November-December 1955

'NO HOPE BUT JESUS'

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RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION
INDIA
Week after week as we visited Kopodi village, we noticed our dear, old leper couple grow weaker and weaker. That ravenous disease had long since consumed the old man’s fingers and toes. It had even practically robbed him of both his precious eyes. But our hearts were always warmed now because of his cheerfulness and simple faith in his Saviour. Recently, however, when we arrived, there was only deep concern in his face. His bare, spindly legs seemed even thinner than usual, and each rib protruded sharply on his shirtless chest. But his concern was not for himself. His wife, whose body had not shown the same outward marks of the disease, was suddenly breaking down, and she was in great distress.

Their only means of even a meagre existence was to beg in the village. She had been able to go and beg, even when he found it impossible to leave their shack. Now he could not bear to see her suffer, and he pled with us to do something for her. The disease had suddenly launched a mad, open attack on her body, and she, even in the week since we had last seen her, had been reduced to skin and bones.

He had shuffled over to the place where we were singing and telling the people of the love of Jesus. We noticed another villager sit down beside him, and were shocked to hear what he said. Instead of encouragement and a bit of help, he deplored the poor leper’s condition and asked him why they did not cook up a poisonous weed growing nearby and drink the juice to end their misery. We later rebuked the man for his heartlessness and followed the leper to his home. We promised to bring some medical aid for them, and his faith was strengthened, as we sang and prayed together.

Several days later the doctor and Bhimabai accompanied us, and this visit brought joy like a beam of sunshine to that humble, bare shack. The doctor immediately realized that they were beyond any medical aid, but they were grateful for the salve and pills that would relieve something of their suffering.

They had prayed that God would send them something to eat. He had been depending on his wife to go about the village to beg, but now her plight was worse than his, and it was malnutrition that was aggravating the disease more and more. We had brought one of the shiny tins of cheese (Continued on page 6)
A NEW AVENUE OF SERVICE

BY ELDA AMSTUTZ

‘They looked unto him, and were lightened’ (Ps. 34:5).

For many months we contemplated opening a room in the village of Supa where men would feel free to come and read. We wanted it near our Dispensary, that it might also serve on occasion as an out-patient ward. At last we felt it was the Lord’s time for us to have such a room, and one was selected and rented.

A whole month was required to convince the one from whom we rented the room that it must be different from other village rooms. Twice the rat-holes had to be replastered; twice the walls had to be whitewashed and the floors scrubbed. Many hours were spent supervising the work and at intervals explaining to curious people the purpose of the room. The securing of benches, tables, magazine racks, book-cases, pictures, and books took many days.

A long list of names was prepared to which personal invitations were delivered to attend the grand opening. There being no telephones, each family had to be visited personally. Many remarked about the thoughtfulness of the invitations and wanted to see just where their names appeared on the list.

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The rumble of bullock cart wheels and the jangle of bells in the night, the incessant chirping of sparrows from dawn to dark, the chatter of the children and the hum of women’s voices—these are all a part of our life here at Mukti. It is a never changing pattern. Although one may be away for years, as I was, it will only seem as a day when one has returned.

Janet Callan was at the dock to wave good-bye when I left; and she was there to welcome me back when I arrived. The next morning as we were leaving Bombay, I stood in the doorway of the railroad coach watching the people on the platform. A great love for them stirred my heart. I was feeling very much at home. There were many familiar sights along the way. When we reached Mukti, it was evening. At the station, there was the most welcome sight of the other missionaries, many of the workmen, and all of mechanized Mukti plus a bullock cart to carry the baggage that the tractor’s trailer would not hold. The men were amazed to find that I could call most of them by name, and so was I. Kamal Deshpande had met us in Poona. Until then I had hardly been able to say a word in Marathi, but seeing Kamal loosened my tongue a little.

When we reached the Mukti gate, the children, many of the women, and my new family to which I was to minister were gathered to welcome me. The guessing game started.
Could I recognize the little girls now grown tall? There were garlands and bouquets, a welcome song that sounded most familiar, the flash of photo bulbs, and suddenly I realized there was something half cocked over one eye. Someone had tied a wreath of flowers to my hair, and in the excitement I had not noticed it. There was also the soft glow of little oil lamps in many small hands. After greeting my old family and friends, I turned into the gate of my new home to greet my family awaiting me at the Rescue Home. It is a large family, old women, young women, teen-agers, little children, and tiny babies. The responsibility is overwhelming, but 'with God nothing shall be impossible'.

Many of you will remember my telling of God's wonderful answers to prayer for rain in the villages round about. A few of you will remember how the Lord, in time of severe drought at home, sent a shower of rain in answer to my prayer, assuring me that some day I would return to India. On the evening I arrived, a light shower fell. It seemed like God's benediction. There had been months of drought. The next ten days there were light showers, and then God opened His heavens and the rain poured down. It was the more precious because about ten minutes before it started, during our early morning family prayers, one of the girls had especially prayed for rain. In less than two hours, an inch and a half of rain fell. It rained every day that week. We were about saturated and so was the ground. We needed some sunshine, and the farmers needed time to plant their fields. The next Monday morning, praising God for what He had done, we asked for a rest from the rain. During the next two weeks there was only one night of steady rain. Now that the fields are planted, the rains have come again. Some say joyfully, 'Aunty has come and brought the ocean with her'. Others just grumble because their roofs leak.

