

Series 11, No. 1
January — February, 1984

MIC

MISSION NEWS



To enter into the spirit of the Jubilee Year means to be immersed in the missionary spirit.

John Paul II

Dear Friends

A happy and blessed New Year to each and every one of our readers. May 1984 be a year that will be marked with our efforts of reaching out to others, as the Church reminded us on Mission Sunday last October.

As the newly appointed editor of MIC MISSION NEWS, I feel a need to reach out to you to receive that warm handshake that any newcomer needs. Yes, I was asked to take up this work to replace Sr. Ma. Anthea Raso, the former editor, who will leave for Africa one of these days. My mission experience for the past 35 years has been in the field of teaching, in the Philippines and in Hong Kong, so this new work is a welcome challenge to me, pursuing my missionary ideal now in the field of missionary animation. Believing that I have many friends "out here" as well as "out there", I now tend this hand of mine for your support.

In the present issue, the co-editor, Sr. Angelina Yap and I have attempted to bring out a message of hope as is expressed in the writings. In the articles, "Helping Hands" and "A Listening Heart" you will see how two M.I.C.'s are reaching out to their brothers in a realistic way. Reading through "Journey of Hope", you will be thrilled to hear how one of us M.I.C. undertook a "pele-polio" to Lourdes in a wheelchair. The description of the event of the transfer of the remains of the Foundress to an open Oratory at Pont Viau will certainly be of interest to all of you who have been reading about Délia Tétrault in the past issues. The part played by the great apostle of China, Matteo Ricci, shows clearly what reaching out means for a missionary, eager to bring the Good News to all.

Sr. Therese LeBlanc, M.I.C.

The Editor

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Although many M.I.C.s have boarded planes at the international airports of Montreal bound for their mission, last September another type of missionary departure took place at Mirabel. It was Sr. Denyse Bélanger and her companion, Sr. Fernande Charbonneau, who were taking off for Lourdes via Paris on an Air Canada Boeing Jet 747. Sr. Denyse, a former missionary of Hong Kong for some 12 years, was not on her first flight, for she had crossed the Pacific Ocean several times on her way to her mission in Asia. This flight however, was different. Sr. Denyse is now bound to a wheelchair, victim of polio, which overtook her in the Philippines about 11 years ago. She was embarking on an organized chartered flight called "Journey of Hope", part of an international pilgrimage organized every five years for polio victims. She was the happy winner of a free trip which would take her and her 40 other handicapped friends of Canada, to Lourdes for a pilgrimage. This international event had been prepared with great care for the past three years; in Canada the organizer was Fr. Lionel Montour, O.M.I. They were joined at Lourdes by 5000 other pilgrims, 400 of them being in wheelchairs or on movable beds. Each one was accompanied by another person giving a helping hand. In this case, Sr. Fernande was chosen to be the M.I.C. Sister to accompany Sr. Denyse. As both boarded the different planes, they discovered that none of them had accommodations for handicapped persons; the flight attendants, the fellow passengers, willingly gave helping hands to lift paralyzed persons up and down the gangways, in and out of seats, around the vast airports of the various stop-overs. Perspiration was flowing freely on the faces of these generous helpers, and as Sr. Denyse remarked with humour, "Our dis-



Sr. Denyse and Mary Seung at Lourdes.

JOURNEY of HOPE

comfort in being carried to and fro was minimal compared to that of our helpers." Even the hotels at Lourdes (400 of them, it seems) have little to offer handicapped persons in ways of accommodation, comfort and simple needs. The narrow streets of Lourdes are always jammed with traffic also, as friends attempt to wheel others in and through the alleys, between buses, trucks, and cars. However, to have the privilege to go to pray on the very spot where Mary appeared to Bernadette at Massabielle, to be able to join in the Eucharists celebrated in all languages with thousands of other pilgrims, in solidarity with the Church, made everything worthwhile enduring.



Sr. Fernande Charbonneau, the companion of Sr. Denyse Bélanger, leaving Mirabel for Lourdes.

For many of us a pilgrimage is outdated. It may seem to be an event that we read about in Medieval Literature, a journey to another land, an occasion to meet other people. Yet, a pilgrimage still has meaning in 1984, and will continue to have meaning if it is understood according to Catholic tradition. These pilgrims were reminded before they set off that a pilgrimage is an occasion of renewal in Faith and ecclesial awareness; it is an opportunity for personal or collective conversion; it is a time for prayer and penance, and finally, it is a sharing of life with others. For Sr. Denyse and Sr. Fernande it was that and much more. It was a missionary event. From the very first moment of their arrival when they heard former Cardinal Marty of Paris, they understood it even better. It was a send-off... a send-off not to another country... but a send-off to deeper life in Christ, through a Marian event.

