

**Review: Bill and Shirley Lees, *Is it Sacrifice? Experiencing Mission and Revival in Borneo*, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, England, 1987**

Pages: 192

**What Would I Sacrifice for the Gospel?**

This is a heartfelt look into the life of a missionary: dangers; setbacks; health issues; and joys when the Lord moves. The Lee missionaries were based in Borneo reaching remote animist tribes, heavily enslaved to dark spiritual forces.

It will challenge the Christian on what he is currently, or willing to sacrifice for the furtherance of the gospel in his short time on earth.

The main negative is frequent usage of modern versions and private interpretations which distort Scripture, e.g., in II Corinthians 9.7, God loves a “hilarious” giver!

Another strange reference is to a Government family planning clinic, which the Lees suggested newly-fertile mothers visit. Whether they were advocating murder, or pregnancy prevention is unclear.

\*\*\*

**Preface (pp. 5-6)**

**I) Is It Sacrifice? (pp. 7-17)**

The Tagal were animists in absolute grip of fear of evil spirits to whom they bowed at all times in total submission, whether it meant starvation, farm neglect, poverty from frequent animal sacrifices, or ill-health. Disobedience might mean death!

They needed to see God’s power demonstrated.

In Borneo, one has to live by the river, otherwise there is no water.

Missionaries give up home, good jobs, friends, comfort and security.

## **II) Living 'By Faith' (pp. 18-33)**

In an answer to prayer for food, the natives found a sleepy python, which had just eaten a pig.

## **III) Guidance (pp. 34-46)**

## **IV) Why Is Guidance So Difficult? (pp. 47-58)**

“Guidance gets harder and harder as you get older”.

## **V) God, Rebels and Executive Committees (pp. 59-71)**

## **VI) A Health Revolution (pp. 72-89)**

The Tagal custom is death for adultery.

Babies were born anaemic due to low iron levels; 25% of normal levels. This was traced to animism, in which no pregnant woman could eat vegetables, the main source of iron for fear of the spirits.

## **VII) Planned Withdrawal (pp. 90-103)**

A missionary can stay too long as they are only “God’s scaffolding”.

Malaysia was formed August 1963 after the Brunei Rebellion, and the Muslim government ordered all expatriate missionaries out. These responded with an appeal to the Constitution’s freedom of religion article, but they were only given a ten-year stay.

## **VIII) Special Experiences and Revival (pp. 104-122)**

Paganism always seemed to be just below the surface in some of the convert’s minds.

There are also problems amongst missionaries of different backgrounds, so that, “uniformity was being substituted for unity”.

In one 1975 'revival', people were collapsing on the floor and going around pretending to be aeroplanes in a trance-like state.

**IX) The Powers of Darkness (pp. 123-140)**

In Borneo, converts wouldn't throw out all their charms, keeping one or two just in case they might need them later on (!).

**X) Disciple-Making and Disappointments (pp. 141-156)**

One Tagal ex-pastor had gone into politics, and soon accepted the advantages of becoming a Muslim!

**XI) Prayer (pp. 157-173)**

"Pray where you are".

**XII) Don't Waste Suffering (pp. 174-190)**

**Epilogue (pp. 191-192)**