Aunty brought something with her besides the ocean. A folding organ, whose volume amazes everyone, was given to me by friends in my home church and has been a joy to all, adding much to our Sunday morning services. The play gymn our B.Y.F. sent to the Krupa Sadan children has given many hours of pleasure, but it has still to fulfil its main mission of keeping the boys out of mischief when they come home on holiday from school. There were the victrolas, games, lovely baby clothes, food parcels and so many tokens of the goodness of the Lord and your generosity. 'Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest, the savour of his knowledge by us in every place'.
sent to us from America for those in need. We opened it before them, as can be seen in the cover picture, and they gratefully accepted the nourishment they so badly needed.

But this was not all. They were overjoyed with the next surprise. They smiled when they were told that friends in Australia, who had heard about him, were praying for him. Then Bhimabai handed him the warm, sheepskin jacket sent by these loving friends. We helped him into it, and when the lovely, warm wool covered his bare ribs, he clasped his fingerless hands together and turned his eyes heavenward, saying, 'Thank You, Lord Jesus, thank You, great Lord'. He had promised to trust the Lord Jesus and to pray until the answer of supplying their needs came. To think that God had sent the answer from so far away! How happy those who gave would have been if they could have seen the joy in his face!

After a word of prayer, we left the two of them. He was standing there in the leather and wool jacket before the shiny tin of cheese, with hands folded and a grateful smile on his face, saying 'Salaam', as we went on our way.

On the next visit, we found their condition even worse. Rain was streaming in through the roof, which was made of sticks and mud. He was hunched up in the only dry spot there was, so that the sheepskin jacket served as a blanket to keep his whole body warm. He had broken out in other, smelly sores. She lay near him groaning with only an old sari wrapped around her. Her hands and arms were raw and covered with flies. There was no bed, nor even a decent blanket. How glad we were that the Lord had reminded us to bring a little bedding. He was cheered and comforted, but he prayed so earnestly with us that his wife might share his faith in Jesus, their only hope.

All week we continued to pray for them, and especially that this dear, old woman might come to share her husband's faith in the Saviour and his hope for an eternity in His glorious presence.

As usual on Sunday, we had our little service in the village, and our two friends staggered over as always, only more faltering. When the meeting was over, we had a little time to talk and pray with them. After placing a little food before them, we greeted them cheerfully and turned to go. I had just turned the corner, however, when I heard the old man call. At the same time I was struck with a conviction to return to speak with his wife about her soul. I hastily returned.
and asked her when she was going to trust in Jesus, like her husband did. If her answer surprised me, the conviction with which she said it impressed me even more. ‘But Jesus is my Saviour’, she interrupted, ‘and have we anyone else but Him? All day long I take His Name, and again and again I sing:

Jesus saves me, Jesus saves me now,
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Jesus saves me’.

Last Sunday they hoped again for medicine. How miserable their poor bodies looked, and we had to tell them that there was no hope, as there was nothing that medicine could do for them.

‘No hope?’ he asked, and his head fell on his breast. Then raising his face heavenward, he added, ‘No hope but Jesus. We have no one but Him’. His face lit up with hope and joy, as together we sang, ‘Come and go with me to my Father’s house’. Tears came to our eyes as the old lady joined in with deep sincerity in the closing prayer. One of these days perhaps they will not be there, but pray that the Saviour will make these days of misery and pain bright with His presence, until they see Him face to face before our Father’s throne. Some day we shall meet them there, and how glad we shall be because we prayed.

Note: Some days after this article was written, both the leper and his wife went to be with their heavenly Father. The leper’s last words were, ‘Lord Jesus, take me soon’.

(Continued from page 3)

The village street was crowded with people as the head man of the village cut the ribbon across the door and turned the key in the padlock to open the doors. As can be seen in the picture, the people poured into the room, where leaders of the village spoke on the value of education, and a Christian minister read the Scriptures and a gospel message was given. The room was crowded to overflowing, and many stood outside listening.

Will those who know the power of God’s Word pray that as men come to this reading room, the Word of Life will penetrate their hearts?
NOTES OF PRAISE

Sarala Dube completed her nursing training in August last. She tied for first place in Bombay State in her midwifery examination.

We praise the Lord that Miss Margaret Williams has successfully passed the Marathi Preliminary Examination, and would thank all those who have upheld her in prayer.

The Ramabai Mukti Mission is an international, undenominational Mission of evangelical faith, with representatives in the home countries as follows:

Secy.-Treasurer in America:  
Miss M. C. Sayers  
P.O. Box 415  
Philadelphia 5, Pa.

Treasurer in England:  
Miss E. B. Butler  
Flat 4  
6 Arundel Avenue  
Liverpool 17

Secy.-Treasurer in Australia:  
Miss M. S. Jones  
90 Eskdale Rd.  
Caulfield S.E. 7  
Victoria

Secy.-Treasurer in New Zealand:  
Mrs Thomas and Miss Gill  
168 Victoria Avenue  
Remuera, Auckland S.E. 2

Treasurer in Tasmania:  
Mrs J. McFie  
20 Grosvenor St.  
Sandy Bay  
Hobart

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Mrs Mullins  
28 Loch Street  
North Perth  
West Australia

Treasurer in Scotland:  
Miss M. Laird  
Lynton  
Kilmacolm  
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Treasurer in Ireland:  
Miss M. Rea  
'Bethany'  
Ormiston Crescent  
Knock, Belfast

Superintendent  
Secretary-Treasurer on the Field:  
Miss G. Fletcher  
Kedgworth, Poona District

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