They experienced Christian charity as people all around them volunteered to give a hand to ease their discomfort. They became more aware that handicapped persons need those of us that have the use of our limbs, but most especially that we need them to show us the way to self-giving, and to self-forgetting. They experienced HOPE on this journey, as they experienced a healthy catharsis during the scenic drama presentation from the Old Testament story of Job. This modern sacred drama was prepared and presented by a specialized team of actors, choreographers, musicians, singers, all utilizing all the present-day techniques of audio-visuals. It was a liturgical celebration meant to lead to meditation, to pray with the body, to sing to the Lord. This sacred play, held in the Basilica of Pius X, with the theme of "Job, the Revolted Man", was developed in 6 main tableaux,

where the principal actor was himself a handicapped priest. The supporting cast were both handicapped and valid persons. It was an appropriate preparation for the celebration of the Reconciliation to be held the next day. There was the usual Marian torchlight procession where the uncountable Aves were recited and sung in all languages over powerful loudspeakers. There was the immersion into the rough stone trough with its miraculous fountain. There was the focal point of the pilgrimage, the Eucharists, celebrated each day, either in the Grotto or the Basilica itself. There was that impressive moment when the Blessed Sacrament carried by a Bishop, passed in front of Sr. Denyse, where she could express her personal prayers and ask for special blessings. There was another special moment of joy for Sr. Denyse as she met an old

acquaintance from Hong Kong, Miss Mary Seung, now a member of the formation team of the Lay Auxiliaries in their headquarters at Lourdes. Together with other Auxiliaries from Asia, from U.S.A., even from Quebec, they shared their faith experiences over a delicious meal to which Sr. Denyse and Sr. Fernande were invited.

So, the pilgrimage ended as the pilgrims were given a formal "SEND-OFF" in a special celebration. They were to bring a message of hope to others as Job had done before them. "I knew you only from hearsay, now I have seen you with my own eyes." (Job, 42:5). And like Mary, "they stored all these things in their hearts". (Lk. 2:52).

And so, Sr. Denyse came back to share with us all that she had seen and heard... not all... for some of it will remain in her heart and sustain her in the days to come.

HELPING HANDS

When I first arrived at San Juan de Miraflores, in Peru, I noticed that the Sisters were preparing for the blessing of the Church, and they seemed to be overworked. Although they suggested that I should take it easy for a month or so, while I was becoming accustomed to country and climate, I volunteered to give them a helping hand inasmuch as a new recruit like myself could do so.

Afterwards, I joined them in the preparation of the feast of June 3rd, our M.I.C. Thanksgiving Day. We had invited all the Sisters of the area for this special celebration. So

together, hearts burning with God's love and thanksgiving, we evoked whatever words or actions of our Foundress that had inspired us most. We reflected together on why Délia Tétrault had been inspired to found our community and at the Eucharist, we thanked Him for all that He had done in and through her. The words of Paul to the Ephesians explaining how salvation was gratuitously offered to all men made us reflect on that mystery. This Eucharist brought us closer together and animated us to live more fully our life of thanksgiving for all that we had received.



Sr. Rosario Salazar in missionary animation work.

A few days later, I began my work as a nurse in the clinic. As there had been a measles epidemic in the area recently, many mothers were bringing their babies for treatment. But I never felt so helpless... so handicapped even... I had barely any medicine to offer them! Our shelves and medicine cabinet were empty! I wanted to cry! But the Lord arrived on time once more! The P.M.E. Fathers (Foreign Missions Fathers of Montreal) with whom we are working had just received a few boxes of medication from Caritas, and they shared a few of them with us. This time, I cried out of sheer joy and I praised the Lord with all my heart for His goodness to His children. Now, I could begin giving some relief to the ailing babies and their worried mothers.

Our little house is situated in a very poor milieu and every one of the houses seems ready to topple over. However, these constructions are not as crowded as they are in the capital, Lima, where houses

there are lined up side by side. The people here are victims of poverty, misery, and injustice, but they remain simple and hospitable, yearning for love and truth. I am happy to be here with them. It is a very enriching experience for me to be here where I can easily discover the passion of Christ in the lives of these crushed and exploited people. At the same time, I can perceive the Ressurrected Christ, the living God, in their midst.

