PRAYER BELL
INDIA

RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION
November–December 1959
TWIN TREASURES FOR WHOM GOD GAVE HIS SON

By: Lillian Doerksen

It is Christmas-time when many stories of shepherds are told. We love to hear the stories of the shepherds on Judean hill-sides which tell of joy and peace. 'Twas the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem that brought them hope and gladness. The story of our shepherds is so very different. They came to our gates in the morning not with hope and expectation but filled with sadness and despair.

They were ordinary shepherds from a poor and humble village. Torn bits of blankets and saris stretched tightly across three cross-poles was what they called their home, for theirs was a life of wanderings. But it matters not how humble the abode if happiness reigns within - and theirs had been a happy home. That is - until five days ago. That night had changed everything. As he told his story we could see it all - the tiny tin lamp flickering as the breeze blew in from the open side of their dwelling; the stars shining down on the scene of sadness, as weak groans arose from a bundle of rags in the corner. Whether the groans came from the one suffering on the rags, or from the one who sat anxiously at the woman's side seeking to ease her pain, it was not always clear. Since she had given birth to twin baby girls the night before, the father had hardly left her side. He had expected her to be well again in a day and ready to travel on with their sheep. But instead, a strange fever had set in. Though he had done all he could to help her, he could see she was getting weaker every hour. He was trying desperately to think of some other help he could give her, when he was interrupted by the whimper in the flat basket of rags where the little day-old babies reminded him weakly of their need.

He woke one of the older children at his feet. The girl got up, dipped the little tin cup into the vessel of water and mixed this with some goat's milk. Then she sat down sleepily to feed the little mites by soaking a rag into the "formula" and letting the babies suck it. This seemed to satisfy them quickly and the father returned to his vigil at the mother's side, and leaned back for a while, thinking.
He was roused but a few minutes later by a deep groan and gasp at his side. Before he was able to do anything, he saw that his wife and the mother of his new-born babes had gone. He was alone and overcome with the dark loneliness of the fate that had befallen him. His heart-broken wail awakened the children around him and the lonely night carried their frightened cries across the quiet fields. This brought the shepherd relatives and neighbours quickly to his side. Then the night air was torn with the wails of the women, the weeping of the children and the sad, deep groans of the husband.

Next day, when dawn stole across the sky, the little party made its way to a dried-up river-bed, which is the local burial ground. There they built the funeral pyre and chanted prayers. Soon flames licked away at the body of his cherished one and groans too deep to be expressed arose from the grief-stricken shepherd's lips.

The sun had risen high in the sky when they returned to their sheep and found the women sadly discussing the plight of the little babes. Who could feed and care for them? The children were too small and the relatives who might have offered had hardly enough milk to feed their own families. Besides who would care for them when the women were in the fields with the sheep? The shepherd would have to give them up or they would never live.

"No," said the father, overhearing their last remark, "I cannot give them up. We will care for them somehow."

The women shook their heads gravely. Men knew so little about children and their domestic needs. How could he look after them when he had to be out with the sheep? Little use of his being set on keeping them. They would only die.

The only one who seemed to be able to share the shepherd's grief and longing to keep the babies was their dead mother's brother. He talked with the father about it and they planned and thought all day. Again and again they soaked the rag with milk and water and tried to feed the babies.

The next two days they talked and discussed it, too, with the other shepherds in the fields. Some one mentioned a kind home half a day's train journey away where they took little motherless ones like these and cared for them lovingly. They said it was called the Home of Salvation which was a place of love. Would it not be so much better to take the little ones there? There seemed no other way, though the poor shepherd could hardly bear to think of it. He could see however, that the babies looked much weaker and there was hardly a hope of life if he tried to keep and care for them himself. He waited another two days but when he saw there was no other way his decision was finally made. The babies' uncle put one more rag onto the bare little bodies to protect them from the cold of the night as they started out together with the little basket containing the twin treasures.

At the Mukti gate, the missionaries listened with compassion as the shepherds poured out their sad story, interrupted again and again by weeping that touched the heart most deeply. Now that the time had come, the father almost lost his courage. The two of them wavered with indecision. Perhaps they could leave one and take the other one back and try to care for her. Yet it did not seem right to separate them either. How much better if they could grow up together. Besides, they knew it would take special care to help them to survive. They wept again and it was

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Luke 2:7 "And she brought forth her first born Son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; for there was no room for them in the inn."

ROOM FOR JESUS

Room for Jesus, can it be
That hearts can find no room for Thee?
Room for pleasure, room for song
Room for "self" the whole day long.

No room for Him in Bethlehem's inn,
A manger it must be.
And there amongst the lowing cattle
This humble place chose He.
O! Will you open up your Heart
And let Him dwell therein?
Make room for the Christ of Glory
He'll save you from your sin.

Room for Jesus, let it be
Your Christmas song of mirth;
For long ago He came to dwell
With man upon this earth.
He came to live, and lo! to die
For souls lost in their sins.
He made a way, the only Way
And that one Way is, Him.

