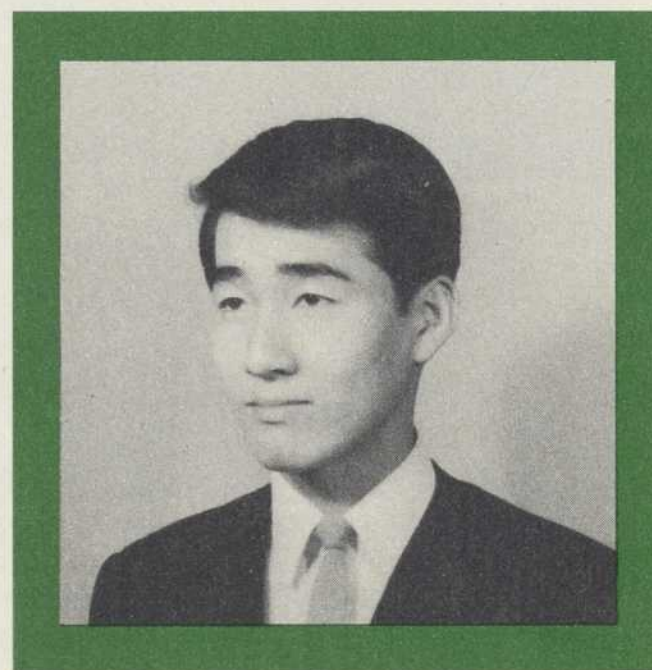
The following excerpts of letters written by young students of Sophia University manifest sincere opinions regarding the presence of missionaries in their country. The writers were: Yutaka Fujita, second-year student, Moriaka Bunroku, fourth-year, Kumai Hisayoshi and Sony Nieko, third-year students.

According to Mr. Yutaka, the presence of missionaries is needed on the level of faith and of education:

"In our age there exists a crisis of the faith, not so much a crisis of losing one's faith by a tendency towards materialism and pleasure seeking, but a crisis of keeping separate our faith and our daily life. Under such circumstances the missionaries can be our spiritual guides.

"At present we are living in a spiritual vacuum. In my country, several religions exist side by side: Buddhism, Shintoism, Christianity as well as a host of 'new' religions. We, Japanese Christians, find it difficult to persevere in our faith. The harder this proves to be, the more we need our missionaries.

"In the field of education also the presence of missionaries is very important. We live in an international society. Although the culture of a particular country is a precious heritage it is not in itself complete. In



Yutaka Kujita

Japan, there are many currents of foreign culture based on Christianity. Philosophy, literature, law, and even the natural sciences have all been influenced by Christianity to a greater or lesser degree. Who can better guide us in these fields than the missionaries?

"For many years, I have been studying in Catholic schools and I am now enrolled at Sophia, the sole Catholic University in Tokyo. I am proud to say that my education and my personality have mostly been shaped



Kumai



Sony



Morioka Bunroku

by Catholic education. To keep the faith is difficult. I am very lucky to have had missionaries as wonderful teachers and friends. To them I owe my new way of life, my learning. I acknowledge them as my understanding guides with whom I can safely walk hand in hand."

Morioka Bunroku is happy to tell of his personal contacts with a missionary in Japan, a Jesuit Father teaching English at Sophia University:

"Looking back on my university life, I can see that he had a great deal to do with the formation of my character.

"We met five years ago in a classroom where he taught freshmen English, using the direct method, something unusual in Japan. Even though he was always smiling, I found him rather distant. I came to know him better as adviser of the debating section of the English Speaking Society. He was warm-hearted and fatherly, qualities hidden under a somewhat forbidding exterior.

"For a time, I was uncertain whether I should pursue my studies. I even started to work as a tourist

guide, an experience which proved so exciting that I decided not to go back to college. Father warned me that I would later regret this decision. He gave me another chance to work myself through school by creating a special class for me and other students in difficult situations. I'll never be able to repay him for his kindness. As a grateful gesture I would like to serve as a bridge for better understanding between East and West. I'll soon graduate from Sophia and start my career in overseas business operations. If I had not met this missionary, I would not be what I am today."