For all of us, living conditions are harsh as the dust and heat are intensive. Living here is a real challenge. But with Him and with Our Blessed Mother, and supported by your constant prayers, we will stand side by side with our Peruvian brothers. We beg you not to forget them as their living conditions are becoming more intolerable day after day.

Your loving Sister,
Rosario Salazar, M.I.C.

(adapted from a letter sent to her Sisters at Pont-Viau.)

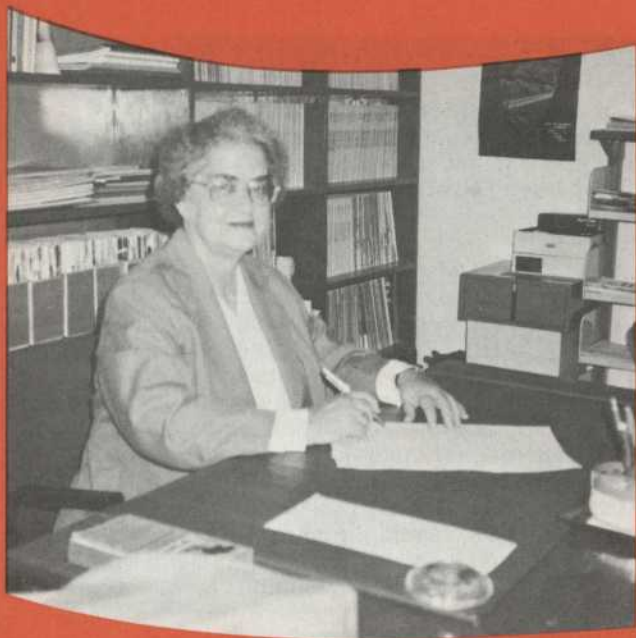
DÉLIA TÉTREAU — reaching out to us

On October 19, 1983, some 300 M.I.C. Sisters assembled at their house at Pont Viau, to attend a very special ceremony which had deep meaning for them and for the entire Church. It was the day chosen for the exhumation and the transfer of the remains of their Foundress, Délia Tétreau, known to them as Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit.

The ceremony began in the morning when the community assembled for the Eucharist presided by a representative of the Archbishop of Montreal, Mgr. Louis Aucoin. He was assisted by Fr. Michel Parent, Vice Chancellor of the Archbishop, and Fr. Jean Louis Martin, Superior General of the Foreign Mission Priests. After the reading of the official documents authorizing the exhumation of the body in the presence of the ecclesiastical authorities and medical experts, as well as official witnesses among the members of the Congregation, the Sisters dispersed for the day. The exhumation itself was a strictly private ceremony conducted in due reverence and respect; this marks the first stage of the introduction to the Cause of Beatification of Délia Tétreau. After the body was raised from the burial grounds where she had lain for the past 42 years, that is, since 1941, the remains were carefully and reverently identified and deposited in a beautiful marble vault at the back of the chapel.

During the long hours of anticipation and expectation, the M.I.C. Sisters visited the "empty tomb" where had lain their beloved Mother all these years. Around noontime, when the first part of the transfer had been carried out, the Superior General in great joy announced to the Sisters: "Our Mother is back with us in the house!" Later in the afternoon, when all had been carefully carried out by the ecclesiastical and medical experts, the Sisters were again conveyed to the chapel. This time, it was to sing a Magnificat around the remains of the great missionary woman, the pioneer of the Congregation that had seen so many women leaving home and country to bring the Good News to their brothers and sisters in the four corners of the world. As the remains of Mother Marie du Saint-Esprit were brought into the chapel, escorted by Sr. Monique Préfontaine, the Superior General, and Sr. Pauline Longtin, responsible for the promotion of the Cause of Délia Tétreau... a hush was felt all over the chapel. An invisible current of solidarity, of oneness with Délia Tétreau, with one another, with the world, visibly passed through the congregation. The silence was bursting with sound. The departed Mother and her daughters were one! A spontaneous praise to God rose up from every heart in the words of Mary, the Magnificat! A deep spiritual joy was experienced by all present, as the remains were reverently placed inside the marble vault in the Oratory. On the sealed marble cover was deposited a frame containing the words written long ago by the Foundress herself, as she offered herself totally to God in love. "I wish that this paper never leave me, never, never, and follow me into the grave so that at the very depth of my sepulcher and among my fleshless bones, will rise a voice exclaiming: I love you, my God, I love you!" These words, discovered long after her death in the folds of an old scapular that she had worn, were handwritten and worn out, difficult to decipher. They expressed in a few words her burning love for God.