"I am the Way, the Truth, the Life,"
Says Jesus to your heart.
"If you will open up the door
I'll come in, and ne'er depart."
And so I'll open my heart's door,
I'll let the Saviour in.
I'll have Him as my Christmas Guest,
My life, I give to Him.

Mrs. Norton Averill

We are happy to share this poem with you written by Mrs. Averill who is a supporter of one of our children. May we find room in our hearts this Christmas season for God's great unspeakable Gift to us, His precious Son.

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noon before they made their final decision. Then they gave over the basket and unashamed of their tears, turned quickly and walked away.

The little dark bodies were laid in the arms of a loving nurse and she carried them over to the hospital nursery. There was warm water on the charcoal burner. She would bathe them quickly, oil them, wrap them into one of the cozy nighties sent by friends across the sea, and make a formula that would revive and nourish the little bodies that looked so weak and thin. What a lovely Christmas gift these tiny twin treasures were! She would care for them most lovingly as her gift to the One who had come to be her Saviour and theirs. There was hope for them as there had been for her. They would have her ardent devotion and most loving care so they would grow up to love and serve the Saviour of Bethlehem as she did. Would any gift to Him be more precious than a promise to bring hope and life to these tiny twin treasures for whom God gave His Son?
WITH HIS TOUCH UPON THEM

By: CAROL TERRY

A hush of reverence and holiness at the consciousness of His presence surrounded the little group gathered together at Manchester, when I recently had the privilege of speaking to our Council in England. Sobered by the call of India's millions; challenged by the many opportunities the Ramabai Mukti Mission is having to meet the needs of India's orphans and unwanted baby girls, as well as India's womanhood so desperately in need of help and hope; stirred by the wonderful way the Lord has been touching lives in Mukti, which is a place of rescue, refuge and redemption, the members of the English Council bowed low before Him in travelling, intercessory prayer. The sacredness and greatness of the responsibility that was theirs in representing this work in England, that more of God's people might pray and give and go, was felt in the depths of their souls where things that are eternal are the things that matter.

Led in His all wondrous way, this little group had bound itself together in behalf of the Lord's work in Mukti, and after the time of devotion at His feet when they felt His touch upon them, every item of business was approached reverently, seeking His will and His glory. The "Covenant Scheme" regarding income tax arrangements for those wishing to make contributions in England to Mukti was duly signed and legally instituted that day, and hands were laid on the legal papers as they were prayed over and dedicated unto our Lord. Thus was every item of business transacted before Him, and we knew the seal of our God was upon this Council for His glory.

We want our friends in England to know of this group, which is ready to tell them of His wondrous workings in India and in Mukti and to present needs for prayer. The moving picture in colour, "Jewels Eternal," is available and any of the Council members will be glad to show it or to come and speak to any of your groups and to send you informative material. This council is organized to help guide you in intelligent, travelling, intercessory prayer that will mean souls from India for our Lord. Mr. Bob Sergent, whose picture appears with this article, is the president of the Council, while Miss Gladys Tillett is the Hon. Secretary-Treasurer. Correspondence in England may be addressed to her at 134 Old Lane, Beeston, Leeds 11.

We commend this Council to our English friends for prayer, for service, for helping you to know of India, its need of Christ, its need of you. I thank the Lord for the privilege of meeting with this dedicated group as I travelled from India to America on furlough and would express appreciation to them and to our friends in other countries who are joining hands around the world with the missionaries by links of prayer and love and gifts that India might know our Lord as we do, whom to know is life and hope, joy unspeakable and fulness of glory.
AND THE POCKETS!

BY: JEAN MCGREGOR

The child at the right, in the cover picture of this issue is called Giver of Joy. Last year, near Christmas time she provided us with material for a Buds and Blossoms story. Perhaps you would enjoy reading a brief account of her actions at that time.

There had been great excitement all through the day because one of the older girls had heard that there was to be a surprise. The following is what happened.

Lotus burst into the room shouting, “Hurry, hurry! Follow me! The surprise is going to happen now.”

Twelve children half ran and half flew after her. Lotus carried Giver of Joy. Around the long porch that surrounded some of the rooms and offices of the Mission, then in through an archway to the square they ran. Once inside the square, they stopped abruptly. There under the roof of the porch was a table. On the table were piles and piles of bright, new dresses. They had come from many different countries across the ocean.

The Missionary Auntie who was in charge said that each child could choose a dress, beginning with the oldest girl and working down. This was when the jumping began. Giver of Joy could not keep her feet still. She jumped while others were choosing dresses. She jumped while they tried them on. When her turn came, she wiggled and jumped so that Lotus could hardly put the dress over her head. It was a little blue one with pink flowers on it and ruffles over the shoulders. Most thrilling of all to Giver of Joy was the fact that it had pockets. It was a good thing that this first dress fit her because she refused to take it off to try on anything else. Stuffing her hands in the pockets she went jumping off to show everyone. Her face was beaming and her pigtails bobbed up and down with every jump. “Look at my dress,” she kept saying. “It has pockets!”

