



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Belfast missionary dies in Brazil

From the [Belfast Newsletter](#)

Published on Wed Feb 02 08:34:16 GMT 2011



A MISSIONARY who left east Belfast for Brazil in 1954 has passed away in Manaus after 57 years of evangelising in South America.

Fred Orr, originally from the Castlereagh Road, died on January 29, aged 86, and had been working in the Amazon area throughout his long and successful missionary life.

Before leaving Belfast, Mr Orr worked in the shipyard and played centre forward for Distillery Football Club in the Irish league.

On his conversion to Christianity, he became active in the work of

Castlereagh Evangelical Church – now Castlereagh Baptist – and was in great demand as a speaker.

Fred married Ina McMurray, from the Ladas Drive area, in 1949 and they later sailed together for the Acre Gospel Mission in Brazil.

Described as a “giant of a man in the Amazon” by a former colleague, Mr Orr had to overcome a personal tragedy even before he arrived in Boca do Acre where he was to begin his work.

Ten days into their 2,500-mile journey by river steamer from Manaus to Boca do Acre, Ina fell ill. She succumbed to the fever and died several days later on board the vessel as it docked in Labrea, Amazonas.

No-one on board the steamer, or indeed the town, spoke English and within 12 hours of arriving there Mr Orr had to bury his 29-year-old wife.

The tragic loss was not to deflect Mr Orr from his calling and he remained in Brazil where he pioneered evangelism and church planting - including the establishment of the Cruzada Amazonica and the Hebron Theological Seminary.

Fifteen years after the loss of his first wife, Mr Orr married Zeni, a Brazilian, and had two children, Fred and Florence.

Friend and former colleague in South America, pastor Victor Maxwell, described Mr Orr as “quite a character” and that “everybody in the Amazon knew Fred Orr”.

Pastor Maxwell said that even after more than five decades in South America, Mr Orr never lost his Ulster identity.

“He was very much a Belfast man,” he said.

“His two children were born in Northern Ireland but are very much Brazilian. They have been out there all their lives, and seldom ever come here, but they speak English with a Belfast accent.

“Fred was as Belfast as could be.”