Now, the Oratory wherein lie the remains of Délia Tétreau, is open to the public and all are welcome.



A welcome challenge...

says Sr. Therese LeBlanc,

incoming editor of

MIC MISSION NEWS.

Another mission...

Malawi...

the warm heart of

Africa...

says Sr. Anthea Raso,

outgoing editor of

MIC MISSION NEWS.





Sr. Anthea with her mother, bidding her goodbye.

Dear Friends,

My stay in Canada as MIC MISSION NEWS editor has been a very enriching and rewarding experience.

Thank you so much for participating in this mission.

I count on your continued interest, support and collaboration.

*Gratefully yours,
Sister Anthea, M.I.C.*

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MATTEO RICCI...

a Bridge Builder

Angelina Yap, M.I.C.

On the 25th of October 1982, Pope John Paul II surprised the participants of the International Study on Matteo Ricci when he appeared at the Gregorian University of Rome and addressed the assembly during the concluding session. The Pope spoke of Ricci as one who had penetrated the heart of Chinese culture and society and introduced China to the Western world. In preaching the Gospel, he also brought the science and technology of the West to China. In so doing, he made himself truly a bridge between two civilizations: European and Chinese.

This role of a bridge builder so well carried out by Ricci is now being held up before Christians as a model of the missionary attitude and methodology with greater impetus than ever. Throughout the world, the 400th anniversary of Ricci's arrival in China is being hailed with new enthusiasm. Taiwan's Catholics are aiming at 30,000 baptisms. Elsewhere, as in Canada, the anniversary is marked by a symposium or conference on this renowned Italian Jesuit, Matteo Ricci.

In September, 1983 in Toronto, the Canada-China Program sponsored a one-hour panel conference on Matteo Ricci as the one who built a bridge that "appears to stand solid and steady" between East and West because that bridge was built on

D. O. M.

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MAI, ET. SUÆ LIX.

耶穌會士利公之墓

利先生諱瑪竇號西泰大西澤意大里亞國人自幼入
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年來都萬曆庚戌年卒在世五十九年在會四十二年

The epitaph on the tomb of Matteo Ricci in Peking.

mutual esteem and love. Ricci's love for China and her people is bone-deep. It embraces the externals with a view "to be all things for all men" and especially "out of love for God who became man for love of me". Thus, he wrote to a friend: "We have become Chinese...", and to his own brother: "I have chosen to live in exile, far from my dear ones without the company of other Europeans. I no longer eat bread nor drink wine. I wear different clothes and have let my hair and beard grow long..."

In China, for the past few years there has been a reversal of the false charges directed against Ricci and his colleagues as promoters of imperialist culture. The first step taken toward this recognition of Ricci's real contribution to China's progress is the repairing of Ricci's tomb in March 1979. **Renmin Ribao** (The People's Daily) on November 4, 1979 praised Ricci as "pioneer of cultural exchange between China and the West."

Matteo Ricci was born on October 6, 1552, in Macerata, Italy, the eldest of eight children. At 19 he entered the Society of Jesus and schooled himself in mathematics, astronomy, geography, and other sciences. When he arrived in China in September 1583, he gave himself to an intensive study of the Chinese language. With the help of his teacher, he studied the Confucian classics and translated the **Four Books** into Latin, the first among many of his works.

Ricci worked his way into the heart of the Chinese people. He donned the robe of a Buddhist monk in order to be considered as a "man of religion" but shed it off the moment he learned that monks "lived on the margin of society"... and lived "outside the populated centres". Ricci and his companions wanted to bring their testimony to the very heart of society so they adopted a "lifestyle of men of letters, involved like them in the social life of the community". Through their dialogue with this elite group, they were able to lead some to the Faith.

When Ricci died in May 1611, the Emperor offered the site for his burial but some court officials protested to this unheard-of honor given to a foreigner. The emperor's chancellor rose to his defense saying: "Nor has it ever happened in the history of China that a foreigner, so eminent in science and virtue as Father Ricci, has come here".

Matteo Ricci, known to the Chinese as Li Ma Tou, spent 28 years in China and his tomb bears the mark of what the Chinese people feel about him. To them, he will always be "The Honorable Li".

Matteo Ricci is now being held up before Christians as a model of the missionary attitude and methodology.

Philippines



A Listening Heart

It was six-thirty, Sunday morning June 19, when we reached Puerto Princesa after a twenty-seven hour journey from Manila on the South China Sea. A few days later, two of our aspirants joined Sr. Alicia Posadas and myself and we moved into the refugee camp. Our house is newly built by a team of Vietnamese carpenters who used material and equipment available in the camp. The roof is made of coconut palms and the walls are bamboo strips.