When Lotus wanted to take the dress off, Giver of Joy began to cry. The jumping stopped and great big tears rolled down her cheeks. No one could make her understand that even though the dress was taken off, it still belonged to her. She thought that if it were really hers, she should be allowed to wear it forever...to chase the chicks, to splash the water out of her bucket, for eating, for sleeping...always.

Nothing would comfort her until the Missionary Auntie in charge of Giver of Joy’s family group took her to her own room to show her where the new dress would be carefully kept. “I’ll keep it right here for you,” she said. “No one will be allowed to touch it and on Christmas Day quite early in the morning I’ll call you. You may put your new dress on then and wear it all day long.”

When the tears were dried and she was at home again, she explained the whole thing to her doll. “It has pockets,” she beamed. “I’ll show you on Christmas Day.”

That night Lotus was trying to help Giver of Joy say her prayers. “Thank you for my new dress,” she prompted.


“And the pockets . . . . . . . . .” whispered Giver of Joy. She didn’t finish the sentence. She was sound asleep.

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BLESSING OF THE STAFF CONFERENCE

BY: BHIMABAI HARISHCHANDRA

It is a privilege to write about our staff meetings which were led by God's Spirit-filled servant, Rev. John Ridley. He served his country as a fighting soldier in the first World War and as a chaplain both at home in Australia and overseas during the second World War. He is an ordained Baptist minister and world evangelist. Our loving Father saw our spiritual needs and brought His servant to our land and to our Mukti Mission. Frail physically, but strong as a lion in spirit, it was marvellous to our eyes what God could do through him by His Spirit.

Mr. Ridley's topics were on "Love the secret of supreme victory" and "Unity in Christ and in His service." He said, "Love likes to link hands with others in the service of the Lord." He showed us how the members of the church are His body, and how there could be unity even in diversity. Victory comes by love in the stream of unity. How important this subject is to mission work. (1 Cor. 12:12, 14, 20, 27)

In speaking on the proofs and products of unity from Acts chapters 2 and 4, we were reminded how the apostles were united in heart, in purpose and in the sharing of their possessions. We were warned, too, as we saw the consequences of the first cloud of darkness that came into the clear sky of the unity of the apostles as related in Acts chapter five. How important it is to watch our walk watchfully, prayerfully, carefully and softly, in order to preserve this unity.

On Sunday morning Mr. Ridley led all the Mukti family and church to Calvary, as he revealed from God's Word how it was the place of pathos and pain, of propitiation and pardon, and the place of peace. There are other places of pain, but Calvary is the pyramid of pain. After telling how at Calvary Christ offers reverence for our irreverence, purity for our impurity, obedience for our disobedience, devotion for our desertion, service for our sins, His great love for our lovelessness and His precious blood for our badness, there were many who responded and came forward to seek the Saviour for pardon, salvation, and a new love in His service. Among the ones who came for salvation was a young Brahman blind girl who came to us some months ago. She was told when she came that she was not to pay any attention to the religion here, but she had found her heart strangely moved ever since she heard of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, hearing of Calvary and how He had poured out His love for her, she raised her hand when the message was finished and stood up, waiting for someone to lead her to the front. To see the joy of salvation as her fair face and sightless eyes turned in praise towards the One who had loved her so much, brought tears of joy and gratitude to our eyes, too.

We, as a staff, thanked our Father for the blessing to our souls and minds and for what He had wrought in the hearts of many in our large family and church. Praise His name!

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People from all over the world sent lovely, bright new clothes for the Mukti children for Christmas. Giver of Joy is only one of hundreds of little girls whose eyes shone bright as stars and who jumped up and down as they put on their new clothes.

Will you join Giver of Joy and all of us in our prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord Jesus for all this .... His goodness to our children?
The postman in our village post office is busy these days sorting out the many fat envelopes containing Christmas joys for the hundreds of children here in Mukti. They have come from you who pray in so many parts of the world.

The Christmas room is a busy place, too, these days but it is a happy busyness. Again and again prayers of praise rise to the Saviour's throne for His love as it is showered upon these orphan girls and women through His loving children around the world. What joy all these things will bring!

Those on the Christmas Committee had the joy of adding four new names to the Christmas list, for not only did the heavenly Father send to us the shepherd twins this week, but two more lovely baby girls were brought—one, beautiful four-day-old baby who had been deserted in a thorn bush and whose scratches are disappearing quickly as she is settling happily into her new atmosphere of love. Then another was brought by a grandmother who was glad to find such a kind home as Mukti for the little one whose mother had died.

You have made it possible for them to be loved and cared for and have sent generously that all of our family could have joy this Christmas. We express our deep gratitude to you and our deepest thanks to our heavenly Father who has made it all possible through the gift of His precious Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. May He be your joy and reward.

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

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