

## **Obituary - Rev John Bentley**

“Is he an important person, this Jesus, whose life story you sell? If so, why haven’t I heard of him before?” This question was addressed to a BCMS missionary by a small boy in the North India region many years ago. He did not wait for an answer but disappeared back into the crowd. Many people in that region had not heard the name of Christ (and that remains true today). John Bentley spent some years with BCMS seeking to make Christ known in North India.

Rev E John Bentley and his wife Erica served in North India from 1966-1971. Born on 26 May 1935 he had trained at Tyndale Hall from 1958 and was ordained deacon in 1963. He served as curate at St Luke’s Wolverhampton from 1963-66 and it was there that he met Erica. Two of their six children, Elizabeth and Alison, were born in India. They spent time in Landau in the Himalayan foothills in language study and then served within the Church of North India in a local church in the Hindu heartland city of Banares (now known as Varanasi). They worked at different times alongside or close to the Neeches, the Duncumbs, the Hobsons and the Harlands. Amongst other things the Benteleys were well-known for their hospitality to visitors especially those coming in from the hospitals in Robertsganj and Kacchwa.

Following their return from India in 1971 the Bentley’s served in local church ministry beginning with St Mark’s, Cheltenham as Curate from 1972-78. Thereafter he served from 1978-2002 as vicar of St Nickolas’ Wallasey They lived in retirement on the Wirral and John died suddenly on 11 January 2009. Judith Battersby represented Crosslinks at the funeral on 19 January. John represented English clergy in golf and Wallasey Golf Club laid on refreshments and flowers after the funeral.

We give thanks to God for their service.