In the camp the statistics inform us that the numbers fluctuate from

month to month. When we arrived, there were 2,400 people waiting for resettlement. Some of these refugees have been waiting for the go-signal as long as four years already. These people had braved the dangers of the seas in order to flee from a totalitarian regime which took away their freedom.

The refugees experience a whole range of emotions as they receive news from home. Sometimes, it is feelings of guilt for having escaped, often it is frustration at the thought that they can do nothing to alleviate

the situation of those who remain. More often it is the helplessness they experience as they find themselves powerless to provide any relief for their families. So the burden of anxiety that they bear is a heavy one, and they search for someone who can listen to them. This is where we come in. We can have listening hearts and shed a tear now and then with them.

Generally speaking, I can say that I see a group of people of all ages and all walks of life who have fled an oppressive life to search for freedom. They are not primarily concerned with riches or money, but they yearn for other things in life, such as dignity of the person. Not once do they forget their homeland nor the ones they have left behind. They have no unreasonable desires. They wish to lead a life where they are free to think independently and not have to bow to political powers. In the eyes of my students, I can read the despair that they are undergoing... those eyes are sad and troubled, their hands are trembling. I often see people crying, ready to give up. So you can see, how important it is for us to listen, listen, listen... and give hope!

I am in charge of the pre-natal clinic and at the moment some 48 women are expecting babies! I do both the consultations and the deliveries. I had sixteen cases in June and several in July. I also do home visits to supervise "mom and baby" when they return home. Besides that, I do some teaching. Because of my qualifications, I was invited to teach a few hours of English and French lessons each day. I also accepted to teach French two evenings a week at Holy Trinity College managed by the Dominican Sisters. That means I have exams to prepare and to correct. Now, in the camp, we also have a course organized for 69 girls for "Primary Health Workers". I have to give

some courses in obstetrics and gynecology since I am a qualified nurse and midwife. I love this type of work!

I have started to learn Vietnamese. It is not very easy because of the pronunciation and the intonation which I find very complicated... much more so than Tagalog.

There is one Catholic church in the camp having an American monk as chaplain, assisted by a Vietnamese priest. I attend this Vietnamese Mass each day, singing along with the others without fully understanding what I'm saying. God knows I am trying to praise Him. And He must be pleased! In the compound, we can also see several other churches of various denominations and one Buddhist temple.

There are many volunteer agencies working in the refugee camp here. Although we belong to various nationalities, the spirit here is one of cooperation, unity and love for the refugees. We have with us the Red Cross, the International Committee for Migration, World Relief, Malta, etc. Several religious communities of the Philippines help in education or in other ways, as do the Daughters of Charity and the Dominican Sisters. The Common denominator is **love**, especially **love for the children**.

You may believe that I have forgotten you, that is not true, for you are all very much in my thoughts as I live and work here. I pray for you all everyday and I beg you to do the same for me. Greetings to everyone I know.

May our lives continue to be challenged by those around us. May we grow in the love of the beauty we can discover in our brothers and sisters in need.

Your loving Sister,
Françoise, M.I.C.

(excerpt of a letter from Françoise Royer, M.I.C. to her Sisters of the Philippines.)

MISSION

BRIEFS



Chipata-Zambia

Sr. Bien Torres has launched a leadership project with the students. Three types of activities were initiated.

One is a **literacy program**. This is offered in the two parish compounds to the women who do not know how to read and write and for those who wish to improve their reading and writing skills. Several married women and some young girls have shown up already.

The second group is a **catechetical program** for little children from 3 to 10 years of age. Our students teach these little ones some simple prayers, songs, and tell them some Bible stories.

The third group is a **handicraft program**. The purpose is to make dolls and toys that will be given out at Christmas time to poor children.

Hong Kong

One day a lady showed up at the clinic where Sr. Jeanne Bouchard gives free treatment to the poor of the Diamond Hill area. Mrs. P. Lin expresses her joy to Sr. Jeanne as she relates what she remembers of her first visit to the clinic some 15 years ago.

"I had a dying handicapped child then. My family repeatedly told me not to keep the child... it would bring bad luck to the family. I was not yet a believer in God then but I could not make up my mind to abandon the child. I kept him, and he survived due to the good care we gave him.

Now, thanks to him, I have received the gift of faith, for you had then spoken to me about the religion of the Lord Jesus. My whole family is Catholic now. Thank you, Sr. Jeanne. I am so happy for the faith I have received. My cross became for me the source of my salvation".