Another third-year student, Kumai Hisayoshi, tells us what he thinks about the presence of missionaries in Japan:

"The presence of missionaries in my country raises many questions. Why have they come? Why don't they marry? What is the motivation behind their way of life? They are apparently ordinary people and yet they lead extraordinary lives. Why? To all these questions I wanted answers, so I got in contact with them in order to know them better.

"In the study of civilizations, I wanted to learn about the religious points of view. I found that there was nothing more interesting than the history of religions. In this field, I owe a lot to missionaries.

"Besides, my relations with missionaries have helped me understand my own parents. The generation gap exists here also. As most of the missionaries I know are as old as my parents, I have learned how to react to my elders. If they were not missionaries I would not talk to them as sincerely as I do.

"In a word, their presence in Japan is profitable to me, to my country as a whole, to the whole world."

Sony Mieke, third-year student at Sophia University, writes as follows on the same subject:

"I am a twenty-year old student majoring in English. I have become acquainted with about fifty Japanese or foreign missionaries most of whom are dedicated to educating Japanese youth.

"When my parents, who were indifferent to religion, discussed whether to send me to a public school, a Japanese Sister urged them to enroll me as a pupil in Saint Dominic's elementary school. This Sister was so kind that my mother decided I could only benefit by attending a school conducted by such persons.

"Our teachers were competent and dispensed an ideal education. I appreciated the missionaries who taught us French, English, and religion. Strangely enough, although surrounded by Catholic missionaries, I never had any idea of becoming a Christian. Coercion was never used in their schools. As I grew older, I got to know my teachers as ordinary people. They talked about Christianity in our classrooms but I found this only natural.

"I am sure that missionaries are of great service to my country by teaching the young. This is an admirable vocation."

Peru (Pucallpa)

Monique Larouche presents the short answers given by Beatrice Hoyos, a Peruvian student in secondary 4: "What does the presence of missionaries in your country mean to you?"

The presence of missionaries signifies:

- 1 — *Help for our nation at all levels, religious, educational, sociological, and economic.*
- 2 — *The presentation of the Good News to the Peruvian people.*
- 3 — *The possibility of receiving the sacraments.*
- 4 — *The hope of a better world here below; the Christian hope of a lasting world of union with God above.*
- 5 — *A moral support in periods of stress and of catastrophes such as the terrible earthquake in the Ancash interior.*



The missionary teaches catechetics.



A missionary accompanies her Pucallpa pupils on an outing.



Missionaries are a moral support in catastrophic times. These missionaries procured help on the occasion of the Ancash earthquake. Rear: Mount Huascaran.

NEPAL

DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

...eight of earth's ten tallest mountains are situated in Nepal? Staircase to the sky, the Himalaya range is crowned by 29,028-foot Mount Everest.

...some of the Sherpas, one of the Nepal's major highland tribes, can climb above 27,000 feet without supplementary oxygen? Most famous of the Sherpas, Tenzing Norgay, accompanied Edmund Hillary atop Mount Everest in 1953. The Sherpas are among the friendliest people in Nepal.

...Himalayan farmers share with Peru's Indians the feat of working earth's highest fields? Despite thin air and harsh cold, they succeed in growing crops of potatoes, oats, and barley.

...in Western Nepal travellers log distances in "smokes"? One pipeful lasts forty-five minutes. So many pipefuls, so many miles!

...what the camel is to desert tribes, the yak is to mountain Nepalese? This rugged member of the ox family is at once beast of burden and provider of food and textiles. Yak hair forms the basis for much of the homespun clothing worn in Nepal. Yak meat is considered a delicacy. Yak milk is drunk or churned into butter.

...although few Nepalese travel for pleasure, a quarter of the population spends one or two months a year on the trail? Man's need for salt provides the goad. Nepal has to import its salt chiefly from India, and most families have the responsibility of obtaining their own supply.

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June 12, 1972

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