MANILA

Social Action in ICAM

Immaculate Conception Academy of Manila students attending the Fourth Year class in Sociology together with the Youth Catholic Movement (YCM) have initiated a new project wherein they give free instructions in the "four R's", (reading, writing, 'rithmetic, religion) to children not able to attend schools in the area. These youngsters range from 5 to 10 years of age. They come for instruction each Saturday afternoon. The project also includes a free clinic where the services of doctor and nurse are offered by the alumnae of the school as well as the present officers of the Student Council.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION (ICMA)

In 1902, Délia Tétreault founded the first Canadian Missionary Congregation.: **The Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.** Since 1923, at the launching of a missionary publication "The Precursor," she invited her compatriots to participate more directly in the Mission by becoming ASSOCIATES and BENEFACTORS of the Congregation.

Today, we offer you in her name a means of personally collaborating in the missionary service of the Church: **Immaculate Conception**

Missionary Association (ICMA).

The bimonthly magazine, MIC MISSION NEWS, the link between the MIC's and their Associates, is sent to all the members.

Your affiliation gives you share in the prayers and apostolic works of all the MIC's. Every week, two masses - applicable to the deceased - are offered in one of the MIC houses throughout the world. Moreover, a stream of Marian prayers flows in the Congregation for the intentions of the Associates and Benefactors.

Schedule of Masses for our Associates

January, 1984

Generalate (Canada)
Mzimba (Malaŵi)
Port-au-Prince (Haïti)
Tananarive (Madagascar)
Kuanhsi (Taiwan)
Vancouver (Canada)
Jeanne d'Arc, Mtl. (Canada)
Yauri (Peru)

February, 1984

Cochabamba (Bolivia)
Val-Marie (Laval)
Ottawa (Canada)
Good Hope (Hong Kong)
Morondava (Madagascar)
Greenhills (Philippines)
Dutrisac, Mtl. (Canada)

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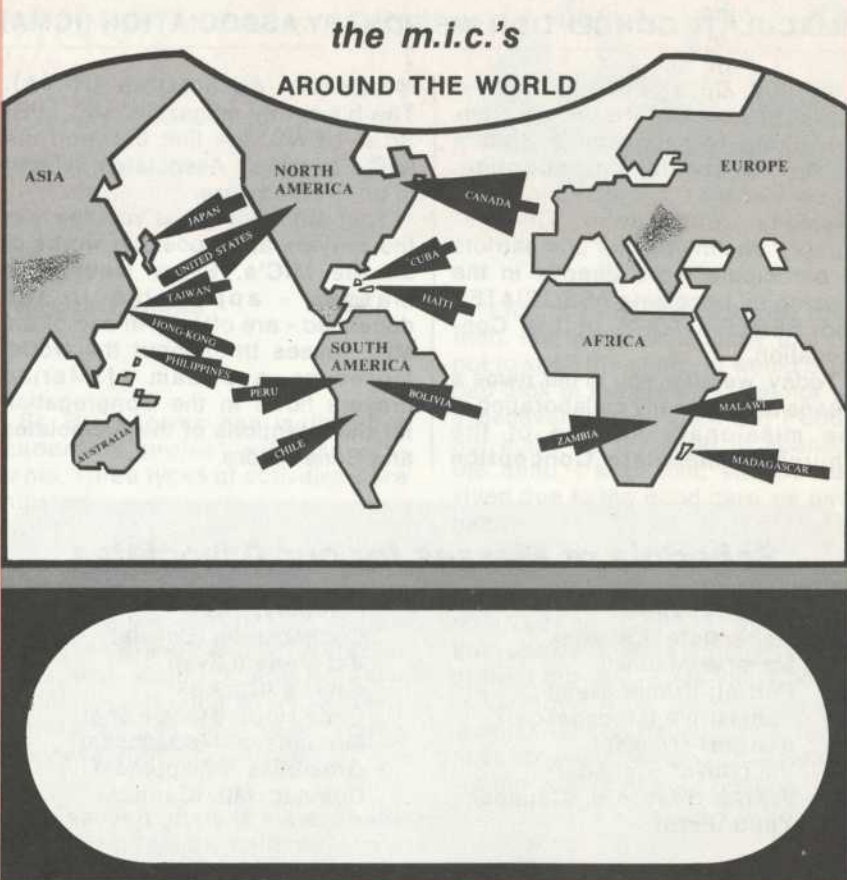
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